

# Why Our Prayers Aren't Answered

by Al Whittinghill

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*Our prayers aren't answered because we're not living a holy and righteous life, and we need to deal with any sin or unrepented issues in our lives.*

**Duration:** 55:42

**Scripture:** Proverbs 14:14, Proverbs 21:13, Matthew 6:33, Luke 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, Hebrews 10:35

**Topics:** "Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not ignoring the cry of the poor, as it can have consequences for oneself. The preacher suggests that God may be trying to communicate through someone in need, and by helping them, one becomes a channel of God's provision. The preacher acknowledges that Jesus did not meet every need, but highlights the importance of not walking by the needs around us. The sermon also references the story of Daniel, who fasted and prayed for three weeks before receiving a vision from God. The preacher emphasizes the need for repentance and standing upright before God. Additionally, the sermon mentions the story of Joshua and the defeat at Ai, where God reveals that Israel has sinned and transgressed the covenant. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being on God's side rather than assuming God is on our side.

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## Transcript

Well, we've seen prayer is not just a good idea, it's God's plan. It is God's plan. It's the lifeblood of the soul for the Christian.

Just as blood is the life for your body, the life of the flesh is in the blood, so prayer is the life of your very soul. It's the lifeblood. And in the light of who God is and all that he's promised and what he wants for you and answered prayer should be the most natural thing in the universe.

It should be like breathing, answered prayer. Every Christian ought to be able to write a volume about answered prayers specifically. You know, most of us in this room believe that God answers prayer or you wouldn't be here.

You have a hope of that or maybe it's a vague thing, but how many really specifically can say, as we pointed out at lunch today, here are five specific things I know God has answered and he answers prayers. Here they are. We would say he answers prayers, but we're not experiencing what he died to give us.

You see, unanswered prayers should make red flags in the life of every Christian, unanswered prayer who were not getting answers to prayer. We need to know the problem is with us, not with God. Nobody wants to answer prayer more than God wants to answer prayer.

I mean, he wants he wants answers. He's not reluctant. And when we have a situation in our life where we are not seeing our prayers answered, it should be the believers most urgent call to self-examination.

It's an amazing thing. The Bible promises that when we're right with God, God always answers prayer. Just listen to these promises of the Lord Jesus, as if it was the first time you ever heard that this is God promises.

Now I'm talking about God who cannot lie promising. Listen to this. All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive whatsoever you shall ask the father in my name.

He will give it to you. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you can ask whatever you will. Literally, you can demand as you do what you will and God will generate it unto you.

That's what it means. It's creative. Prayer is creative and awesome power.

If two of you shall agree on Earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father. This is the confident and bold assurance that we have in him that if we ask anything according to his will, we know he hears us whatever we ask. And if we know this, that he hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we've asked of him.

He says everyone that asks receives. That's Jesus word to us. Call upon me and I will answer you and I will show you great and mighty or awesome things that you have never, never dreamed of before.

Ask of me, he says in Psalm two, and I will give to you the nations and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession, because you see, we're joint heirs with Christ. He says, I can break every yoke. It's God's anointing that will break every yoke.

I will set you free, not just free, but free indeed. If you continue in my word and don't pull back and don't hold back. You see, God says when we're right with him, answered prayers are normal.

It's as natural as breathing. Now there's some facts about the way that God answers prayers that we're going to just quickly cover for a moment, and then we're going to look at some other things. God, when he answers prayers, he often answers very, very quickly.

In fact, many times it was, it says in Isaiah chapter sixty five, listen to what he says in Isaiah sixty five verse twenty four, and it will come to pass that before they call, I will answer and while they're yet speaking, I will hear before they call. Sometimes the answer is extremely quickly, even before you even call on him. The answer is they're knocking on your door.

That's one thing about prayer. But and another thing about prayer is God usually says yes, he usually says yes. Second Corinthians chapter one verse twenty.

Listen to this. It says chapter one verse twenty for all the promises of God in him are yes and in him are a man under the glory of God by us. All God's promises are yes and a man in Christ.

This is normal thing. Yes, a man by us to the glory of God. So he often he answers very quickly.

Many times he answers. Usually says yes, he's a good God. Thirdly, he usually answers big.

He answers big. And in Ephesians chapter three verse twenty, it says this now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, this power that works in us. And that's the according to that God can do all that's in his great heart.

Remember, he couldn't do many mighty works in his own city because they knew him in the flesh too well. They were familiar with him. Maybe kind of like going to church all the time, familiar with the things of God, but don't know the power beneath the surface, blinding us to what the awesome newness could be.

You're so familiar with the way you've always been with Christ that you're being robbed of what he wants you to be. That's the way I feel many times. I said, Lord, don't let me stay the same.

God deliver me from the passive contentment in you. He answers big. He's not poor.

He's not stingy. He's not reluctant. Praise the Lord.

I got him in. He sometimes says no. That's another thing about prayer.

Thank God. He says no. Sometimes praise God for unanswered prayer in the sense of him saying no, because you see life like a checkerboard or a chessboard and he considers every piece.

He knows everything about every piece and every move, how it affects the whole board. And he is working all things together for good for you and me and each person that loves him and is called according to his will. And I'm just one little palm down here and I can't see even how this thing over here affects the rest.

But he and his heavenly wisdom and thought can see it all, not only from just a few moments in this game of life, but this whole chessboard of history all at once. And he's not even confused. He's all wise.

He sometimes says no. As I said, he said to Paul, he he asked the Lord. It says more than once in Second Corinthians, chapter twelve, verse eight and nine.

The Lord is asked by Paul. He said he said he was seeking the Lord three times that this affliction might depart from me. And the Lord said to him, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect and weakness.

He said no to Paul. He definitely said no. And number five, he sometimes says not yet.

He sometimes says not yet. In Hebrews, chapter ten, verse thirty five, God may give you a promise and you may have to wait upon the Lord. Ten thirty five says you have cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which has a great repayment of reward.

You have need of endurance after you've done God's will. You receive the promise after you've obeyed God and learned how to appreciate what he's going to give you. He enlarges your desire.

Then you'll appreciate in fullness what he has for you. Great things should be greatly desired. He often makes us wait for them.

My son says, Daddy, could I have a razor? And I said, well, you know, I'm afraid to give you a raise. You might cut your neck off. The thought is genuine, but the danger is real and God keeps back real beautiful, powerful things until we are ready and responsible and walking where we can be in a sense, trustworthy

stewards and faithful so we don't destroy those around us and our own selves as well by treating godly things perilously as we so often do.

Six, he often answers in a way we never expected. It says that his thoughts are not our thoughts and his ways are not our ways. His ways and his answers are so much higher than ours.

They're like the stars in outer space compared to a grain of sand down here higher than the earth. You see, when there's no answer to our prayers, we need to have a self-examination. We need to, like Job, say, Lord, search me and what I don't see, show me.

And if I've done iniquity, I'll do it no more. This is not just a passing matter. This is not just a take it or leave it thing.

This is very, very serious when we're not seeing prayers answered. God wants to bless our prayers. But if we expect God to bring us into a life of prevailing and overcoming prayer, we need to understand that there are conditions our lives pray, not just our lips.

And that's what God wants to do this weekend. He wants to bring us into a whole new dimension. I mean, you think about what your life could be.

Forget your resources or your lack of them on yourself. Forget your talents or your lack of them. Forget your understanding or your lack of it.

And look at God and trust him as a child to fulfill his promises. And if we expect him to answer prayer, we've got to prepare our hearts. It says in Hosea, break up your fallow ground.

It's time to seek the Lord until he comes and rains righteousness upon us. You know what fallow ground is. It's ground that has had activity work, but it's been allowed to be passive and lay idle.

And maybe it's been plowed. Maybe you've been here, you've been plowed before you've been convicted. God has spoken to you in the past, in your church or through a friend, and you've been broken.

But you see, there's not been any good seed. So you haven't taken the word seriously and acted upon it. And so the ground that's been plowed has become hard and it's even worse than before the plowing, because you have to come through with iron rods and break those clods up to make it unfallowed ground.

Break up your fallow ground. It's time to seek the Lord. So to yourselves in righteousness, put God's word in and act on it.

God will send the rain in due season. Draw near to God, we said, with a true heart. Draw near to God, says James, and he will draw near to you, be afflicted, mourn and let your joy be turned to heaviness.

Prepare your heart and seek him. The preparations of the heart, it says in Proverbs 16, one, the preparations of the heart belongs man. But the answer is from the Lord.

We, as John the Baptist exhorted, are to prepare the way of the Lord, to make a landing strip for God's great work, to prepare the house, set it in order for the king to come and reside, set the furniture, prepare the table. God looks on the heart and you may have a lot on your head here tonight, but I'll tell you, God is looking at the real issues. There are men in another room praying right now that we won't be camouflaged away by just mental understanding from the real issues of our life that will get down and see that blessed

are the pure in heart.

They shall see God. You know, you can go to church and you can relate to other Christians and you can believe the Bible and you can quote scripture and you can teach Sunday school to a measure and do all these things without the anointing of God. And you can even feel good about it because everybody else is in such a low state that you may be better than a lot of people around you, but you're missing what God has for your wife, for your family and your content to die in the wilderness slowly.

But I'll tell you, God tonight has something more for us. And he says he wants to answer our prayers. Look at First John, Chapter three, First John, Chapter three.

And there's a law here. First John, Chapter three, verse 19. It says this.

Hereby, we know that we are of the truth and we can have assurance in our hearts in his presence. If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and he knows all things. Brother, you've got more wrong.

I've got more wrong in my life than God has ever shown me yet. But you see, if God has shown me things and my heart's condemning me in a sense, convicting me, saying, saying you're wrong about this, God's even greater and there's more to it than meets the eye. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart.

He knows all things beloved. If our heart condemns us not, then we have confidence toward God. Let me tell you, if we have a pure heart, if we're walking in the light that we have and we can say, Lord, as far as I know, I'm right with you and the things you've said, then God says, I'll take care of the rest.

Your whole life is going to be under the anointing of God and I'll show you things in due season, not to torment you, but to conform you to the image of Christ. And then if we have confidence toward God, verse twenty two and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we are keeping his commandments and we are doing those things that are pleasing in his sight. Pleasing in his sight means by faith, because without faith it's impossible to please him.

It's walking in the invisible. It's choosing the imperishable. It's doing the impossible because you look at the things that are not seen.

That's the reality, not the visible things around. So tonight I want to deal with those hindrances to prayer. Why my prayers, why your prayers are not answered if they're not.

And I'm going to give you a list. I'm going to give you a lot of scripture, and I hope that you'll act on these even while you sit here. Brothers, I feel in my spirit that there's a lot at stake for some of you.

You already know what God's saying to you, some of you, and you're making a decision whether you'll die in the wilderness or not. I believe that people not only are brought to life in meetings like this, but some men die in meetings like this. Number one, hindrance to prayer, lack of personal holiness, holiness, not being keeping the rules, but holiness being beyond that, honoring the relationship to God.

And that means, of course, if you love me, keep my commandments, but not because you have to, but because you want to, because there's a godly flow of love and power there, a lack of personal holiness, sin, Harvard, or when God to me as a Christian speaks to me about something with my wife or my

children, I tend to tolerate or sidestep the real issue. And the familiar scripture is Psalm sixty-six, verse 18. Just write it down.

It says, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. If I regard if I tolerate or fondle is the word in the Hebrew, it's a sexual word. If I fondle iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

No exception. You see, these are things that we have uneasiness before God in our life that God has spoken to us. And when we come, it's always back there in the back of our mind.

We may not really have to be in perspective about it, but we're afraid to let God in that area because we're afraid of what he'll do. It's always there making me uneasy and not have confidence before God. And I can't pray in boldness.

I don't have an unveiled face. I'm wearing a mask. I'm covering over.

In fact, that's what it says in Proverbs 28, Proverbs 28, verse nine. It says that whoever turns his ear away from the hearing of God's law, even his prayer becomes an abomination. That is so serious because some people try to make themselves feel better emotionally by prayer.

And you know what the scary thing is that you can that you feel like you're praying. You can go out on Saturday night and so wild oats and come to church on Sunday morning and sing a few hymns and have an emotional release kind of saying, well, God knows I'm only human. And then you can think you're right with God.

But I'm going to tell you what, if you keep confessing the same thing over and over and over again, you're only deceiving yourself and you're mocking God. Proverbs 28, 13, going further, says whoever covers his sins will not prosper. That's God's promise.

He has good and bad promises. Whoever covers his sins will not prosper. I remember the time I was praying and I was preaching in the church of the man that led me to Christ.

And he's he's a different he's kind of a different group than I would normally go in. But he asked me to come in and preach on the cross. And it's a very, very extremely charismatic church.

And I'm not making any statement, but all I'm saying is this, that they they really believe that whatever if you're a child of King, then you can have whatever you want in terms of Cadillacs and anything else prosperity. And I said to them, I say, you can claim prosperity all you want, but I want to say this to you, brother. You can say God's going to prosper the child of God.

But if you are covering your sin, you will not prosper, no matter how much you say you are. If you're covering over things that God is dealing with you, whosoever covers his sin will not prosper. Calvary will never cover what I'm not willing to uncover.

In Luke, chapter 12, verse two, it says that there's coming a day when everything that's covered is going to be open before a billion eyes, brother, everything that you think is secret. Now you're going to find out all along has been an open disgrace in the spirit world. Demons have mocked Jesus Christ because of things I tolerate when God shows me the light on those specific things.

Some people cover sin by religious activity because they feel better. Unjudged sin makes prayer impossible. You see, repentance of that is what God wants tonight.

I'm talking about really dealing with it. I'm talking about to the point of cutting off your hand if you have to. If it offends you, cut it off.

It's better to have it like that than to go the rest of your life maimed and then often to with a with a defiled conscience to meet God and be ashamed at his coming. There's no such thing as a little issue to God. If he has pointed it to you, you may think it's little.

And that's why you haven't dealt with it. You've excused and deceived yourself when God points it out. It is it is serious.

I remember in the book of Joshua, when God had been with him as they marched around Jericho, they were his chosen people and they marched around Jericho and they shouted victoriously and God did a miracle and they were overwhelmed and then in confidence that God was on their side. Let me tell you, God's not on their side. God's not on America's side.

We better be on his side. Later, when he said, are you for us or against us to the Lord Jesus in pre-incarnate form? Are you the man with the captain of the Lord's host of the sword? Are you for us or are you against us? And he said, no, I've come to take over what he said. And here we see Joshua and him going out in confidence against a little smaller folk called A.I. and they are put to flight before the Lord's enemies.

They they have a big army and they're put to flight before a smaller force. And it blows Joshua's mind and he goes before God in prayer and Joshua, chapter seven, verse eight, and says, oh, Lord, what should I say when Israel turns her back before her enemies? In other words, it's a disgrace. God, what can we do? It sounds great.

Verse ten, the Lord said to Joshua, get up, Joshua. Why are you lying on your face? You know, I think a great message that would really get people's attention would be times when prayer is sin. That's what God's saying to him, Joshua, are you doing praying religiously to me? He says right here, Israel has sinned.

They've transgressed the covenant that I commanded them. They've taken things from from Jericho and they've stolen and dissembled and they've they've put it in their own things. And he says, listen, I'll not be with you anymore except you deal with it.

That's what he's saying. Why are you moaning? Oh, God, help. And all these sorrowful things.

When God says the problem is right over here, deal with it and I'll be with you. It's as simple as that deal with the thing I pointed out to you. You see, there's another situation in Isaiah when they come to Isaiah in chapter fifty eight and they ask him after he talks about answered prayer, people come and inquire of him.

And in chapter fifty nine of Isaiah, the Lord tells them what's wrong with their his own people. He says to them in Isaiah fifty nine, one behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save. His ear is not heavy that it can't hear you.

Your iniquities have come between you and your God. Your sins have hid his face from you so that he will not hear. God is still the same God he wants to hear.

But you see, then he says your hands and your fingers and your lips and your tongue. No one's calling for justice. Nobody is diligently pleading for truth.

You're trusting in vanity and lies and you make mischief and have iniquity. He goes on and talks about not knowing the way of peace. And he's saying, listen, that's the reason your prayers aren't answered.

That's the reason why you're just content to, I mean, be like the rest of the world who hope and pray. Let me tell you, hoping and praying is not believing and praying now about faith, hope and charity. Hope is always future.

You can hope and pray all you want. God says you have assurance. Believe God in praying faith is a big difference.

Big difference. There's no trouble on God's side. Do you want Jesus Christ in beautiful reality and power enough in your life to give up what God has laid on your heart tonight already in your life? Do you see a lot of people don't they're content to be happy in church or be thought spiritual? We love the role of being a Christian more than the reality of walking with Christ like the Pharisees.

That's exactly what it was. Either prayer will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from prayer, said Dwight Moody or somebody. I think that's who said it.

Anyway, whoever said it, they were right. Flesh and blood didn't reveal it to him. I'll tell you that I heard about a man that was out in war.

He was a king. His horse lost a shoe because of a nail. The shoe was lost and because the shoe was lost, the horse went lame and because the horse went lame, the king went down and because the king went down, he was taken and defeated and the army was gone and the nation fell all because of a nail, a little thing, a little thing that was overlooked.

God looks on the heart. Would you rather feel right or be right with God? Would you rather feel right about how you really think you are or would you rather really be right? Because tonight God wants to deal with some things that won't make you feel very good. Some of you.

It doesn't feel right, as we heard earlier, to choose correctly when everything against you says no, but we deny ourselves and we take up our cross and we say, yes, Lord, I am dead. I'm a dead man. Have it your way.

Be it unto me according to your word, not my will, but thine be done. Right on exactly that point is the crossroads of discipleship. It's easy to obey God as long as you want to and as long as he's blessing you.

But the test of rebellion is when you don't want to and rebellion makes you like a witch in God's sight. It's like the sin of witchcraft and it deserves death. So that's the first thing that's pretty serious.

We can stop right there. God's already given us a truckload to work tonight in prayer before him, but that's just the beginning. Isn't that disgusting? A lack of personal holiness or tolerating sin.

Secondly, unforgiveness. Oh, how great a breach it makes in the spirit. Jesus coupled answered prayer with forgiveness over and over and over again.

Listen to Matthew chapter five about the man that went to the altar. Verse twenty three. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar and remember at that point that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar, leave off your worship and your prayer, he's saying, and go your way.

And the first of all, be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer thy gift. I remember once being at Bayview Glen Church in Toronto, preaching there for several nights, and it's a great church. It's a large Christian Missionary Alliance church that A.W. Tozer preached at and was pastor for years.

I was petrified being there the second night I was there. I talked about bitterness and I noticed at the end of the service that godly, godly man that I admire, the associate pastor, got up and left the meeting. I thought he wasn't feeling well.

The next night after we had that closing that night, the next night at the service, I asked, are there those here who need to give a testimony as to how God is dealing with them? That man stood to his feet and he said last night, God showed me that I was a hypocrite, that I am the associate pastor of this church and trying to reconcile others to God and their brother. And God showed me my own brother that I had written off as just far from God. I haven't spoken to him at any depth in 10 years.

And he's here in the city and I had to leave the meeting and I had to go to his door and knock on his door. And when he came to the door, I was on my knees, he said, and I begged him to forgive me for my unforgiving heart and wrong attitude. And he said, and he began to weep.

He said, and my brother, pull me up. And for the first time in 10 years, my brother and I embraced and I never realized at that moment the hold that I had had on my heart all these many long times. You see, God says to us that forgiveness and prayer go together.

Remember the scripture in Mark 11 that he says, whoever shall say to this mountain be removed and doesn't doubt in his heart, it shall be removed. It'll be just like he like he said to the mountain, God will make it happen. Therefore, I say to you, verse twenty four, whatever things you desire when you pray, believe you receive them and you will receive them.

And when you stand praying like that in splendid faith, it's as if to say forgive if you have ought against any so that your father, which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if you don't forgive, then neither will your father in heaven forgive you your trespasses. And let me tell you, if you don't feel forgiven, you'll never approach God in bold, confident prayer.

You'll always be slinking in saying, oh, God, I really shouldn't be here. But if you know that you're free and you're forgiven and you're forgiving others, as it says, that as he forgave you, so forgive them. Did you deserve forgiveness? Who deserves forgiveness? I don't deserve forgiveness.

God gave me the grace through the blood of Jesus to forgive me. And so I forgive the one who doesn't deserve it, who has wronged me, truly wronged me, even before he repents. I'm to forgive him.

There's some cases that I must wait for him to show an acknowledgment for his discipline sake before the Holy Spirit. But before he calls, I should be willing to answer God. I forgive this man.

I not only forgive him, but I receive him in Jesus name. You see, unforgiveness shuts and bolts the door of prayer. Our father, which art in heaven, holy is your name.

And it goes on and then it says, forgive us as we forgive those who have sinned or trespass against us. God used to me, forgive me in the same measure that I'm willing to meditate to another. Give back to me the awareness of being joyfully forgiven in the same measure that I'm willing to forgive that one who's wronged me the most.

You can't be wrong with man and right with God. You can't be. How can you say you love God and you haven't seen if you don't love your brother whom you have seen? First, John five, it says prejudice, racial prejudice, cultural prejudice, but bad taste in your mouth.

How dare I dislike whom God loves? A root of bitterness cut off. That's what a root is. You chop it off at the surface.

Superficial, passive relationships of peace in the church. But it says, take heed, brother, lest there be in any of you found a root of bitterness springing up in the field, a church splitter, someone that has anger at maybe their parents long gone and they split churches in anger when it doesn't go their way because they have unresolved conflict. And it sprouts up every now and then and poisons everybody else around that.

I'll tell you, you're a grave digger for the Church of God. Unforgiveness. God will never take my request seriously if I don't take his will seriously.

Unforgiveness tonight, have you forgiven everyone, your wife, husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against it, bitter against my wife? Yes, that's what it says. It's easy to become bitter at the woman God's given you to live with if she doesn't, quote, appreciate your magnificent spiritual leadership. It's easy and God makes it so I really believe at times he makes our wife not see things.

So they will have to have the humility to love her, even though she doesn't see how glorious we are. The third thing that will defile your heart, hinder your prayer is pride or vanity, pride or emptiness, vanity in the book of Job. I've just picked various scriptures, but in the book of Job, chapter thirty five, listen to what it says about pride, Job thirty five, verse twelve.

They will cry to me, but no one will answer them because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not hear a false cry of vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. It's just words.

You see, God says pride, whether it's introverted pride that says, oh, I'm so poor, I'm so pathetic. Oh, God, it's so bad. Or whether it's the big pride that says I'm the greatest in the world.

You see, it's either way. It's self-centered and it's introverted or extroverted. What you need to do is quit struggling to get a positive self-image and forget about yourself and start worshiping Christ, because if you get a positive self-image, I'm going to tell you something.

You're believing a lie in my flesh dwells. No good thing. You'll go on being deceived until you let God down.

Actually, you're never holding him up. God knows the proud of far off. He resists the proud, the man praying in that Luke 18, the Pharisee who came into that place and prayed, it says with himself as he and spoke about his prayers went off the ceiling back down.

And here's this public and over here can't even look up to God, beating his breast, saying, God, be propitiated, be merciful to me, a sinner. Let the blood cover me is what he's saying. I'm a sinner.

And God says that Pharisee prayed with himself. The public and went home justified. I'll never forget a friend of mine was reading that a pastor.

And as he was reading that, God made pride disgusting to this man. And he was reading that Luke 18. And he said, God, that is disgusting.

Look at this Pharisee. God. Oh, look at this wonderful public.

And God, thank you that I'm not like that Pharisee. Thank you that I'm not praying like that. Thank you, God, that I'm not like that Pharisee, like the Pharisee said.

Thank you that I'm not like that public. And you see, instead of God, be merciful to me, a sinner, how our pride deceives us a smug. I am spiritual because of a few things in the past.

Pride or vanity will hinder prayer. Deal with it tonight. Brother, may God deal with all of our pride, the kind we know about and the kind we have no idea.

It's like grain in the wood of this pulpit. It's still there. There's enough pride to send us all like a catapult into hell if we got what we deserve in every one of us.

The fourth thing that will hinder prayer is non obedience. Now, I'm not talking about disobedience in this case. I'm talking about non obedience.

That's when we know good. And the God has God has spoken to us, James four, 17, to him who knows to do good and doesn't do it to him, it becomes sin. By that, I'm saying the Holy Spirit whispers to you, you're here and you're stirred, stir your church.

Oh, God, you get a goose bump big enough to hang a hat on. You feel like a mouse is running up and down your leg and back. God, glory.

And you go home and say it's a great men's conference. You're stirred. But you see, you forgot that part of the stirring was when he said, I want you to start tithing.

I want you to start praying with your wife. I want you to start sharing the gospel when it embarrasses you and when you don't have a thing to say, except I love Jesus. I want you to honor your parents.

You see, we forget it. We suppress it. We ignore it.

And you know what? God still said it to me. It doesn't go away. It's back there.

And I know I should. Well, I really ought to pray more. I really should be doing this.

I really need to or something will say. And it's always there. And it's ruining our confidence because we've said no to God.

It's compromise. Compromise is light disregarded. It's when we choose to allow a feeling of controversy to stay put in our hearts and not deal with it.

Some of you may spend the night here at this altar tonight until you can get through the ditches of controversy in your life that you have dug. You've grieved God. You've quenched the spirit.

You've ignored. You've ignored reasonable requests of God of your soul in order to justify yourself. Job justified himself.

And in Chapter 40, verse eight, God is speaking to him and he says, Will you disown all my judgment? Will you condemn me? God says to Job that you can remain righteous. Will you say, God, you're wrong and thus condemn him when he says, You know what I've said to you very clearly. You know exactly what I've said to you.

We excuse ourselves with a hundred things. And God says, Stop doing that. And trust me, I've got to walk in all the light.

I can become a backslider in heart. Proverbs 14, 14 says the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. You see, that means that there was a time I was seeking God with his way.

But now I've let that grow remote and I'm seeking my own way. Well, he said they've all gone their own way. It's iniquity.

It's the sin that cast Adam from the garden. Non diligence, disobedience of not obeying unbelief. How long must he speak to you, brother, about something? The longer you let it go, the more remote it will become.

And the stiller and smaller will be that voice. And you will develop what the Bible calls a hardened heart synonymous with a seared conscience. And whereas you have a scar on your hand where once you were sensitive, now it's dull and you may die in your present state.

I'm not trying to scare you, but you should be. If you're in this situation, you need to be scared. There's a real reason to get to the end of your life.

And see, I've traded it for trinkets for some hussy. I've given over the plan of God. I've been tricked.

You know, I think that one man said he's seen some Christians die and they have been as miserable at that moment of realization that they've missed God's best and perfect will for their life. Sure, they're going to be in his presence and he'll wipe away their tears. But they've traded the high calling of God for the mundane, normal life.

God hadn't called us to a normal life. He's called us to Christ likeness. If you want to be normal, go home.

I'm serious. God's not begging tonight. I'm telling you, God has riches, riches, a treasure chest open.

He says, Come and fill your hands. It's all yours in Christ. There's got to be clean hands.

You can't bring the world's junk and stick fists in there. Got to have open hands, open hands. Another thing that will hinder prayer is idolatry, idolatry.

How can you worship Jesus in the holy of holies when there are idols in the temple of God, your heart, the sanctuary of your being? You know what an idol is in Colossians three, five. It tells us that covetousness is idolatry. I'm not an idolater, Al.

I don't worship statues. Well, maybe you don't worship wood in the form of an animal or something, but do you pattern your life and order your life in order to get a sack of wood shaped like five bedrooms or six bedrooms or whatever bedrooms or maybe a piece of metal shaped with BMW across the front? Nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with it.

Nothing right with it either. No big deal. Double mindedness.

A man can't serve two masters double mindedness. Let not that man think it says that he shall receive anything from the Lord. He won't get the wisdom from above because he's so caught up in holding on to his own ideas.

Jesus must reign without a rival. Whatever takes from my heart, that place that Jesus says is mine, whether it be a relationship. Whether it be a hobby, whether it be a church, whether it be family relationships, I'm not minimizing family or church.

Do you hear what I'm saying? But when God says to me, get up away from your kindred and your inheritance and go into the country that I'll show you like you did, Abraham, leave your father and your inheritance and go. Then, brother, you've got to go. Who are your heroes? Who are who are the people you admire? Who would you like to be like? Are they worthy? What do you want more than anything else in your life? Idolatry, God said, little children have no have nothing to do with idols, flee from idols, take it from the heart.

What agreement does the temple had with idols? Number six thing that will hinder prayer disorder in the home disorder in the home. By that, I'm talking about non harmonious, godly relationships in first Peter, chapter three. It talks about prayer and my relationship to my wife.

It says in first Peter, chapter three, verse seven, these amazing words. And we overlook them and we excuse ourselves, but they're still there tonight. Husbands live with your wives, dwell with them according to knowledge, God's revelation, giving honor to your wife.

She's weaker. God made her that way in many ways. So she'd have to trust the Lord through you, not just your wonderful guidance, but your sacrifice and self-giving.

She's a weaker vessel. You're an heir together of the grace of life. Dwell with him this way so that your prayers are not destroyed.

It means destroyed when we give an occasion to our adversary. He has an occasion at law with us and he comes. We put ourselves under the law and he becomes a antidote, a person that is against us in the law.

And there's no chance of fighting and winning under the law. Are your relationships right with God on Christ like relationships? Disorder in the home, anger, discipline to your children, not teaching your children, not spanking your children, not praying with your wife, all those things we've said, all that stuff. If God is saying if it's not right, if you're not loving her and your children, you can't pray.

Do you love your wife like God says love or do you passively tolerate her? Some of you need to go get on the phone before this night's over. And as a pre foretaste of what will happen when you go home of humility and asking for forgiveness, you need to prepare the way by the phone. Is there something wrong tonight? Another thing that will hinder prayer is selfishness, selfishness.

James, Chapter four, says we have not because we do not ask that is a shame, isn't it? But the next verse is a sham. We ask and we have not because we ask of this because we ask for our own selfishness to consume it on our own desires, using God as a stepping stone for my ends or thinking like he's a cosmic errand boy for my happiness. Jesus is is a supernatural aid to a happy life.

He will help me reach my goals. How much of your prayer centers around yourself or your church or your this or your that we need to get outside and pray out there, out there and God will take care of us if our hearts are right. Another thing that will defile your heart and make you unable to pray is a lack of compassion, a lack of compassion when you are faced all around with need.

Around you and someone here at the conference might have made a need to you that that is well within your power. And God says to you, prodding your heart, I want you to do it. And it says in Proverbs three, verse twenty seven.

Listen to this. It says, withhold not good from them to whom it is due when it's in the power of your hand to do it. Then it says, do not say to your neighbor, go and come again and tomorrow I will give.

And when you have it by you today. Lack of compassion, it goes on in Proverbs twenty one and it says in verse thirteen. Listen to this.

This is awesome. Twenty one, thirteen Proverbs. Whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also will cry himself, but he'll not be heard.

Maybe God's been crying to you through someone right around you and you've not heard because you're their provision and God's saying, I'm trying to let you see how it feels. You're Jesus to that person and you're the channel of God to that person. With what measure you give, it'll be given back to you.

Jesus says in Luke six, be warm and feel brother. God bless you. How can the love of God grow in me? I'm not saying you meet every need.

Jesus, I really don't think Jesus. I think he walked by. I really do.

Some people that weren't healed because they weren't in a place where they could be or would respond to him. But I think that God makes it clear to us there's plenty of needs around to me and we can't walk by them. God can't put the ocean of his love in a thimble of a heart rally just a little bit more.

Brother, we're almost finished. It's getting late. I know you're tired.

Another thing that will hinder prayers and we pray prayers, not in the will of God. We pray prayers, not in the will of God. See, prayer secures God's will.

It doesn't change it. We thank God for some prayers. He hasn't answers.

Israel prayed and demanded from God. It's a dangerous thing to demand from God what we plan for and plead with him for what's not his will. God, give us meat to eat, they said.

And so it says in Psalm one hundred and six, a fearful verse, verse fifteen, Psalm one hundred and six. God gave them their requests, but he sent leanness to their soul. He might give you what you want, brother.

There's two kinds of wrath in the scriptures. One of them is a heated, active, aggressive coming against. And the other is a Greek word that means to fold your arms and sit back like in Romans one to give them over to their own choices.

God may give you what you think you want. Nothing could be worse. Another thing that will hinder prayer.

Of course, this is easy and a knowledge of all of us is unbelief, unbelief, brother. I ask you at the beginning, can you believe God for a new beginning? Can you tonight believe God to leave behind that man that came and go home a different way? A wise man who came and followed his star. And when they saw him, they felt that it worshipped him.

And when they left, they went home another way. It says in the Bible, wise men, they worship Jesus and go home a different way. Are your prayers in faith or are they just an emotional vent? Are you believing God? What are you believing God for? Stay on your knees and unbelief will melt away.

If you're afraid and your knees are shaking, get on them. They'll stop shaking. They'll stop shaking if you trust God.

Unbelief, it says in Hebrews three, 19, talking about the people of God, that God wanted them to enter into all of his will and promise. It says it says in three, 19, we see they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us, therefore, fear.

God's given a promise to us of entering into his rest. We should seem to come short of it through unbelief. Brother, you demand some more sign.

And God says, I want you to trust me. It's a new beginning. The last thing I'll cover.

Hinderance to prayer, of course, I have to say this is warfare, warfare. I love it in the book of Daniel when it says these words in Daniel, chapter 10, verse one to three. Listen, in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belshazzar.

The thing was true, but the time appointed was long. He understood the thing and had understandings in the visions. And it says he, verse three, Daniel 10, I ate no pleasant bread fasting and neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth.

I didn't anoint myself. No bathing until three whole weeks were fulfilled. Then it says, as he prayed, then after three weeks he had a vision, he had a vision and people differ on who he saw, but whoever it was, it got his attention.

He said, when I see God, all of my beauty in me turns to corruption and he begins to repent and weep before God. And then the angel says in verse eleven, he said to me, oh, Daniel, man, greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand on your feet up right now for unto thee I'm sent. And when you had spoken this word, Daniel stood trembling.

Listen to this. This is awesome. Then he said to me, don't be afraid, Daniel, or from the very first day three weeks ago that you set your heart to understand.

That means that you came to the place when you said, I want God no matter what I want to come to myself. I want to know what God's really saying, Daniel, from the first day you set your heart to understand and to chasten yourself before God. Your words were heard.

And now I've come for your words, but the prince of the Kingdom of Persia has withstood me for twenty one days. You see, there's a host of demonic powers that are given to withstand your prayers and my prayers, and they want to thwart prayer. I'm convinced he has a whole legion of dark angels just to come against prayer.

But you know, the good news, God has a legion of good angels as well. And in Hebrews chapter one, verse 13, it talks about angels. He says to the angels, he said, sit at my right hand.

He excuse me. Verse 14, talking about angels, are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who are heirs of salvation? Brother, it may take a time for your answer to get here, but tonight from the first day, the first moment that you began to chasten yourself to justly call yourself what God says you are, he's dealing with you in his presence. You say yes to him.

And that moment God sees your heart under his precious blood as you trust his blood to the glory is that God, despite all that I've covered, it may have been painful for some of you. God is willing to rain righteousness on us and to teach us to pray if we'll prepare our hearts, if we confess our sins. He is faithful, confess not only means to to just admit it, it means to call it what God calls it.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from the unrighteousness that that sin was caused by. All of we've talked about is within reach of all of us tonight. Did you know there's a godly life right there for you from Jesus Christ, just like you receive salvation from the hand of a dying Christ tonight? You can receive complete victory from him, the hand of a living Christ from the throne of God.

But you've got to prepare your heart and be willing to enter a new dimension of seeing the invisible and believing that which his word says he's a gracious father. But he's waiting for his children to repent until he can righteously deal with them in grace and truth answered prayers like a ocean in the heavens. And God wants to it doesn't have a bottom and it doesn't have a shore, a bottomless, shoreless ocean that you can tap into.

But you've got to open the pipe. There's a hindrance there, see, and the reluctance to deal with the hindrance, I just want to say shows us how much we need a savior that rebellion. Who will not be in the kingdom of God? It says a long list, whoremongers, abominable, those who make alive at the head of the list, the fearful and the unbelieving.

Let me tell you, this is serious tonight. A life of prayer has conditions. We may not ignore these conditions and expect God to hear our prayers.

I'm asking you tonight to throw away your inhibitions and to step out with a fresh trust of God. The question is not, does God answer prayer? The question is, have I ever really prayed, really prayed? It's like a river with a dam there. And you come and you say, River, why don't you flow? You're supposed to move.

And he says, I would move if you'd remove the obstruction. You silly human being. Take that piece of rock out in front of me and I'll flow like I was created by God to flow.

And we say, God, spring up a well within my soul. He says, I would remove the obstruction. I've showed you over and over again.

The problem is you just love your sin. I'll tell you something, unanswered prayers, the devil's will for your life. It's the devil's will for your life.

Don't accept it. Don't live with it. Blessed are the pure in heart.

If I give this up, I'll just die. We'll just die then, brother. Got to be with Jesus.

You'd be better off. What a privilege to be an ambassador of Christ, to live on Earth every day like it's your last and to be able to look in the mirror and say, thank God, my soul is cleaned by the blood of the Lamb. Paul said the testimony of our the source of our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.

Sincere, pure, honest before God. And so tonight we're going to open up this altar. And again, as we do on Saturday night so often, I'm going to ask you to get dead honest with God.

Some of you are here and you're not a real Christian. You've been taking it in. You understand it.

That's your problem. You think it's mental and you need to come to this altar tonight and give your whole heart and life to Jesus Christ. For whatever he wants, for as long as he leaves you on Earth, every breath.

Others of you have left that intimacy with him for something that's an idol or something we've covered tonight. And you can't really pray. You're in a vicious cycle.

And God says, listen, it's your move. I've showed you a man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? Do justly, walk humbly.

And fear your Lord, your God. And tonight he's going to say to you, you go and you humble yourself and you deal with that thing. See, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, there's no sacred ground.

But in the name of the Lord Jesus, we consecrate this altar to you, Lord. It's your place. It's his.

It's a place. An altar is where you make sacrifice to God. And whatever touches the altar, the Bible says, is holy.

That means really touches it. Don't let anything unholy touch the altar. That means speculative and just not for real.

But we make this an altar in Jesus name. And I'm telling you, if you obey God and deal with what he's saying, when you touch here, when you just act on what he said, when God says it, he'll meet you there at the altar. I will meet with you, he says.

And so that's why you have to get up out of your seat. That's why you have to humble yourself, because it puts you in a place where you can receive. It breaks up fallow ground.

It prepares the heart and moistens it with tears. And God says, when you sow in tears, you'll reap in joy. And so tonight, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I don't know what he said to you, but I call upon you to deal with every hindrance to prayer.

Whatever enemy is keeping you from victorious prayer, whatever is holding you back, some idol of the world, some relationship, come to this altar and die to that. Deal with sin, because on the other side of this cross, this altar here is resurrection power for dead men, for men who have given it all to God, you you can't imagine. I can't imagine what God's prepared for me and for you until I get to that place where I'm

only his hindrances to prayer.

What is it, brother, in your life? What's worth giving up the promise of whatsoever you ask in my name, I'll do that clear air of that promise. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do. What would that mean to your wife and your children if you had that in your hand as you do? But God says you can experience it.

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