

# Hindrances to Prayer

by Bill McLeod

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and the hindrances that prevent God from answering our prayers, highlighting the need to recognize and repent of sin in our lives.*

**Duration:** 44:18

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 3:1

**Topics:** "Prayer Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a forgiving spirit, drawing from Ephesians 4 and 5. The speaker shares a story of a couple where the wife wanted her husband to understand the severity of his actions before forgiving him. The sermon also highlights the power of prayer and the speaker's personal experiences of answered prayers. The speaker also discusses the significance of obeying God's laws and the impact it has on our ability to witness and share the message of Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Let's read our scripture from 1 Peter 3, if you have a Bible with you. Likewise, you wives, verse 1, 1 Peter 3, likewise you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands that, if any obey not the word, they also may, apart from the word, be won by the conduct of the wives. While they behold your chaste conduct, that's what that old English word conversation means here, while they watch, while they behold your chaste conduct coupled with fear, whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands, even as Sarai obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters you are, as long as you do well and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, you are all of one mind, having compassion one of another.

Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrary wise blessing, knowing that you are there unto call, that you should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips, that they speak no guile, let him turn

away from evil and do good, let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Alright, 1 Peter chapter 3, the 12th verse says, and it's a quotation from Psalm 34, it says the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. My subject tonight is hindrances to prayer. What are things that, you know, hinder God, that prevent God from answering our prayers? Because, you know, all across the country, Christians are telling us, well, I pray, but I don't really see much happen.

And if they don't say it, they're bearing witness to it in their own heart, they realize that this is so. Pray much, and God doesn't seem to do very much in return. And why is this? Spurgeon used to say that prayer was the rope that pulled on the bell that rang in the ears of God.

I rather like that, it's not that God is sleeping, but he said, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. Let your request be made known unto God, in spite of the fact that your heavenly Father knows what things you have need of before you ask him. He still says, let your request be made known.

So we ought to be pulling on that rope that rings that golden bell in the ears of the Lord. Pray without ceasing. Indeed, the word of God says we should do that.

Now, first of all, let's look at the importance of prayer. It is seen in this that the Christian life begins with prayer. Romans 10.13 says that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

So the Christian life begins with prayer, it ends with prayer. Like Stephen in Acts 7, as he was dying, he cried out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And then it's carried on by prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5.17 says, pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ concerning you. The importance of prayer is seen in that prayer, when it's answered, it brings glory to God.

It says so in John 15.7 and 8, Jesus said there, if you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Listen carefully now. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit.

So shall you be my disciples. In other words, answered prayer glorifies God. It glorifies God.

Then it brings joy to men. Jesus Christ said it in John 16.14. He said, hitherto have you asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

I don't believe it's possible for a Christian to know the fullness of joy if he is not having answers to prayer. It's all linked up together. Answers to prayer.

Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. And then prayer leaves abiding fruit. Fruit that will abide, that will last.

We often have pastors complain that the fruit doesn't seem to last. We had a very graphic and sad example and experience of this in some meetings in Texas, just before we came, about five weeks before we showed up for the meetings, revival meetings. This particular church usually had five crusades a year, and ours was the third, and there were supposed to be two more following our visit there.

But he had an evangelist there, and they set a new record for Southern Baptists. And if you remember that the Southern Baptists have got 40,000 churches in their annual. They don't even list churches that have less than 400 members because that's a small church.

They have over 2,000 churches that have anywhere from 1,000 to 12,000 or 14,000 members. To set records among the Southern Baptists, you've got to go some. But that church in Little Rio Honda, Texas, they set a record.

In one week of evangelistic meetings, a single church crusade, they had over 1,600 people profess conversion. Now the pastor wrote he was absolutely thrilled at what had happened. We were likewise thrilled.

Here we're going to go down there, get into this great gang of new converts and be able to teach them the truth of the spirit-filled life, the crucified life. Well, we got there, and as we got off the plane and met Gene Horton, he looked so sad, I couldn't understand it. And he was sad, and he took us down in the motel, and then he said, I've got a great need in my life.

And I said, well, Brother Gene, I said, just keep your heart open in these days of revival. Ask God to speak to you. We'll pray for you.

And he said, is there anything wrong with right now? And I said, no. And he came into the motel and literally fell on his face in the carpet, and he called upon God. And you know, God revived him.

And then he told us what happened. Five weeks after those over 1,600 people had professed conversion, there was not one attending the church. Not one had been baptized.

Not one had come into the church. And he was broken. Do you know why? The evangelist they had preached the gospel, but he had a rock band with him.

And that got the crowds. And Gene said, I knew I shouldn't have done it. As a matter of fact, his wife got so hostile over it, she wouldn't even attend the meetings.

And she wasn't over her hostility when we got there. Oh, she was upset, because she knew it was wrong. But you know, they're saying, well, anything that'll get a crowd is right.

It isn't right. I mean, that proves it. But anyway, a binding fruit comes through prayer.

You remember in John 15, the Lord Jesus Christ said, You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain. That's abiding fruit. And how do we get that kind of fruit? What's the next statement? That whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

So abiding fruit, dear people, is gained through prayer, not through gimmicks and fancy programs and all this kind of thing. That's where we've gone wrong. A friend of mine was chairman of a large evangelistic crusade in a Canadian city, and he told me that literally thousands of people came forward during that crusade.

He said, Our church got 175 cards. We were excited and thrilled. He said, We followed them all up and got exactly two out of 175.

And he said, These two were people already attending the church and already saved. He didn't run down the evangelists, but there was certainly something wrong. Abiding fruit, dear people, comes through prayer.

I'm talking, remember, about the importance of prayer. In Scotland they have a saying that a house that has no prayer in it doesn't have a roof on it. Does your house have a roof on it? What about your life? Does your life have a roof on it? Or are you exposed to the elements? No prayer.

Perhaps no believing prayer. Prayer has been called the breathing of the soul. Lamentations 3, the prophet Jeremiah said, Hide not thine eyes at my breathing, at my cry.

And from that statement of Lamentations 3 comes the saying that prayer is the breathing of the soul. If I had to think before I breathed physically, I'd die every time I went to sleep. I don't have to.

I mean the breathing mechanism just works. And when he talks about his praying being his breathing, you see what he's getting at. Before I answer the telephone I ought to pray.

After I answer the telephone I ought to pray. Before I write a letter I should pray. And you know when I write a letter I ought to pray about it.

Before I answer that doorbell I ought to pray. Before I talk to people, pray. As I drive my boat or fish, I ought to be praying.

Driving a tractor or car, I should be praying. Washing dishes, ironing shirts, whatever. The Bible says pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks.

For prayer, remember now, is the breathing of the soul. And Jesus Christ said, My house shall be called, and it's a quotation from Isaiah, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. If you don't know how to sing and don't know how to put words together, at least you can pray.

And God's house is to be a house of prayer for all people. There's a denomination in Canada, a small group out in western Canada, I don't know if they have, I've never met any of their people in the east here. They started out as a sound evangelical group in Russia.

They were called spirit wrestlers because they were so mighty in prayer. They do not call their buildings churches. They call them houses of prayer.

And I've seen them. Right over the door it's written house of prayer. But they don't have any power in prayer anymore.

They don't have the gospel anymore. Very few of the people know what it means to be saved anymore. And although it says on the door house of prayer, there's no real prayer there.

At least very, very little. They've lost out. They've lost out.

The importance of prayer. We've been talking about that for a few moments. Let me give you some promises concerning prayer.

Here's a great one. Psalm 65, verse 2. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. It's just like a title for God.

O the God that answers prayer. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. The God with whom you and I have to do is a God who answers prayer.

Don't ever forget it. Or Jeremiah 33, verse 3 where the Lord said, Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not. Have you ever been challenged by that? It's a promise by that promise.

God has given to us, his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these, by these you and I should become partakers of the very nature of God through the promises by prayer. Call unto me, God said. Are you calling? Are you seeing God answer prayer daily? That in the New Testament you remember in Matthew 7 Jesus Christ said, Ask and it shall be given you.

Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you for every one that asks receives and he that seeks finds and to him that knocks it shall be opened. What a promise.

What about our text 1 Peter 3.12 The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their prayers. With all these and many, many more promises concerning prayer why is it that there is such a dearth among the people of God insofar as answers to prayer are concerned.

Andrew Murray while he's been dead many, many years I suppose he's been dead 60 or 65 years now from South Africa a great man of prayer he wrote a number of books on the subject and he said and I was surprised when I first read this many years ago he was saying that wherever he went and he toured the world preaching the deeper life the revival message and so on he toured the world he said everywhere I go preachers are telling me that the prayer level is awfully low back then why? there has to be a reason for it alright now David talks about it he says in Psalm 66.18 if I regard one translation says if I conceal if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me now that's very plain and I'm glad the Bible is as plain as it is if I regard if I look with complacency on iniquity in

my heart if I compromise with sin in my soul if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me and I can pray all I want and God will not listen now Job talked about this problem he says I cry aloud I cry out of wrong but I'm not heard I wonder why self-righteousness that's why and then Isaiah chapter 59 he said the Lord's hand is not shortened it's not amphitheater dried up that it can't save he said his ear isn't heavy that is his ear is not thick you know sometimes when I say something my children didn't pay attention I say what's the matter you got a thick ear God doesn't have a thick ear now that's not the problem he says but your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear that's the problem and Jeremiah

said also when I cry and shout he shuts out my prayer Jeremiah yes because of the sins of the nation and God said therefore pray not thou for this people don't pray for them they're beyond prayer and God said to Ezekiel though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice I will not hear so there are and of course the context shows that the reason was Israel was extremely rebellious against the Lord so sin prevents God from answering prayer I think just last night I said that prayer was not to change God but prayer was rather to change me so that God could safely you know I'm thinking now of God's moral nature his justice and holiness and all this consistent with his moral nature so God can answer prayer for me he can't do this God doesn't want to encourage me in sin if I'm living in known sin

God doesn't want to encourage me to stay in my sin by answering prayer for me so God withholds a blessing until I face up to the problems in my life you see God loves us so much he won't do anything to encourage us to go on in sin and rebellion and unbelief so obviously from these texts and many others in the Bible sin prevents God from answering prayer alright let's ask now what kind of sin well you know it might be sin against some other person it might be just this for example it might be your attitude to other people for example in Isaiah chapter 1 the Lord said when you spread forth your hands I'll hide my eyes from you when you make many prayers I will not hear your hands are full of blood now did he mean that the nation of Israel were all a bunch of murderers not really there were

some there of course but after all they did have Jotham Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord he was one of their kings and Hezekiah was a godly man and they had revivals under some of these men not really but something else Hezekiah chapter 3 Hezekiah chapter 33 the Lord used that illustration about the watchman He said son of man I've made you a watchman to the house of Israel now if you see the sword coming and you fail to blow the trumpet the people will die but their blood I'll require at your hands you'll have blood on your hands now Paul picks this up and you remember Paul was preaching and it says the people finally opposed themselves and began to blast him so what did he say? the Bible says he shook his raven and he said your blood be on your own heads

I am clean now he was thinking of Hezekiah chapter 3 Hezekiah chapter 33 Isaiah chapter 1 in Acts chapter 20 he said the same thing again when he talked with the elders from the Ephesian church he said I am pure from the blood of all men for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God he's saying the same thing again and you and I as believers in Jesus Christ are watchmen and many of us have never ever tried honestly tried to win another soul to Christ we have neighbors and we've got unconverted loved ones and relatives and this kind of thing and we've never ever tried to win unto Jesus Christ I was chaplain for an American radar base in Canada when they had them in Canada they don't have them now on the pine tree line and I remember one time a man who was a captain in

the American Air Force he phoned me long distance and said you better come out and talk to my wife I think you can sell her a bill of goods now he was a professing Christian she was not so I went to their home and sure enough she was ready to receive the Lord and the three of us knelt and she gave her heart to Jesus Christ when she got to her feet she marched over and stood about an inch from her husband their noses were about that close and she said we have been married 12 years you and I have lived in the same house for 12 years and you've never once told me you're going to try to leave me alone and his face was just starled and he said well honey you know about the prenuptial arrangements when we got married I knew a man who had been a Christian 25 years and he had never once in 25

years ever shared his faith with anybody and one of the reasons why some of us are so unhappy in the Christian life is because we have blood on our hands we've never really tried to warn another person Bill Orr was telling me a story about a friend of his who was a TV repairman and one day a man phoned up and said his TV wasn't working could he come and Bill's friend said well I can't come until Thursday and the fellow said well I wish you could come today he said I'd sure like to have him as soon as possible he said I don't think I can so he hung up but the Lord began to talk to him and the Lord told him to rearrange his schedule so he did and phoned the fellow back and said I'll be over later today so he got there and he got talking to this fellow and he led him to Christ right there so

they had a time rejoicing together then he turned and he began working on the TV set and they were talking back and forth and suddenly he noticed the fellow wasn't talking and he whirled around and the guy

was dead in the chair he was gone now he could have waited until Thursday that would have been too late and there are people all around us there are some people that no preacher will ever reach that you could reach because they have confidence in you if you're living a Christian life they've watched you maybe for years they may even put themselves in your way hoping that somehow you'll stumble over them and say some word to them about Jesus Christ oh listen the devil is a first class liar I've seen it in my life I remember one time God led me to go to a home to try and lead this man

because there were about 35 to lead him to Christ and I somehow I couldn't get around to it we talked about this and we talked about that and talked about something else and finally I got the kind of discouragement I'm going to get out of here and so I did what a lot of us do you know when we're not faithful to the Lord we read the Bible and pray you know something you could make 10,000 house calls and never read the Bible and never pray in a single home and still do the will of God if you preach the gospel that's what he asks us to do not read the Bible and pray you see on the other hand you could make 10,000 house calls and read the Bible and pray in every home and never once do the will of God because he says we're to preach the gospel so I read the Bible and prayed and felt a little

better and sounded for the door and just as I got to the door the lady asked me a question about the Bible and it was such a direct question that led right into the gospel and finally the two of them got saved and then she said to me if I hadn't asked you that question you wouldn't have told us how to be saved would you have? well you can fancy how embarrassed I was but I needed to be told that and another time there was a lady the children were coming to Sunday school and they weren't there for a couple of Sundays so I couldn't get them on the phone if I remember right anyway I called at the house and the lady seemed to be so happy the Lord said now talk to her about her soul but she seemed to be so happy the devil said oh she's a Christian look at her look how happy she is she must be a

Christian you don't have to talk to her and you know I was down at the door ready to go well I'd read the scripture and prayed felt a little better I'm down by the door and she's standing there all smiled so happy I'd come the children will be back they've had the flu or something they'll be back next Sunday so glad you called pastor all smiles you know and the Lord said speak to her and so I said do you mind if I ask you a personal question are you a Christian? and she turned her back like this and put her head like this just on the door and she started to cry her heart out and then finally she says I want to be a Christian but I don't know how so I led her to the Lord within a month her husband became a Christian we baptized her to them and took them in as members of the church the

devil's a first class liar and I don't doubt at all he's talked every last person in this building at some time or other out of witnessing to another soul about Jesus Christ that's his business he's a liar do you understand it? he is and he's doing his level best to keep you and I from getting involved in a vital soul winning a witnessing ministry so if there's blood on my hands how can I expect God to bless my life and answer my prayers? this may be the problem remember when you spread forth your hand when you make many prayers I will not hear your hands are full of blood it might be your attitude to your life's partner well that comes up in 1 Peter chapter 3 likewise your husbands dwell with them according to knowledge giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel and it's being

listened to this little phrase now as blessed of the grace of life Christian husband you can't travel alone you've got to take your little wife into every you know all that you do she's your partner we call her sometimes the better half and that's not too unscriptural a term you know there's been many many cases like well we see this in revival so often where you know people get talking honestly about things and quite

often you know suddenly he makes a meringue he's going to go on a fishing trip we'll say or go hunting or something he doesn't tell his wife but there's a half a dozen guys that got all arranged about three months ahead maybe some of these other guys tell their wives and finally one of the other fellows wives tells this guy's wife that her husband's going to go hunting with

her husband and she's mortified because her husband never told her see so then she sits waiting and you know the steam builds up the pressure builds up over the weeks she's waiting for her husband to tell her and the night before he's going hunting he says honey would you mind making me a big lunch I'm going hunting tomorrow and then she blows her top I knew it two months ago but I had to hear it from Ruby why didn't you tell me but dear people this goes on all the time some men tell their wives absolutely nothing they're so independent they won't tell them anything they can ask all the questions they want they won't get an answer just get kind of sucked off listen I did that too one time and God really dealt with me about when I was first out preaching my wife would come and she'd say

what does this verse mean in the Bible oh I'd say oh come on anybody would know the answer to that and I'd just walk off now I was a big shot counseling everybody in the country telling them what the Bible meant but when my own wife asked me I didn't have an answer and God really dealt with me about that as being heirs together of the grace of life and sometimes a wife is like this she's independent and she lives a little life all by herself I met a man from Saskatoon one time and his wife they lived in Regina and his wife had died of cancer they didn't have any children and he got so depressed over all this the doctor advised him to move out so he moved to Saskatoon and there I met him and led him to Christ and he says you know my first wife I don't understand her he said she was a

wonderful wonderful woman but he said you know that every night she used to go into one of the rooms and lock the door and she would never tell me what she was doing in that room until one day I think he said he climbed the ladder and peeked through the window do you know what she was doing she was reading the Bible and kneeling and praying and he was heartbroken he said why wouldn't she share it with me now he was not a Christian see I suppose she thought oh he won't understand so I won't tell him so she had never shared salvation with him and the first time I talked to me he received Jesus Christ into his heart she could have led her own husband to Christ but she didn't you can't afford you don't travel alone when you take those vows before God and man you've taken somebody into the

innermost recesses of your heart and you are now heir to the throne grace of life and if you don't live that way then your prayers will be hindered that's what it says and the Greek word here is the same word that Paul used in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 when he said wherefore we would have come unto you even I Paul once and again but Satan hindered us and your prayer life will be hindered if the relationship here is not right or it may be some other person outside the family even and you remember the Lord said in Matthew chapter 5 if you bring your gift to the altar and you remember there you remember that your brother has something against you it doesn't say you remember that you've got something against somebody else he says first be reconciled to your brother and then go and offer your

gift and God will accept it then in Mark chapter 11 the Lord Jesus Christ said when you stand and pray and forgive if you have anything against anybody forgive and then he said if you do not forgive then your father will not forgive you and of course naturally your prayer life is hindered because God will not forgive your prayers because you are not forgiving those other people that you think have sinned against you and people it's got to go all the way I remember one night I was asked to go and counsel in the home took a preacher friend of mine there and what had happened this poor fellow had fallen into sin of adultery they

were a Christian couple probably in their thirties and he had shared this with her after God straightened out his life and she went berserk she beat on the wall with

a fish she was kicking stuff around she fell on the floor and she was biting the carpet with her teeth she acted like a demented person and when we got there she was screaming and screeching and pointing at him and calling everything she could put her tongue to horrible filthy dirty rat she wasn't going to live with him anymore and she went on and on like this and I just let her talk for a while and I said you know what Jesus Christ called you she said what I said a wicked servant she looked at me so I told her that little parable that Jesus told about the man and the woman and the man woman and the man and the woman and the woman and the man and the woman and the man and the man and the woman and the man and the woman and the man and the man and

the woman and the man and the woman and the man and the and the woman and the man and the and the woman and the man woman and the and the man And sometimes I totally ignore the work of the Holy Spirit, I just rush into the presence of God, and I rush out of the presence of God, and I don't really have fellowship with God, and I don't let him talk to me at all.

So God just drives the thing up until I face up to the issues and begin to have fellowship with God, rather than looking on God as being a gimme person. Hey God, gimme this, gimme this, gimme this, thanks, and away you go. God won't have it that way.

He wants us to have fellowship. Remember the text in John 15, 17, If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be my disciples.

But it's all linked, you see, to fellowship with the Lord, and answers to prayer have to do with fellowship with the Lord. Maybe I'm hypocritical. You remember that fellow over there in the Bible, he says, He stood and prayed thus with himself.

You know, I like that. The Holy Spirit is a sense of humor. I mean, the fellow was praying all to himself, God wasn't listening.

He prayed thus with himself. God, God, you ought to be thankful I'm playing on your teeth. You know, Lord, I'm such a wonderful person.

You know, I'm not unjust, I'm not an extortioner, and I'm not an adulterer, and I'm sure not like that poor, lousy old publican over there, you know. God, you ought to be happy I'm playing on your teeth. Great fellow I am.

Are you listening, God? He wasn't listening, as a matter of fact. The publican standing far off, it says he wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, he beat on his breast, crying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. You know, there's something in this story that tells me that the publican overheard the Pharisee pray.

See, the Pharisee said, I'm not like this publican. And the publican, what he literally said in the Greek is this, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. God, he's right, I'm the sinner.

And God heard him. Jesus said, This man went down to his house to justify, rather than the other, for everyone that exalts himself will be abased, and he that humbles himself will be exalted. So maybe that's my problem.

Jesus talked about this over there in Matthew 5 and 6. He said, You know, the hypocrites, they like to pray, standing in the synagogues and the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily I send you, they have their reward. They want to be seen of man, and they are seen of man, and that's as far as it goes.

God doesn't answer their prayers, he's not even listening. Because you see, this awful hypocritical attitude of theirs, all right, here's some simple reasons they ought to be obvious, but they are not always obvious, because maybe we're not even thinking about it. But there are always reasons when God isn't answering prayer, and I need to find out what they are.

Now, maybe it's a ritualistic spirit. You remember there were the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the groves, a total of 850 false prophets, and Elijah was all alone, and these false prophets, they prayed. I would say, looking at the record there, they probably prayed about 10 hours.

And if you think God answers prayer because we make a lot of racket, then brother, they should have been heard. Because they leaped up and down at the altar, and they cried, and they cut themselves with stones, as their manner would have said, a 10 hour prayer, 850 men, something should have happened. And absolutely nothing happened, and Elijah's prayer never took two minutes, and the fire of God fell, because he was walking in fellowship with God.

No, Jesus Christ said, don't be as the heathen, they think they're going to be heard for their much speaking. That's not it. God isn't deaf, God isn't sleeping, he's not on a journey, he's not unaware of what's going on, he's interested, he's loved, so pray in the spirit, in humility, and God will be listening.

Walk in obedience, walk in the spirit, and God will answer your prayers. George Muller, he wrote a little book called 30,000 Answers to Prayer, which was the story of his life. 30,000 of them, a most marvelous man of faith.

Oh, he said, my philosophy, God said it, and I believe it. And that was his philosophy of life. But he knew he had to walk in obedience, and as he walked in obedience, he just saw the glory of God over and over and over and over again.

I'm writing a little book called Answers to Prayer. Don't mistake me, I'm not in the class of George Muller at all, but it's a thrill to my heart even now to think back at some things that God did. I'll share just one.

I concluded a Bible camp, it was a tent camp, we had to move all this equipment. The kids went home Monday morning, and there was one pastor and I left behind at the camp, and here we were. I didn't have a car then, we didn't have a truck, we had an old VR car, a real old wreck, the nearest town was 10 miles away, and we were sitting there looking at each other, and finally we said, well, let's pray.

So we prayed, and you know when we prayed, we really committed the whole thing to God. Wednesday of that same week, I had all this equipment, moved over to this other camp site, and the camp rolling. No money, no transportation, nothing.

We prayed and really believed the Lord. Then he had a happy thought, he said, hey, there's a guy in Oak River, an old fellow, he's got a truck, a ton of trucks, never thought of him before, I'll bet he'll take your stuff over. So we rode around the house, his wife said, oh, my husband, he's in Winnipeg, he won't be home for several days, maybe for a whole week, he's got a lot of business down there.

Well, we didn't tell her why, we called, and so we got back in his car, and we were going to go back to the camp again, wondering what to do. Well, he said, look, his car's home, he's not home very often, but he's home now, would you like to meet him? I said, sure. So after a bit, Hughie said to him, you know, he told him about him, would you like to meet this fellow? And he didn't take us over.

Ah, but here's the story. God waking him early that morning and told him to get on the train and go home, go home to Oak River. Now then, that's part of the story.

He obeyed the Lord. When he got off the train, he hadn't been home yet, he talked to his wife. When he got off the train, the Lord said, now go straight to Peter Reed's house.

He didn't know why he was going to Peter Reed's house. He knocks on the door, comes in, and that's why he said, I looked kind of stupid when I walked in, because I didn't know why I was there. Oh, he quickly found out.

And so, that's just one, dear people, of many, many concrete, definite answers to prayer we've seen over 34, 35 years of ministry and of walking with God. I have not been perfect. I've often failed the Lord, but, you know, I think I'm still growing in grace, and it's so wonderful to know the rules of the game and to walk according to the rule book, this book here, and then God pours out his Spirit, and we have all these answers to prayer, and it's a beautiful way to live and to walk.

All right, just to sort of sum it up now as we close, I want to draw your attention once again to John 15, 7 and 8. Jesus said, If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you be my disciples. All right? Now, in 1 Timothy 2, verse 1, we read this.

The word of God says, I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

We might have more quietness and peace in Canada if more Christians were doing this, praying for the powers that be, the way we ought to be praying for them. Yes, praying for them to be converted, because that's what the context is implying. Not just praying that they'll give us good government, but praying that they will be saved.

God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. And then the 8th verse of that chapter says, now he's summing up again, and he says, I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Now, people, he's talking about men in the particular, not men in the general sense.

Sometimes, you know, the word men is used when it just means men and women, people everywhere. But not there. How do I know? Because the next verse says, in like manner that the women adorn themselves in modest clothing.

So he's talking specifically to men, and he says, I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. I was talking to a Plymouth brethren, brother, friend of mine one time, and I said, you know how are things going in the assembly? Oh, not very good. I said, how's your prayer

meeting, brother? Terrible, terrible.

He said there was only six brethren there last Wednesday night. Only six, that's all. And about seventy sisters.

But you see, the sisters didn't count. There was only six brethren there. But you know, in many churches it's that way.

The women outnumber the men in the prayer meeting about three to one, and sometimes more than that. Yet the Bible says that the men are the ones that take the lead. I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, dealing with the sin plow and whatever it is, without anger and without doubting, praying faith.

All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive, our Savior said. Oh, the promises are crystal clear, and God is in business today as much as he ever was. But you see, the problem lies in my heart, and in your heart, that we condone sin, bad attitudes, and we don't want to really live a life under the control and dominion of the Spirit of God, and we're trying to manipulate God.

You know, some Christians, they use God like a can opener on the wall. You only use it maybe once or twice a day, and you put a can on there and clip it on, and you crank the handle, but you don't have any fellowship with a can opener. It's just a convenience, hanging on the wall.

You know, it's something like an elevator in a building. You get on the elevator, and you push the third button, and it runs you up to the third floor, but the elevator doesn't talk to you, and you don't talk to the elevator. It's strictly nothing more or less than a convenience, and dear people, this is what we've done with our God.

We've made a can opener out of God. We've made an elevator out of God. He's nothing more or less than a convenient fire escape out of hell.

He's not a friend. He's not my God. He's not my king.

God is my king of all David pride, working salvation in the midst of the earth, and God wants to be the king of your life so he can work salvation in the earth. God wants to use your life and mine in the winning of the loss to Jesus Christ. Everywhere I go, people say, oh Bill, you know, I can't witness to Christ.

That's not my calling. That's not my calling. So I say, do you have a tongue? Yes.

Do you ever talk about sports? Yes. Do you ever talk about politics? Do you ever talk about that doggy ad? Yes. Do you ever talk about politics? Yes.

Why can't you talk about Jesus? And for that, we don't have an answer. Not the kind of an answer we'd give to God. But you know what the problem is? No, I can't talk to someone about Jesus Christ unless my life is right.

That's the problem. I went to talk to a wicked sinner one time. His wife had accepted the Lord, and I made a little arrangement with her that she'd be out one night so I could talk to her husband alone.

And I got there, and he received me rather, not exactly rudely, but next door to it. But anyway, we talked a little bit. And then he says to me, say, what do you drive? Well, I said, I drive a maroon-colored half-ton

Dodge truck.

And you know, I had a tailgate in that truck, and it said, Dodge, in letters about this big in sort of silver letters in the back of the tailgate. And so I got some Scotch light, and I put, Don't, at the top, in letters about this big Don't, and then it said, Dodge, and at the bottom, Jesus saved. And I thought that was pretty slick.

Oh yeah, the fella says, I know that truck. I've driven behind you in the highway. You don't believe in obeying the laws, do you? No parachute.

I went sneaking out of there, and I got home, and I got down on my knees, and I cried before the Lord and said, Lord, as long as I live, I'll never make that kind of mistake again. I'll never knowingly break the speed laws or any other laws. You know, he told me what I needed to be told.

And this is one of the reasons, you know, why we can't really witness there's something back in our life that might be two years or twenty years back or whatever. There's some area that's not right. And this is why, basically why we can't share Jesus Christ.

Because we know we'd be a hypocrite if we did. Why don't we deal with these areas? Maybe God's spoken to your heart about something tonight, and we're going to sing a song in closing in a moment, and it'll be an invitation song again. Would you come, if God's working in your heart, just come, stand here, or sit in the front pew, and then we'll come and counsel with you at the end of the meeting.

God is just waiting to bless, fill our hearts with joy and peace. We heard a little bit about it tonight in the sharing time. Jesus Christ is here, waiting to bless you and I.

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