



PRIMARY PURPOSE OF PRAYER

NOT TO CHANGE SOMETHING BUT TO KNOW SOMEONE.



PRIMARY OBSTACLES TO PRAYER:

Questions to ask when prayer goes unanswered:

1. Is there sin in my life?

2. What is God trying to teach me?

See list below as a checklist to what might impact your prayers.

1. Sin or Disobedience (habitual and unconfessed) David said If I had cherished sin in my heart, you would not have heard me (Ps. 66:18). Isaiah writes, Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2).

2. Pride Peter wrote, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5). "I can do this God, I don't need you." = pride. Often displayed in "I'm too busy."

3. Spiritual Battle Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

4. Lack of Faith- James 5:15 The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well

a. Not fervent - James 5:16 The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

b. Regular/persistent - Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18).

c. Doubt - Let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord (James 1:5-7).

d. Fear - Focused on the mountain, not the mountain mover. Pray big prayers!

5. How We Treat People

a. Others – Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need (Proverbs 21:13).

b. Our spouses - Husbands... be considerate as you live with your wives, that your prayers might not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7).

6. Lack of Reconciliation/Unity - See Matthew 18; Galatians 6

7. Unforgiveness - Jesus says, "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25)

8. Hardened Heart - If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination (Proverbs 28:9).

9. Delays - The timing isn't right.

a. Sometimes God says "not yet" meaning, it's simply not time for it.

b. Sometimes he delays to increase or test our faith.

10. No - No is an answer to prayer. God is good, just and right. He has the big picture in mind.

11. Prayerlessness - I simply don't pray (obvious!).

a. But ask, why? Do I believe God can't or won't answer? If so, study God's word and look up all the accounts in the Bible about how God answered prayer.

12. Wrong Motives

- a. Is this God's will? 1 John 5:14-15 says we need to ask in accordance to God's will.
- b. Am I selfish? You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions (James 4:3).

HOW TO PRAY:

Suggested Patterns:

Matthew 6

- 1. Upward.** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name - Start with seeking God's face before his hand.
- 2. Downward.** Your kingdom come, Your will be done - Submit your will to His will for your life and the world.
- 3. Inward.** Forgive us our debts as we forgive those... - I like to move into confession and repentance. It gets the heart right.
- 4. Outward.** - Give us this day our daily bread. - Supplication is asking God for His will on behalf of us and others. He knows our needs but we are called to pray continually for everything, for this is the will of God (1 Thess. 5:18).
 - b. Pray specifically
 - c. Pray daily
 - d. Pray sincerely (from the heart)
 - e. Pray fervently (James 5:16)
 - f. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil
 - i. Ask for readiness in the Spiritual Battle.
- 5. Upward.** For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory... - End seeking God's face. The bookends of prayer are always upward.

Other patterns are:

(ACTS) Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

John Piper's IOU's

- I - Incline my heart to your testimonies (Psalm 119:36).
- O - Open my eyes to see wonderful things (Psalm 119:18).
- U - Unite my heart to fear your name (Psalm 86:11).
- S - Satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love (Psalm 90:14).

GOOD PRAYER HABITS:

1. Regular

- a. Time - The pattern throughout Scripture is early morning.
- b. Place - Prayer Closet (a place that is free of distractions).

2. Push Through Dry Seasons (God's way of saying, is this about you or me?)

3. Journal Stick to a discipline of 1 page.

3 Habits:

1. Briefly recap the day before and, in one paragraph, write what God showed you needs to change or remember and pray it.

2. In a paragraph, write what God spoke to you through His word and pray it.

3. Write out a few prayer requests for the day.

4. Pick a Trigger Sounds odd, but when fasting, hunger is a trigger to turn our attention to God and pray instead of concentrating on hunger. If you are fighting a stronghold (could be any addictive desire), when the pressure manifests itself, use that as a trigger to focus attention on God and the empowerment of Holy Spirit.

5. Be Disciplined No one accomplishes anything without commitment. That being said, there

are two extremes to avoid,

a. Avoid legalism - if you miss a day, don't sweat it! It's all grace.

b. Avoid unstructured time and activity - it rarely consistently works.

6. Pray Scriptures Here is an example from Philippians 4:6-7,

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Jesus, I praise you that you are worthy to approach, that you care enough about us to listen. You are a great Father (upward). I ask you to examine my heart through your Holy Spirit to show me where I am anxious and where my lack of faith in your ability to help me live out life is (downward). I choose to pray and approach you with my requests (pray them). Now Jesus, I thank you for (and list them!). Now Father, I am asking that you would make peace a sentinel in my heart.