

PRAYER BLOCKERS

Without prayer, our life in Christ is nothing. The Apostle Paul instructs us, "...but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (**Philippians 4:6b**).

Prayer is simply communicating with God, most often by verbally speaking out requests and petitions, giving Him thanksgiving and worship, and coming to Him with confession of sin. We should pray often; and in fact, more than that: "pray without ceasing," according to **1 Thessalonians 5:17**.

Are there times when God will *not* listen to our prayers? Actually, yes. According to Scripture, there are numerous things that will hinder our prayers from being answered.

I've outlined **10 different items below that will block our prayers to God** from being answered and our requests granted.

1. Praying to God Without Going Through His Son, Jesus Christ.

There's no other way of getting around this. You *must* go to God the Father through Christ. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; *no one comes to the Father but through Me.*'" – **John 14:6**.

Since sin in the human heart separates us from God, we need a way to be declared righteous and blameless by God. That Way is the Lord Jesus Christ: "Having been declared righteous, then, by faith, we have peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ." – **Romans 5:1**

Salvation and reconciliation with God come through Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection, and we must personally believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord in order to receive it.

2. Praying While Ignoring Scripture

Proverbs 28:9 states, “if one turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer is an abomination.” God’s Word and instruction (referred in the Old Testament books as the Law) is an absolute must to listen to and adhere to. Not doing so and blatantly ignoring the clear command of the Bible will make God equate our prayers to Him to sin!

1 John 3:22 reinforces this by saying, “and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things which are pleasing in His sight.”

3. Praying to Impress Others

Don’t pray to publicly draw attention to yourself, by trying to make a spectacle and show others how religious and close to God you supposedly are. Don’t litter your speech to our Creator with many huge, lofty-sounding words.

Instead, look to present your petitions to God in private. Use simple, clear-cut language that is sincere, honest and comes from the heart.

This is all based on what Jesus commanded in **Matthew 6:5-8** – “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

4. Praying While Mistreating Your Wife

1 Peter 3:7 directs us married men that even though our wives must submit to us, we in return need to give complete love, honor and respect to our spouses: “You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way...and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

5. Praying with Unconfessed Sin of Which You Refuse to Repent

Do you have bad, sinful habits that deep down you love and refuse to repent of? God will not listen to your prayers: “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.” – **Psalms 66:18 – 19**

6. Praying with Unforgiveness in Your Heart

We’ve all been there. Someone has done us wrong, and we’re left hurt, bitter, betrayed, broken and/or angry.

As tough as it is, you’ve got to forgive them. Our Lord Jesus explained this further:

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” – **Mark 11:25-26**

7. Praying While Ignoring the Poor

Showing charity to our less-fortunate brothers and sisters can hinder prayer. **Proverbs 21:13** asserts, “he who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.”

8. Prayers Not Prayed

The next three are from the Book of James.

For the first one, it is ridiculously elementary: “You do not have because you do not ask.” (**James 4:2**)

9. Praying With Selfish or Lustful Motives

James 4:3 informs us, “you ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” Make sure you don’t ask to satisfy a lustful or selfish heart that only focuses on the pleasures of life. Instead, see that your prayers are backed up by pure motives that line up with God’s will for your life. **1 John 5:14** states, “this is the confidence we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

10. Praying With a Doubting Heart

The last bit of advice from the Apostle James is a big one: do not ask while still having unbelief. Instead, believe with bold faith that God will come through! **James 1:6-8** articulates, “but he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one you doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”