

S.N. Jul 25, 79 P.M. W.K.H.L

## "HINDRANCES TO PRAYER"

I Peter 3:7

Now we come to understand that prayers may be hindered. In fact, they may be hindered in (more ways) than one. And most important, as we come face to face with the fact, that too many of our prayers go unanswered by our own admission. The promises of God that he has made, are not fulfilled.

When a business man discovered that his business was running at a loss, he takes stock. He draws up a balance sheet and he discovers why he has made no profit. And takes steps to remedy it.

Shall we be (unwise) in our spiritual accounting and not sit down and honestly face the question. Some of our prayers have failed. Do we say perhaps, it was not God's will after all. How do we account--surely, there is something wonderful because in the record of the Bible, man has been calling on God for many years.

Andrew Murray wrote, in relation to his people, God works.— Only in answer to their prayers. "This is an amazing, sobering, truth."

James, by the Holy Spirit writes, "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Only a little — no, but much! We are encouraged. As we read the revival in Wales. That when praying and preaching was done, the people were so stirred that they crowded in the church after church. And remained until 4 o'clock in the morning. The flame spread from one district to another district throughout

South Wales, with swiftness. And soon scores of towns were shaken by the power of God. Would you like to see a fire like that and see a fire like that burning over the land.

We believe, and we say, that we need that as individuals. We need that in our homes. In our churches, in our pulpits, in our Sunday School classes, in our nation. We need what God can do.

Dr. Jowett, "I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach". Evans Roberts, "secret intercessors make it possible for public laborers to do their work and win. They do as much for the Lord's cause - like Moses on the mount. As they do to fight like Joshua in the thick of battle. Prayer is based on God's word. It is the only weapon man can use today to touch Heaven."

Myers said, "God's greatest agency for winning men back to himself, is the prayer of other men". "How few ever enter into a practical power of prayer. It is the mightiest force on this universe."

Chadwick said, "souls may be lost in good works, as surely as in evil ways." The one concern of the Devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies. And prayerless religion. He laughs at our toys. He mocks at our wisdom. But he trembles when we pray."

One great man said every step in the progress of missions is directly

Another said, prayer is like opening a shining gate, to the great ocean.  
And our little channel when the sea gathers up, flows in at full tide.

Judson said, I never prayed sincerely for anything but it came. Sometime,  
no matter how distant the day - somehow, in some shape it came."

Jowett said to the people, (you have one talent. You can help) the man endowed  
with ten.

The slave co-operated with the Apostle Paul. Obscure folks can be in mighty  
fellowship with the great by prayer, I can share the work of the preacher. In prayer,  
I can visit a lonely missionary. In prayer, I can visit in the cabinets of statesmen.  
What a privilege is mine. Also what a solemn duty. How often do you use this power.  
How often do you journey in this way.

But as we consider the great truth of prayer, we see that Satan is at work.  
And there are (many many) things that hinder our prayers.

## I. DISOBEDIENCE

Zach. 7:13 - Therefore, it has come to pass, as he cried. And they would not  
hear, so they cried, and I would not hear. Saith the Lord of hosts. "God had  
answered prayer for those who were his obedient servants. God heard and answered

Abraham's prayers. And Abraham was ready and willing to do what God wanted done.

Gen. 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed. "Because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Joshua was obedient and Jericho fell. Because he followed the directions of God.

John wrote, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments. And do those things that are pleasing in his sight. "I John 3:22.

If we are disobedient to God, we cannot pray. For the spirit of disobedience is the spirit of disloyalty. And that kind of spirit never finds acceptance. Such prayer has no promise of reward. Prov. 28:9 He that turneth away his ear, from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be abomination.

God always hears the obedient. But never does God hear the rebellious. "And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea, when you make many prayers I will not hear. Isa. 1:15. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land, but if you refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword. But the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Isa. 1:19-20.

A disobedient spirit can claim nothing from God. If we do not want to obey, we will be powerless in prayer.

"If thou turn to the Lord Thy God and shall be obedient unto his voice,  
he will not forsake thee. Deut. 4:30-31.

Jeremiah pleaded with his people, obey the voice of the Lord Thy God.  
Chapter 26:13.

King Saul disobeyed God and protested to Samuel that he had done all that  
God had asked. I Sam. 15:21. But the people took to spoil - the sheep and oxen.  
The chief of things which should have been utterly destroyed. The sacrifice unto  
the God.

Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices  
as in obeying the voice of the Lord. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.  
And to harken than the fat of rams. I Sam. 15:22.

The Bible lays stress in obedience to prayer. And the heart that obeys gets  
results. But hindrance is in the way of disobedience. I John 3:22. Whatsoever  
we ask, we shall receive of Him. Because we keep his commandments and do those  
things that are pleasing in his sight.

## II. UNBELIEF

This is another thing - but without faith it is impossible to please him.

"For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder to

them that diligently seek Him. Heb. 11:6. James 1:6-7. Therefore, I say unto you, whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that you receive them and you shall have them. Mark 11:24.

Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Eph. 3:20. When we call, we must call in faith. We must have faith to take hold of God and wait on God. Unbelief leaves us like a crippled bird with a broken wing. We flutter near the earth. Unbelief breaks our prayers and cuts them off.

Perhaps our faith is resting in the wrong basis. We may put our faith in prayer but we are commanded in Mark 11:22, have faith in God. If our faith is directed toward a response to God, to whom we pray, we will not stumble. You know the motto. It is not prayer that changes things, but it is God, that changes things. And sometimes we put our faith in faith, and not in God. Now my faith is small. Your faith is small. And I can't believe that God will do it all. But without faith, it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. Faith is something like eye sight. Now you just can't see eye sight. Have you ever seen eye sight? There is no such thing as faith in something that does not exist. But we must put faith in God. And our unbelief and despair will defeat us. Heb. 11:6. It is absolute - without faith it is impossible to please God. And we must come believing that God is the rewarder of them that seek him.

God invites us to unload our burdens at his feet. Our God loves to be trusted. You remember James exhorts us that we should not doubt. Or else we'll be like the sea driven and tossed by the wind. James 1:6-7

You know how a wave is - it never stays in the same place for two seconds. It is unstable. It is always moving. So it is with the doubting, unbelieving man. Such a man puts his burdens and problems in God's hands, one minute. He takes it back out again the next minute - only to repeat the futile process. He believes one minute and he doubts the next minute. The Psalmist offers confidence - when he says, commit and leave committed. Your way to the Lord. Trust also, and keep on trusting in Him, and he will do it. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Psalm 37:5, 7.

### III. SIN

This is another reason why we find that our prayers are hindered. And blocked. Because of some sin which we have cherished. In our hearts - and we cling to this sin. If I regard iniquity in my heart - the Lord will not hear me. Psalm 66:18. That means, regard given to what is sinful in God's sight.

So long as there is any (known) sin or sins of any form, in our hearts, a sin or sins which we have not forsaken - such will act as a barrier between us and God. Whether the sin is just one - or whether it is many.

John Mott asked, has God ever been known to hear a prayer from a heart in which any form of iniquity was deliberately handled, fostered, or tolerated?

F. B. Myers said, repeatedly, that the act of consecration was cancelled by one reserve. But to give 99/100 and to withhold 1/100 was to undo the hold.

And that in one piece of reserve, the self life entrenched itself.

This servant of Christ went on to say that the electrician cannot charge your body with electricity with a single thread connected to the ground. It will break the (completeness) of your insulation.

That a physician cannot undertake your care while you conceal the matter of your symptoms. We need to learn that God will not answer our prayers as long as there is one point of controversy between us and him. God's concern about us as we read in the Scripture. That (if) our heart has secret sympathy with sin, it will short circuit our prayers.

Psalm 66:18 - it is so true, it is important to notice the word regard does not merely mean to look on - but it means to hold on too. The holding onto sin in the heart. Certainly God has heard and given heed to the voice of my prayer. Thus, we need to make a clean break with sin.

#### IV. MARITAL DISCORD

This brings us perhaps to one of the basic understandings of what is wrong in the home. The possibility is plainly visualized here. I Peter 3:1-7. It is a passage which deals with the relationship between husband and wife. It begins, you wives be submissive to your own husband. And it (concludes) you husbands, likewise live with your wives in an understanding way as a weaker vessel. That your prayers may not be hindered.



When a husband or a wife or one in heart and purpose, then the Scripture says there will be the law of love. But when there is lacking of that mutual understanding, the couple becomes a casualty.

When a growing family has every evidence of the lack of harmony, we the parents, there is a tragic hindrance, in the prayers that go up.

Fussing and quarrelling at home hinders your prayer life. When a man marrys - God says he is to love his wife. Even as Christ loved the church. And gave himself for it. Eph. 5:25.

When a woman marrys, God says she must see to it that she reverences her husband. Eph. 5:33.

And both of these are to be followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath also loved us and given himself for an offering and a sacrifice unto God. Eph. 5:1-2.

In marriage (men and women), join their hearts, their hands, and they become one flesh.

So many husband and wives are breaking their promises. God says this hinders prayer. When there is domestic discord, we have wrong attitudes on the part of parents. Or children toward parents. Hindrances toward prayer are certain.

Eph. 6:1-4 - Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.  
Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the First Commandment with a promise.

The general principle is the relationship one to another. The individual relationship to God. When one comes to worship, and remembers the broken relationship, that person should leave his gift before the altar.

Now Peter is singling out the Christian relationship between husband and wife. And this has special attention of husband and wife relationship. When things are wrong in that relationship - prayers are hindered.

And an individual is related to another individual in the family. And this reveals the spiritual state. Each owes duty to the others. We are bound together by law. Husbands are not to take advantage of their wives. And a Christian husband and wife are to be one in holy bonds. So Peter had both partners in view when he writes in Chapter 3:1, you wives. V. 7, you husbands. Now the mistreatment of wife by the husband has the same problem - (it hinders prayer.)

And of course, this when one searches his conscience, in prayer can a man pray having mistreated or abused his wife. Not in that moment by being confronted by his sin. Can a woman pray, who has been embittered by the treatment she has received from her husband - the wrongness in his heart. Paul referred to this in I Cor. 7:3-5. He said, that a husband ought to fulfill his duties. And that a wife ought to fulfill her duty to her husband. Peter's abomination here is positive. He says it is not possible to carry on family prayers with his Jewish

background, the offering of prayers in his home in the family circle. It was deeply rooted in the Old Testament teaching. And brought into the Christian family life.

A strained relationship between husband and wife created an unpleasant situation. And what a tremendous truth he has shared with us. Truly Christian married life, God has said through prayer, a strained relationship between husband and wife brought about a hindrance to prayer.

Peter said, the end of all things is at hand. Be of sound judgement, of sober spirit, for the purpose of prayer. I Peter 4:7. They were to live in the expectant return of Christ and be sound in their judgement. And Peter makes an appeal here saying that prayer comes from a proper connection. And there is a proper connection between prayer and the daily habits of life. The habits of life, either keep us from prayer or spoil our prayers, or to hinder he says our habits of life.

V. [PRIDE]

Job 35:12-13 - There they cry but none giveth answer. Because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not hear vanity. Neither will the Almighty regard it. Men must humble themselves before God. They cannot come into God's presence and strut about as a peacock and expect God to hear.

Gen. 18:27. Abraham, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord. Which am

There are many verses upon this - Isa. 57:15. For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabited eternity. I dwell in the high and the holy place - with him also that is a contrite and a humble spirit. To revive the spirit of the humble and the contrite one.

Psalm 34:18 - The Lord is ~~not~~ unto them that are of a broken spirit or heart, as say of such as be with a contrite spirit.

Luke 14:14 - And thou shall be blessed that they cannot recompense thee. Thou shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Not withstanding Hezekiah humbled himself from the pride of his heart. So that the wrath of the Lord came not upon him, in the days of Hezekiah. 2 Chron. 32:26.

God resisted the crowd and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore to the mighty hand of God. That he may exhalt you in due time. I Peter 5:5-6.

2 Chron. 12:5, 7 - 12 - On other Scriptures of hindrances on matters of pride.

## VI. UNFORGIVENESS

Matt. 6:14-15 - If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you forgive men not their trespasses, neither will the Father forgive your trespasses.

How little and trifling sins have done others against us, in comparison to the terrible way that we have treated God. Then so great is our sin toward God which needs forgiveness. We remember in the parable said - pay what thou owest. Unforgiveness, or holding grudges, or emmity against others may seem to be a very respectable sin. People who would never get drunk, or gamble, or commit other sins - are guilty of this sin. And yet they expect their prayers to prevail. Jesus said to Peter, I say unto Thee, until seven times - but until 70 times 7 - Matt. 18:22.

I John 3:13 - Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. How can a murderer prevail in prayer. How can one who turns a cold shoulder to his fellow man expect God to offer him a warm heart. If a man says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar. I John 4:20.

Probably no one could estimate the hindrance done to prayers by the matter of unforgiveness. Now so many people who (entertain are bitter) And unforgiving spirit. And Jesus handled this thing in a wonderful way, he said in Matt. 11:24-25, whenever you stand praying, forgive. If you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in Heaven may forgive you, your trespasses.

These are sober words and should convince us of our folly. If we expect answers to our prayers - how can we cherish unforgiving spirits.

I must forgive, if I fail to do so I am unable to pray.

I prayed for the conversion of an erroring son. But all the time he seemed to go from bad to worse. During those years, I had a bad feeling in my heart towards a brother I felt had previously wronged me. I insisted upon repairing the situation which he refused to do. Feeling my cause was just, I held this against him. I would not overlook it. At last, I realized that this thing was hindering my prayer. I judged it before God and freely forgave. Oh, the liberty, as I then turned to God about my son. Soon, I heard with joy, his conversion. Though far from home, he was brought under the power of the Gospel = led to Christ. An unforgiving spirit explains why thousands of petitions are apparently unheeded.

## VII. SELFISHNESS

Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss. That you may consume it upon your lust. James 4:3. Who so stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself. But shall not be heard. Prov. 21:13. Selfishness is the insanity of existence. It is abnormal to life, and of course, Mary in great unselfishness poured the precious ointment on Jesus' feet. And wiped them with her hair. Surely Mary had power in prayer. The widow who cast her two mites and all she had into the treasury. Certainly, when she called unto God - God answered. The widow who shared her measure of oil and meal with the God's prophet. Did not walk in a prayer path that was weak. Surely Mary, Martha and Lazarus who shared their home in love and hospitality with the Master. Did not have their prayers hindered. Without a doubt, when Peter and John had no silver or gold to give, they had something in the name of Jesus. Surely the power was not hindered.

The man who has some of God's money in his pocket can never get a liberal answer from God. "But my God shall supply all of your need according to his riches in glory

This promise was made in connection with the church. Can one who has ears that are so deaf to the cry of the needy expect to have the ear of God attend to their prayers. Those who live lives and withhold from the church that they are members of. How can God openly bestow his blessing upon them. With all the selfishness, he cannot expect to be a mighty man of prayer. Jonathan Edwards said if you seek in the spirit of selfishness to grasp all as your own, you shall lose all. We need less and less of self each day. And more and more of God.

### VIII. IDOLATRY

This is a matter in which I John 5:21 says little children, keep yourselves from idols. Ezekial knew that there were those who set up false Gods and shrines. He speaks to the people about the idols in their hearts. "Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts. And put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faith. Shall be I require of by them." Eze. 14:3.

Eze. 14:4 - Therefore shall speak unto them and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God. Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idol in his heart, putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I, the Lord, will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols.

We need to hear this thing applied to our own lives as the appeal was made to Jacob in the day of old at Bethel. Then Jacob said this is the household and the place where God meets. And I want all of my family surrounded around to put away the strange Gods that are among you. And to be clean and be changed of garments. And let us arise and go up to Bethel. And I will make an altar unto God who answered me in the

day of my distress. And was with me in the way which I went. Gen. 35:2-3.

When God called Jacob back to Bethel, he found it necessary to cleanse his house of strange Gods. Now as we are told, about this, an idol is anything that takes the place that God ought to have. It takes a place in our hearts - whatever takes the place of God's name or God's truth. Whatever causes us to be worldly minded - love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world - the love of the Father is not in him. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh. The lust of the eye, the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. I John 2:15-16, Naturally your prayers are going to be hindered. God tells us that idolatry is something that we need to put to death.

Money is an idol to many people. Some people make this their first God and their first idol.

Some people, their home has become an idol. Some homes are so protected that a man cannot even come in the door with his shoes on. No matter how fine a place it is, it ought not to take the place of God in our affection.

There are some people who put their folks first. What a blessing a family is - no matter what the duties are that we owe each other. The highest place in your life ought to be God. This is another hindrance. If you practice idolatry.

Now above all, we need to know that God has hatred against these things. You remember the Lord said about the woman who was a sinner, but anointed his feet in the Pharisees house - for this reason, I say to you, her sins which are many have been



forgiven. For she loved much. But he who hath forgiven little - loves little.  
Luke 7:47.

So God has to have our hearts, our homes, and we have to give our hospitality to him.

I think right along this line - the proper use of our gifts. The special gifts that God gives us. The spiritual endowment that God has given you and has enabled you to discharge your duties. And I think gifted Christians who are not using their gifts but are letting them be wasted, you are simply getting in to the place of hindering your prayers.

There is nothing, as Spurgeon says, like iniquity harbored in the breast. Prayer, to be effective, must be honest and not hypocritical. It must be genuine when we pray.

Isaiah's day, he said, so when you spread out your hands in prayer. I will hide my eyes from you. Yes, even though you multiply prayers. Your hands are full of bloodshed. Isa. 1:15.

Job 16:16-17, he said my face is covered with weeping, and deep darkness is on my eye lids. Although there is no violence in my hands and my prayer is pure. Prayer must be pure to be effective. It must be clean or else it will be doomed. Your conscience must be free of idolatry. James wrote, that the effective prayer of the righteous man accomplishes much. He illustrated this with Elijah. He prayed and it rained not. For a space of 3 years and 6 months. He prayed again and the sky

poured forth water, on the earth.

So in our disobedience, we must come and see that idolatry is something that hinders prayer.

### IX. UNPAID DEBTS

Sometimes people in honesty make debts and cannot pay them. Sometimes people make debts and can pay those debts --yet, they will not pay them.

If men expect their prayers to be prevailing, they must be honest enough to pay their just debts.

A debt you can pay, and you do not do what God requires about it, every prayer you offer God is hindered by your dishonesty.

Zacchaeus was converted. We have his record. Luke 19:8. He stood before the Lord and said, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation I will restore him four fold.

We have the record of the jailer at Phillippi. He did all that he could to right the wrong, that he had done to Paul and Silas. He took them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes, and was baptized. He and all those straightway. And when he had brought them into the house, he set them before meat and rejoiced. And believing in God with all his heart. Acts 18:33.

Courtland Myers told a story about a Christian merchant in Boston many years ago. He was a fish dealer. He had two other fish dealers - and they all put their money into one combination. All the cod fish business in Boston harbor. And thus, they controlled the market. The Christian man on his knees at the family altar tries to pray. He stumbles, he mumbles, he read how many poor people could not buy cod fish because of the high price. But were forced into the place of want and suffering. The cod fish choked his prayer channel. He told his partner in the cod fish corner, that he was through. He said, when I was on my knees in prayer, a whole mountain of cod fish rose up between me and Heaven. I could not even see God. I would not let all the cod fish in the Atlantic Ocean stop me from praying.

Do you know much of our hindrance in prayer - much more could be said than what we had mentioned. But I trust what we have said has touched your heart. In the words of Hosea, return unto the Lord Thy God, take with you words, and turn with the Lord and say unto him - take away all iniquity. And receive us graciously. Hosea 14:1-2. And then your experience will be that as put forth in the word of God - Hosea 14:4-5. I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely. For mine anger is turned away from him. I will be with you as unto Israel. I will grow as the lily and cast forth his roots. We need to remember these words. And this truth which we have shared here together.

There was a story about Dr. Gambrell. There was a whole church that was having problems. And of course, they had fallen upon difficult days. The Pastor has resigned and the church is about to be split. And he was invited to come and preside over a meeting that they were to have. It was on a Wednesday night and they were having prayer meeting. And the situation was difficult. People were angry from the opening prayer. Dr. Gambrell acted as the moderator. No one, he says, within the congregation was acceptable to moderate. So he was an outsider. He surprised everyone

by saying, bring your Pastor's high backed chair. And put it down here at the front and in the center. And then he reminded the congregation how much the Lord loved the church. And what a price he had paid for the church and for the people. Next he reminded them that the Lord was to be present. He was in the midst of his people. Following this, Dr. Gambrell instructed them, if anyone wishes to address the assembly, that person must come forward to the front and stand beside that empty chair. As a visible reminder of the presence of the unseen Lord. Anything that he said, or was said - was to be said as if in the presence of the Lord himself.

The story has it that the tense situation was miraculously changed. Soon he was able to call the church into a prayer meeting. And save the fellowship. It brought a revival of considerable strength. Prayers can be hindered both, because God will not answer our prayers. Hearts are not right. And also, when our hearts are not right, we do not pray.

And men every place - pray lifting up holy hands. I Tim. 2:8.

Dr. Lee once told the story of a woman who came to see him early one morning. She was gaudy - dressed, high rouged and her attire was crown with an artificial white fur piece. The woman told him that on the previous Sunday evening, she had stood outside the church and had heard him preach. And said that Christ would accept a surrendered desert. "My life is a desert". Will Christ accept me, where upon he assured her of Christ's loving concern - and he led her to accept Christ as her Saviour. She left Dr. Lee's study by the back door. As she went directly out, she went by the garbage can. She lifted the lid, dropped the white fur piece in the can and slammed down the lid. There are some things, that Paul said, we ought to deposit in the spiritual (garbage) can. So that we might not be unworthy as

Christians. And therefore, if our prayers are to be unhindered, we must deposit some of these things that we have discussed here. Disobedience, sin, unbelief, marital problems, pride, unforgiving spirit, selfishness, idolatry, unpaid debts, and on and on. Make it right with God.