



**Conversation with God – Part 10**  
**1 Peter 3:7**  
**GCSP – 02/07/2009**

One of the great characteristics we, as humans, display is the ability to adapt. Unfortunately, this ability can also be detrimental to us. Sometimes we will adapt because it is, or seems, easier than correcting the problem or situation.

Many battered wives choose to adapt to their abusive husbands rather than calling the authorities and doing something about their situation. Many who need help in one or more areas of their life will choose to adapt to their struggles instead of asking for help, or instead of putting forth the effort to improve their skills or understanding.

Sometimes we are simply ignorant of available resources and/or procedures that would solve our problem or remove a hindrance; and due to that ignorance we will adapt instead.

After almost six years in business, I am just now beginning to discover and understand some of the resources available to me in my insurance business. There was a gap in my training and I just found other ways to get things done. My sales may well have been hindered over the years by my willingness to adapt instead of calling the folks at our regional office to find out if there was an easier way to do things.

I would hazard to guess that most Christians are hindered in their prayer lives, and thus hindered in their spiritual maturity, because they have adapted to the Christian experience they know, as opposed to what God has intended for them.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **1 Peter**.

**1 Peter 3:7**

Let's pray.

I will just be using the last phrase of this verse as the launching point for tonight's sermon; so husbands, you can relax if you thought this was going to be a sermon about your relationship with your wife. Although, if the Spirit is convicting you about something just from the reading of that verse, then by all means make the application to your life.

Tonight, I will be preaching in general terms about how our prayer lives can be hindered, not just how husbands can cause their prayers to be hindered by failing to treat their wives with understanding and honor.

Primarily I will preach to how we may be hindered from prayer, how we may be hindered in our prayers, and how we may hinder our prayers from receiving a timely response from God.

To merely bow the knee or fold your hands in formality or to go through a form of devotion in a careless and haphazard manner is more mocking God than honoring and

worshipping Him. It is humbling to consider how much vain repetition and heartless, passionless babbling the Lord must endure on a daily basis from those who are called by His name.

Spurgeon says, *"I most solemnly remind anyone who does not truly pray that the wrath of God abides on him. He who never seeks for mercy has certainly never found it. Conscience acknowledges it to be a righteous thing with God that He should not give to those who will not ask. It is the smallest things that can be expected of us that we should humbly ask for the favors we need. If we refuse to do so, it is only right that the door of grace should be closed so long as we refuse to knock."*

Prayer is not a hard thing but the natural duty of the creature to his Creator. Those who refuse to be about the business of genuinely praying are bringing times of difficulty and calamity on themselves; you will in essence be pushing God's hand of mercy and protection away.

In **Proverbs 1:24-26**, God says, **"Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention, and you neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes."** In this Proverb, God is speaking through the voice of wisdom, but it is God speaking nonetheless.

For those who do pray as they should, their prayers are a most precious thing. Their prayers become a channel by which God supplies priceless blessings, and a door through which God delivers new mercies every morning. To genuine believers, prayer is so valuable that the danger of hindering its effectiveness cannot be taken lightly. It would be like hindering our lungs from oxygen or hindering our hearts from a generous flow of blood. Hindering your prayers would be like hindering your eyesight while driving on the edge of mountain cliff. Hindering your prayers can and will have disastrous results in your life.

### 1. Hindered From Prayer

There are several things that will hinder you from prayer; let's look at just a few main ones.

You may be hindered from prayer by *falling into a lax condition concerning the things of God*; meaning you are spiritually cold or indifferent. Spiritual coldness means you start paying more attention to the things of the world, and have distanced yourself from the church and from the things of God. Spiritual indifference means you become satisfied with your level of spiritual maturity and you begin to become un-teachable; you somehow make the leap of thinking you have reached a level of spiritual maturity that allows you to in essence be above God's Word.

For example, I have known people throughout my Christian life who believe they have reached such a level of spiritual maturity that they no longer need to attend church, and think that it is okay because they are "so close to God." How can you be so deceived that you actually believe violating Scripture is okay? **Hebrews 10:25**, among multiple other passages cannot be any clearer that God's children are to gather together for the public assembly. The Old Testament is full of examples prior to the creation of the

church of the necessity to gather together for public worship. Yet some have been deceived by the enemy into believing these passages of Scripture do not apply to them in their current set of circumstances and at their current level of "spiritual maturity."

Those who are spiritually cold will generally not pray, or they will offer up frozen supplications as opposed to passionate pleas. Those who are spiritually indifferent will probably have a somewhat active prayer life but they are hindered from a proper prayer life, as they are living under a spirit of deception.

Prayer is the true gauge of spiritual power. To restrain your prayers in any way is a dangerous habit to cultivate. Who you are on your knees before God is who you are. If your prayers are being hindered your life is being hindered. If your prayer life is weak due to hindrances, whether known or unknown, you will be weak spiritually, whether known or unknown.

When the Pharisee and the publican both prayed, their prayers revealed exactly who they were. You may be able to maintain a decent reputation before men, but it is a small matter to be judged by men; for men only see the surface, while the Lord's eyes pry open and penetrate the soul and the spirit. Your outer actions and your spiritual words are a small matter to God if the condition of your heart is lacking. The Pharisee had all of the outward appearances of being a man of God but only the publican had the proper heart attitude, and thus obtained spiritual power through his prayer. The publican had the right obedience, the right actions, and thus the right power and privilege through his prayer.

**Proverbs 4:23** says, "**Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.**" Living prayers are among the springs of life.

Prayers can also be hindered *by having too much to do*. I believe the pace of life can be definitely different for those of us who live up here in the mountains, but we are by no means immune to this trap of Satan to get and stay busy. We fall for the lie that we have to maintain a certain level in our standard of living so we literally kill ourselves to do so. Our schedules are packed to the gills with a mind-numbing array of frivolous and unnecessary activities just because the rest of the rats in the race are doing the same.

When did it become the norm for our children and grandchildren to be involved in every possible sporting event and social activity that is offered to them? And if keeping them involved in all of these activities is supposedly good for them, how come we are raising generations that are getting progressively more immoral and rebellious? If the "good life" includes big screen TV's, fancy cars, bigger houses, newer clothes, and more nights out on the town, why are marriages crumbling faster than ever, why are children having children and experimenting with drugs at younger and younger ages, and why are anti-depressants and ADD/ADHD drugs being prescribed at such an alarming rate today?

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Luke**.

**Luke 12:16-21**

Here we have the parable of the rich man who was ever busy about building new barns and accumulating his wealth. No place in this parable does Jesus condemn the man for

being unjust or immoral. The implication is simply that the man was covetous; covetous with his possessions and with his time. He was too busy for God.

Jesus warns in **verse 15**, "**Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed.**" Most of us are under the false assumption that the sin of greed only involves our money and possessions. Jesus says "every form of greed" and then tells the parable of the rich and busy man. Yes, this man was greedy when it came to his possessions but he was also greedy when it came to his time. "I will, I will, I will" is the mantra of this man. "I will tear down, I will build bigger barns, and I will eat, drink and be merry."

How often do we display this attitude? Don't bother me with church, don't tell me what's on your heart, I don't have time to deal with your needs just let me dump mine. The life that is too busy is too busy to pray properly, too busy to care about the needs of others, too busy to spend the proper time in God's Word, and too busy to love one another, encourage one another, care for one another, pray for one another, and any of the other "one another's" we are commanded to do by God in His Word.

Some of us go so far as to becoming proud of our busy schedules, as if it somehow makes us more important – at least in our own eyes. Or maybe we like the attention that self-martyrdom brings. "Oh, poor me, I don't have time to spit. Don't you feel sorry for me?" I don't know about you but I've been guilty of this. I shouldn't be proud of my busyness I should be doing everything I can to get my schedule under control so that my time with God in prayer and study is not neglected, and thus my prayers not be hindered.

Busyness is not in and of itself a bad thing, but we must be careful to discern the things in our lives that are causing the busyness. What is truly necessary and what is not? And if you think it necessary to have the job that keeps you going 60 hours a week, could it actually be that you could live on less and be able to cut down those hours? Analyze and discern what those extra hours on the job are truly costing you and your family.

On the other hand, prayers can be hindered *by having too little to do*. There is truth in the notion that if you want something done find the one who has much to do. Those who have nothing of worth to do, generally do it with a great deal of fuss. They not only waste their own time they have a great tendency to waste other people's time as well. Sometimes, having nothing to do, they are hired by Satan to hinder others. Many times those with too little to do will devote hour upon hour to the god of television and devote a precious few minutes the God of the universe in prayer and study.

Not being busy enough is just as much of a sin as being too busy, and both conditions will lead to being hindered from prayer.

One last area that can hinder you from prayer is *a lack of order and organization*. These are those who allow the circumstances of the day to rule the day. They are constantly pursuing that which is urgent, whether or not it is truly important. They never let a phone call go unanswered regardless of what they are doing at the moment. Occasionally a phone call is important but most are not; they are just urgent because the phone is ringing.

Those whose lives are ruled by the urgent are constantly trying to keep up with things. There is never enough time to do what's important – which includes prayer. They do not have an appointment with God on a daily basis, and if they do manage to set a specific time for prayer they allow any and everything to interrupt that time.

Forgive me for using the phone example again, but if the president of the United States had an appointment with you at your house, would you make him wait every time your phone rang or every time your computer dinged telling you had a new email? Then why do you let stuff like this interrupt your time with God?

We all have stuff to do each day and some of it is very important, but none of it is more important than prayer. Get yourself organized at least enough to spend ample time with God in prayer and study every day.

## 2. Hindered in Prayer

I could repeat what I have already preached on to this point, for the issues that hinder us from prayer can also hinder us in prayer, but instead I will add to the list those things that deal with the current point.

Some are hindered in prayer *by selecting a poor time and place*. We all have times during the day when it is near impossible to set aside for prayer. If you work, you cannot choose the hours of the day that are owned by your employer – and I am talking about concentrated prayer not just keeping God in your thoughts and consciousness. If you find yourself nodding off by 9:00 at night, don't set aside 9:30 as your prayer time.

Imagine you have found that a barn is the best place where you could go to be alone and pray without interruption, but someone does come in to ask you something. The next time you climb up into the hay loft, but someone climbs up after you. The next time you climb up into the loft and you then pull the ladder up behind you. We need to find a place and time where we can in essence pull the ladder up behind us so neither man nor the devil can follow and invade our private time with the Lord.

*Worldly cares* are another hindrance in our prayers. **1 Peter 5:7** tells us to “**Cast all of our cares upon Him, for He cares for you.**” **Matthew 6:25-34** teaches us to not worry since God takes such great care of the birds of the air and flowers of the field, and we are infinitely more valuable to Him than they are. **Philippians 4:7** tells us that “**the peace of God which surpasses all understanding**” is able to guard and keep us if we will “**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let our requests be made known to God**” (**verse 6**).

A heart clogged with the cares of this world will be like a swimmer trying to carry an anchor. You must tear yourself away from the cares of this world, let go of the anchor, if you are going to be able to keep your head above water in the matter of being hindered in prayer.

*Earthly pleasures* are another hindrance in your prayers. Christians, especially American Christians, are in danger of entertaining and amusing ourselves to death. We resemble flies that light onto a dish of honey until their legs and wings are covered; not allowing

them to fly away. Earthly pleasures oftentimes become sinful pleasures which will further hinder you in your prayers. How can the indulging in the ways of the world be followed by communion with God? How can you come home from a night of sin and look into the face of Jesus? You can't roll around in the muck and mire of the world and then expect to approach the mercy seat with clean garments.

Prayers may also be hindered by *worldly sorrow*. There is a place for sorrow in our lives but sorrow should quickly drive us to prayer not drive us away from prayer. When Jesus was sorrowful He went to the garden and prayed. All too often our sorrow can drive us away from God if we become too focused on ourselves and on this world we live in. **2 Corinthians 7:10** says "**the sorrow of the world produces death.**" We have an everlasting hope in Christ Jesus and thus have no valid reason to allow our sorrow to denigrate into the hopelessness of the world.

We can be hindered in prayer *by a bad temper or by carrying anger and hostility toward another*. The prayers of angry men and women make God angry. You cannot wrestle with the Lord in prayer while you are under the power of Satan. Jesus tells us not to come to the altar if you have something against your brother (**Matthew 5:24**). Make amends and seek forgiveness from your brothers and sisters before approaching your Father or your prayers will be hindered.

Many hang onto past sins committed against them. We are in essence allowing the sin of un-forgiveness to fester and rot within us and are allowing that foul odor to mix with what should be the sweet incense of prayer offered up to our Lord. If Nadab and Abihu were consumed because they offered up strange incense to the Lord, how do we dare to offer up the foul putrid odor of buried un-forgiveness mixed in with our prayers?

There is a righteous anger, for **Ephesians 4:26** tells us to "**be angry and yet do not sin**"; but holding grudges and withholding forgiveness is not righteous anger.

Lastly, and obviously, we will be hindered in prayer if we dishonor God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit. We primarily do this by disobedience to His Word and living an inconsistent Christian life.

### 3. Hindered From a Timely Response

Quickly, let's consider just a few thoughts on what is required for speedy and timely responses to our prayers.

First, as I just alluded to, if we desire for our prayers to not be hindered from a speedy and timely response, we must live *holy lives*. "**The effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man avails much**" not the effectual fervent prayers of an unrighteous man. As we studied early on in this series, Jesus said, "**If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you**" (**John 15:7**). That promise begins with the word "**If**." You cannot expect your prayers to be unhindered apart from a vibrant living obedience to the words of our Lord. **Proverbs 10:24** says, "**The desire of the righteous will be granted.**" **John 9:31** says, "**If anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.**" Apart from living a holy life you cannot expect for your prayers to go unhindered.

Along with a holy life of obedience there must also be *an unwavering measure of faith*. We have already covered this aspect of our prayer lives in previous sermons but it is worth mentioning again. **Hebrews 11:6**: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." **James 1:6-7**: "But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord."

Thirdly, if you do not want your prayers hindered from a speedy and timely response, you must *be holy in your desires*. **Psalm 119:49** says, "Remember the word to Your servant, in which You have made me hope." In other words align your prayers with the promises and blessings within God's Word. If God has not promised it you have no right to expect it. Bring God's own promises to him and you cannot fail. The successful prayer is the desire of a holy heart sanctioned by the promises of God's Word.

Fourthly, you must *pray with earnestness and fervency*. I have already quoted **James 5:16**, but as a reminder, it is the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" that accomplishes much.

Fifthly, there must be *a desire for God's glory* in your prayers. If we are wholly and completely living for God, our prayers will run side-by-side with His purposes, and none of them will fall by the wayside. **Psalm 37:4** says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

And lastly, we must have *a holy expectancy* in our prayers if we desire a speedy and timely response. **1 John 5:15** says, "And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

Beloved, the Lord has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness and included in that is everything we need to have a powerful unhindered prayer life. Be careful to adhere to all that He has left you with.

Let's pray.