

# Prayer Stoppers

Psalm 66:16 - 20

## I. Intro

- A. Continue discussing prayer; priority of prayer in Jesus' life and in early church
- B. Tonight – things that hinders our prayers
- C. **READ Psalm 66:16 - 20**
- D. Look and discuss some prayer hindrances – or prayer stoppers

## II. Busyness

- A. **Quote:** *If the devil can't make you bad, he'll try to make you busy*
- B. Example of busyness hindering fellowship with the Lord – Luke 10:38 – 42:
  - i. Jesus and disciples traveling from town to town – Jesus, teaching, telling parables along the way
  - ii. Come to small village – Bethany; two sisters, Mary and Martha, invite Jesus into their home
  - iii. Martha busy in kitchen preparing great meal for Jesus – what she thinks is most important at time
  - iv. Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to Him
  - v. Martha upset that she's having to do **ALL THE WORK** – says something about this to Jesus
  - vi. **Jesus' response:** Luke 10:41-42 (NIV) <sup>41</sup> "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."
- C. Stephen Gaines refers to subtle enemies in our life; **Question:** Know what the “most notorious faith killer” in all of life is? Worry
- D. **ASK:** Why do you think Martha was so busy while Jesus was present with them? **ANS:** Worry – she was wanting to impress
- E. **ASK:** Was Mary concerned about impressing Jesus? No – she just wanted to make the most of the time she had with Jesus hearing Him speak, having the one-on-one time with Him
- F. We have the same opportunity as Mary, and Martha, through prayer
- G. We can do, serve with all the greatest intentions, but if our serving becomes more important than our spending time with the Lord then it becomes sin – certainly includes serving in the church
- H. **NOTE** – serving is not wrong; it's only when it begins to hurt true intimacy with our Savior

- I. **Matthew 6:33 (NIV)** <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

### III. Disobedience

- A. **Scripture consistently teaches that God blesses obedience, and punishes disobedience**
- B. **IMPORTANT POINT:** Not obedience that saves us, but grace; ... *not of works lest any man should boast; but also faith without works is dead*
- C. **Deuteronomy 11:26-28 (NIV)** <sup>26</sup> See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse-- <sup>27</sup> **the blessing if you obey** the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; <sup>28</sup> **the curse if you disobey** the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.
- D. **ASK: Does this passage still apply today? Yes**
- E. **1 John 3:21-22 (NIV)** <sup>21</sup> Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and **do what pleases him**.
- F. **One way God blesses our obedience is through answering our prayers**
- G. **Illustration:** Car wreck from running stop sign, not able to face my parents
- H. **Question:** If we disobey God's laws how can we expect to come into His presence without sense of shame and guilt – how can we expect God to still bless us?

### IV. Laziness

- A. **Sometimes we fail to spend consistent quality time in prayer because we're not good stewards of our time**
- B. **1 Peter 4:7 (NIV)** <sup>7</sup> ... be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.
- C. **Why prayer is referred to by some as a spiritual discipline – you have to be intentional and work at making it a daily practice**
- D. **Proverbs 6:9-11 (NIV)**  
<sup>9</sup> How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? <sup>10</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest--  
<sup>11</sup> and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.
- E. **ASK: How can this verse be related to praying?**

### V. Idolatry

- A. **2<sup>nd</sup> commandment of the Ten Commandments says: Exodus 20:3-4 (NIV)**  
<sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
- B. **Anyone or anything that becomes more significant to us or more influential in our life than God Himself is an idol**
- C. **Idolatry in scripture referred to as spiritual adultery; ASK: How would you define adultery? Rejecting one thing/person in favor of another – that's what idolatry is**
- D. **ASK: When a marriage has been destroyed by an adulterous affair, how is communication between spouses affected? Same with idolatry and prayer**

## VI. Unforgiveness

- A. **Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)** <sup>14</sup> For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
- B. **Model prayer of Jesus - ... *forgive us our trespasses as we (do what?) forgive those who trespass against us***
- C. **Mark 11:25 (NIV)** <sup>25</sup> And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.
- D. **Quote: *Bitterness is an acid that eats its own container***
- E. **Leads into next hindrance ...**

## VII. Unconfessed Sin

- A. **REFER v. 18**
- B. **The application of this verse for us as it relates to prayer and forgiveness is cleansing is necessary for our prayers to be heard by God**
- C. **As believers, we still continue to sin – when we continue to “practice” sin, we don't lose our salvation, but we lose the joy of our salvation**
- D. **Psalm 51:12 (NIV)** <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, **to sustain me.**
- E. **ASK: What is meant by the words in passage ... *to sustain me?***
- F. **Example of prayer of confession: Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)** <sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive [*wicked*] way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
- G. **Sin separates us from fellowship with God; Question: If fellowship is broken, then how can their be communication?**

- H. **ASK:** How do we know, made aware of, sin in our life? Conviction of Holy Spirit

### VIII. Broken Relationships – Especially Family

- A. You can't be right with God if you have relationships that have been marred or broken – especially in your family, especially in marriage relationship
- B. **1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.
- C. **2<sup>nd</sup> greatest commandment according to Jesus, ... love your neighbor as you love yourself;** most important and closest *neighbor* should first be our spouse, then our children, other family; for those who are not yet married and don't have children it should be parents, then siblings, then other family
- D. **Ephesians 6:1-3 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup> Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- <sup>3</sup> "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."
- E. **Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)** <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. ; **ASK:** Who does God charge with teaching/instruction of ways of God with? Father; **ASK:** Does this relieve the mom of any responsibility in this area? No
- F. How we are to treat broken relationships with fellow believers: **READ Matthew 18:15 - 17**

### IX. Lack of Faith

- A. Lord doesn't just want us to pray, He tells us we are to pray in faith; **ASK:** What's the difference?
- B. Many times when Jesus would heal someone He would make statement, *It shall be done according to your faith*
- C. **Mark 11:22-23 (NIV)** <sup>22</sup> "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. <sup>23</sup> "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. **(Hinges on our will be in alignment with will of God)**
- D. **Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)** <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

E. **James 1:5-6 (NIV)** <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But **when he asks, he must believe** [*let him ask in faith*] and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

## X. Close

- A. **Close with personal prayer**
- B. **Naming these “prayer stoppers” – admit, confess it to Him tonight, ask for and claim His forgiveness, and then commit to make it right**
- C. **Hindrances: busyness, disobedience, laziness, idolatry, unforgiveness, unconfessed sin, broken relationship, lack of faith**