

The Disciplines of a Godly Life: SUPPLICATION-5 What Stops My Prayers

This morning we are learning from Jesus in the School of Prayer.
 Our classroom is daily life, our textbook is God's Word.
 This morning's lesson is: "What stops my prayers?"

To answer that and to learn what may be the greatest lesson of our spiritual lives, let me talk about prayers that are answered.

How much money would \$111,600,000 be to you? I would assume it is a huge sum to any of us?

Perhaps the most remarkable testimony of modern times to the power of prayer may be seen in the life of a quiet man from Bristol, England. Born in the early 19th Century and living 93 years, George Mueller lived the life of powerful praying.

- His prayers touched 120,000 individual orphans and poor children, that he personally fed, clothed, educated and discipled in his five orphan homes that he built, and 72 days schools he maintained in England and 3 other countries -- **solely by secret prayer.**
- George Mueller started with his first orphan home in a rented facility for 30 in 1835, four more rented homes for 120 between 1835-1845. Then George began to build homes; 1849 #1 for 300 orphans, 1858 # 2-3 for 950 more orphans, 1869 # 4, and 1870 # 5 for 850 more orphans. By 1870 he had orphan homes for 2100 to be cared for completely. All by prayer alone.
- Through extensive diaries that he left behind after his remarkable 93-year life, a picture of powerful praying can be pieced together. In summary this man raised 7.2 million 19th century dollars by prayer alone
- To help us realize how much 7.2 million dollars in the 1800's is worth¹ today that is the same price we paid for all of Alaska. So simple math would conclude that the 7.2 million 19th Century dollars that George Mueller raised by prayer alone would be equal to \$111.6 million dollars today. With no mass mailings, TV ads, web blitzes, or huge financial machine behind him.
- His prayers touched the finances of countless individuals that were led to give him staggering sums of money freely, without George Mueller ever asking for

¹ <http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/other/stats/warcost.htm> has a comparison of war costs that reveals that Civil War dollars would buy 16 times the worth then.

even one penny. For over 60 years, day after day the exact amount of money to supply thousands of orphans a home, food, clothing, and an education flowed into George Mueller's study. He read God's Word and prayed, telling only the Lord his requests, and people all over the world were drawn to send or bring him gifts. These gifts flowed to him at an incredible, miraculous rate. Here are the averages of his ministry:

1. Annually he averages in gifts the amount of \$ 1.86 million.
2. Monthly he received an average of \$ 155,000.
3. Weekly for over 60 years gifts made to his ministry averaged \$35,769 - without any need ever being published or spoken except in prayer.

So that was one man who prayed, and his prayers were heard and answered. Jesus said, "You have not because – you ask not. You ask and receive not because – you ask amiss!" James 4.1-10

When you and I pray we always go through the One and ONLY OPERATOR. He always answers the call, but doesn't always put that call through for us. This morning we need to consider why our Operator Jesus Christ the Son of God would ever have to say -- "**I am sorry, I can't put that call through for you.**" And if you listen carefully to Him speak through His word, you will never have to get those dreadful words again. The rules for placing a call, and being put through are VERY CLEAR, right here in the COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE that Jesus our OPERATOR left us.

What stops or hinders my prayers? Here are the dozen plus areas God says fouls the lines, breaks the connection, stops the flow, hinders the reception of our prayers!

1. **PRAYING WITHOUT COMPASSION:** Proverbs 21:13 Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard.
 - o Jesus expressed one emotion more than any other. Do you remember what they emotion was? COMPASSION. Note the record of the Gospels: Matthew 9.36; 14.14; 15.32; 18.27 & 33; 20.34; Mark 1.41 and on we could go through the life of Jesus.
 - o So what if we have been lacking compassion, how do we get it? God's Word says " Colossians 3:12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; That is an imperative, that is one of the "commandments" we are to teach. Remember Jesus said in the Great Commission that we are to be teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you? Probably Paul wrote Colossians (c. AD 60) at the same time or even before Matthew was written! So Colossians is certainly part of what Jesus commanded through the inspiration of God's Word to us today!
2. **PRAYING WITHOUT CONFESSION:** Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

- God's Word says James 5:16 **Confess your trespasses to one another**, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
 - 1 John 1:7-9 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
3. **PRAYING WITH UNTOPPLED IDOLS IN OUR HEARTS:** Ezekiel 14:3 "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?
- 2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
 - James 4:1-8 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 **Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. An idol is anything we hold above our devotion to the Lord. It can be a person, it can be a possession, it can be a pleasure. Whatever it is must be forsaken.
4. **PRAYING WITHOUT FASTING:** Mark 9:29 So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."; Acts 13:2-3 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
- Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."
 - Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
 - Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
5. **PRAYING WITH BITTERNESS:** Mark 11:25-26 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in

heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

- o Matthew 18:33-35 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you? 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."
 - o Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.
6. **PRAYING WITH SELFISHNESS:** John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.
- o Matthew 26:39-44 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." 40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." 43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.
7. **PRAYING WITHOUT HIS NAME:** John 14:13-14 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.
- o Colossians 3:16-17 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
8. **PRAYING WITHOUT ABIDING:** John 15:7 If you **abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire**, and it shall be done for you.
- o John 15:1-6 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

9. **PRAYING WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT:** Ephesians 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—
 - o Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
 - o Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
10. **THANKLESSLY PRAYING:** Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; If you can't thank the Lord for what is happening in your life – be it chastening for sin, refining for greater good, or blessing from above – then you can't really pray!
11. **UNHARMONIOUSLY PRAYING:** 1 Peter 3:1, 7 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
12. **FAITHLESSLY PRAYING:** 1 John 5:14-15 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

1. **COMPASSIONLESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Proverbs 21:13 whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be heard.
2. **UNCONFESSEDLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.
3. **IDOLATROUSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Ezekiel 14:3 "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?
4. **UNHUMBLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH: When prayer is hypocritical there is no response from the Lord.** Matthew 6:5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
5. **HEARTLESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH: When prayer is mechanical there is no response from the Lord.** Matthew 6:7 and when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.
6. **UNFASTINGLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Mark 9:29 so He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Acts 13:2-3 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
7. **BITTERNESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Mark 11:25-26 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."
8. **SELFISHLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** John 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.
9. **NAMELESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** John 14:13-14 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.
10. **LOOSELY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
11. **SPIRITLESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Ephesians 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—
12. **THANKLESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; If you can't thank the Lord for what is

happening in your life – be it chastening for sin, refining for greater good, or blessing from above – then you can't really pray!

13. **UNBELIEVINGLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** When prayer is offered in unbelief there is no response from the Lord. James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.
14. **UNPETITIONINGLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** When prayer is neglected there is no response from the Lord. James 4:2b yet you do not have because you do not ask.
15. **FLESHLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** When prayer is fleshly there is no response from the Lord. James 4:3 you ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
16. **UNHARMONIOUSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** When prayer is offered in an ungodly marriage there is no response from the Lord. 1 Peter 3:7-9 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. 8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.
17. **FAITHLESSLY PRAYING IS NOT PUT THROUGH:** 1 John 5:14-15 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.