

A Sabotaged Prayer Life

Exodus 25, Psalm 66:16–19 (ESV)

CONTEXT: Remember, that God has descended on the Mountain and given the 10 commandments to the people and called them to obey it. But God knew they would not obey it... so immediately after he gives them instructions for an altar.

TEXT: Exodus 20:18–24 (ESV)

²⁴ An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.

So God instituted a system of substitutionary sacrifice. To provide atonement for the sin of the people. Ultimately it would travel with them in a portable temple called the **TABERNACLE**.

Exodus 25:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. ⁹ Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

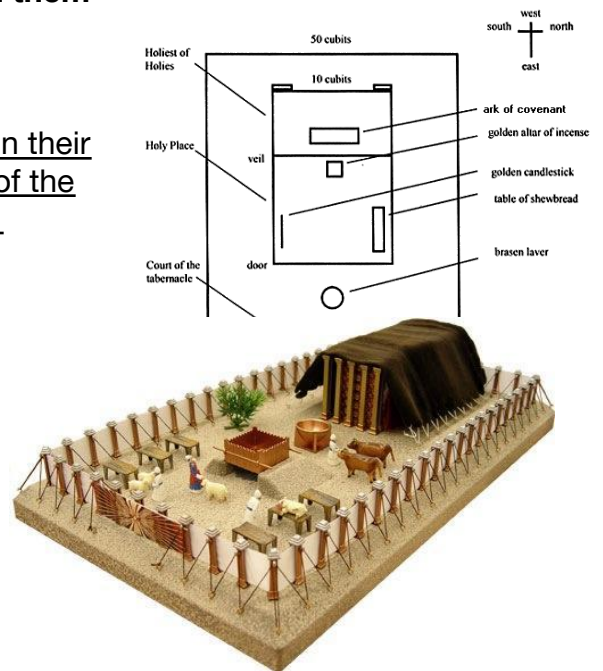
The **Tabernacle** had to be built to God's exact pattern, because it was to serve as a **pattern of approach**. It was to teach the people how they were to approach God. The Priest had very specific instructions he was to follow in order to go before God on behalf of the people. So Moses wasn't to innovate, he was to obey. He was to build exactly as God had said.

The Tabernacle consisted of 3 parts:

1. **The Outer Court** - *Pointed to God the Son*
 - The Brazen Altar - where sacrifices were made
 - The Laver - where washing took place symbolizing the appropriation of grace.

1. **The Holy Space** - *Pointed to God the Holy Spirit*
 - The Candlestick
 - Table of Shewbread - *Pointed to the Word of God*
 - The Alter of Incense - *Symbolic of our Worship*

2. **The Holy of Holies** - *Pointed to God the Father*
 - Ark of the Covenant -
 - it was the Ark that went before the army in battle



- The Ark contained the Law of God within and the Mercy Seat without so it was there that peace with the Father was represented and it was because of what that Ark pointed to that man could approach God with the needs of his life.

Now what is the Tabernacle or Temple in the New Testament? **YOU ARE.** Who are the Priest of God in the New Testament - **YOU ARE.**

Over the Next 6 weeks I want to show you how following the pattern laid out by the tabernacle can revolutionize your prayer life.

Let's begin today where the priest had to begin - **at the BRAZEN ALTER and the LAVER OF WATER.**

This was where sacrifices were made. Animals were sacrificed shedding their blood for the sins of the people.

- **BRAZEN ALTER** - GOSPEL. When we are saved, when we become Christians we have to enter our relationship with God by means of a sacrifice - the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World. His blood was shed, without which there could be no remission of sins.
- **WATER LAVER** - APPROPRIATION, APPLICATION OF GOSPEL. But what I want to talk to you about today is the second station... the water laver. The sacrifice of Christ was ONCE FOR ALL... but the WATER LAVER, points to our practical cleansing from sin, our practical holiness.

It is very possible that you know Jesus as your Savior, but you are NEVER able to progress in prayer apart from forsaking all known sins at the water laver.

- I BELIEVE MANY OF YOU ARE STRANDED SPIRITUALLY BECAUSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE WATER LAVER.
- I BELIEVER MANY OF YOU ARE WASTING YOUR PRAYERS BECAUSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE WATER LAVER.
- MANY OF YOU HAVEN'T GROWN SPIRITUALLY IN YEARS BECAUSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE WATER LAVER.
- LIKewise - IF YOU WILL LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW TODAY IT CAN ABSOLUTELY REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR WALK.

Psalm 66:16–19 (ESV)

¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. ¹⁷ I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. ¹⁸ If I had cherished

iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. ¹⁹ But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

Cherish = to find delight in, it is a word for the relationship a boy may have with a pet. Is there a sin in your life that you have made into a pet? You no longer view it as a grievous evil, now - it's part of the family. If so, make no mistake the LORD WILL NOT LISTEN. You are treating what Jesus died for as a pet.

Proverbs 15:8 (ESV)

⁸ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.

Sometimes people assume, wait a minute I give, I serve, I sing, I teach... all of those things are tantamount, coequal to a Jewish sacrifice. But apart from practical holiness they are a mountain full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Job 27:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ For what is the hope of the godless when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life? ⁹ **Will God hear his cry when distress comes upon him?**

Proverbs 15:29 (ESV)

²⁹ The Lord is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 28:9 (ESV)

⁹ If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

Isaiah 1:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

Zechariah 7:13 (ESV)

¹³ “As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear,” says the Lord of hosts.

John 9:31 (ESV)

³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

1 Chronicles 4:9–10 (ESV)

⁹ **Jabez was more honorable than his brothers;** and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” ¹⁰ Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!”
And God granted what he asked.

Honorable = God is able to honor you. It's safe, it won't hurt you. Like the idea that Cold can travel into deeper water, catch bigger fish because I trust him.

ILLUSTRATION: TN river dam, the warning signs, I trust my son to take him into dangerous waters where the big fish live. Can God trust you to take you into dangerous waters filled with marvelous blessing or must he leave you on the bank. Will you die on the bank? Millions will.

James 5:13-18 (ESV)

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.** ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

SOME OF YOU HAVE UN-FORSAKEN, CHERISHED SIN IN YOUR LIFE AND FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THERE ISN'T A NICKEL'S DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR LIFE AND THAT OF A LOST PERSON.

ILLUSTRATION: I see this when a man goes through an unbiblical divorce. He abandons his wife. He figures... well God will forgive me and I can move on. Friend, if you don't abandon and forsake your sin, God is not one bit obligated to forgive you. Your spiritual life is on pause from the moment you set your mind to disobey until you repent and make every effort to restore that relationship.

ILLUSTRATION: Some people think it's normative to allow 1 or 2 little pet sins to exist in their lives. They say to themselves, "Everyone does it, it will not make any difference, these are small sins". They are sins that required the death of the Son of God! There are NO SMALL SINS. Until you forsake them - you are wasting your time in prayer.

WHAT ABOUT SINS WE STRUGGLE WITH - I'm not talking about that, if you are wrestling against it, trying to overcome it, trying to resist temptation, defeat the sin... you are not cherishing the sin. BUT WHO AND WHAT THE ENEMY IS MUST BE VIVIDLY CLEAR AS YOU APPROACH GOD.

Let me as you a question:

• Is there a sin in your life that you confess as sin to God, but if you got real honest with God and yourself, you will probably commit the same sin again before the sun sets? If so, you are wasting your time praying.

- Is there a sin in your life that God has revealed to you a way of escape but you have refused to take it? For some of you God has told you countless times to eliminate every access point you have to pornography but you are lazy, undetermined, and you will not do it.
- Some of you God has been dealing with about giving, He's told you an amount, He's prompted you time and again, but you refuse... why do you think He's not answering your prayers friend? For all practical purposes you are stealing from God.
- What about the sin of forsaking the assembly - Church attendance for some is no longer something you are committed to. It's something you MIGHT do if there isn't something else on the radar... no ball game, no cabins, no getaways.
- Do you have an immoral relationship on the side? Maybe it's not fully consummated, but you are keeping your options open. You flirt, you insinuate, speak in double entendres. That stuff is not tolerated when you approach a Holy God.

The Fervent Prayer of a **RIGHTEOUS** man availeth much.

ILLUSTRATION: I grew up in the country and there was a creek my cousins and I used to play on. But one day we came down to the creek and what had always been 12 - 15 foot of water across, was now just a little stream a few inches wide. WE couldn't imagine what had happened. So we hiked several miles up stream until we found it. A family of beavers had invaded that creek and dammed it up. 3 or 4 beavers had brought that creek to a halt. So we tore the dam down, but came back in a couple of days and it was rebuilt. Do you know what the owner of that property had to do to get the beavers to stop building the dam? He had to dynamite the dam.

Some of you will sort of confess you sin.... but you never radically repent.

Repentance is the dynamite of the sinful life.

Friend you have no idea the blessing and power you are missing by allowing sin it's way in your heart.

Mary Queen of Scots, *"I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men."*

Jonathan Edwards

Preached, Sinner's in the Hands of an Angry God read his sermon off a piece of paper, ***"those people felt the very presence of God in such a way, that they mounted the pews for fear that the ground would open and that hell would swallow them."*** Before Jonathan Edwards got into that pulpit, before he preached that message, his diaries tell us that for three days before it he fasted and he prayed.

Oh but if you don't REPENT, all fasting will do for you is make you hungry.

- **Genesis 18:22–33 (ESV) - God was about to destroy all of Sodom and Gomorrah and all the inhabitants, but the Righteous man Abraham cried out to God and God spared Lot and his family.**
- **Numbers 11:1–3 (ESV) - The People complained against God and God nearly killed them, but the righteous man Moses prayed for the people and they were not destroyed.**
- **1 Kings 13:1–6 (ESV) Jeroboam rebuked the prophet of God and his hand withered up, but a Righteous man prayed for him, God forgave and healed the withered hand.**
- **2 Kings 4:32–35 (ESV)- The Righteous man Elisha stretched out his body over a dead boy and the boy was raised to life.**
- **Job 42:7–9 (ESV) - God’s anger burned against Job’s friends and he would not listen to them... but when the Righteous man Job prayed God forgave them.**

The Fervent Prayers of a Righteous man availeth much.

The longer I live, the more I am convinced there is a direct correlation between the holiness of one’s life and the power of one’s prayer.

We know this intuitively that i why when we really need an answer, we desire very godly people to pray with us.