

Hindrances to successful prayer...

1. Examine the following verses and in a few words distill the significant reason why prayers go unanswered: Job 35:12-13; Proverbs 1:24-32; 15:29; 21:13; Isaiah 59:1-2; Jeremiah 11:10-14; Matthew 6:5, 7; 26:40-44; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:9-14; James 1:5-8; 4:3; and 1 Peter 3:7.

Job 35:12-13 **Pride** hinders successful prayer.

12) There they cry out, but He does not answer Because of the pride of evil men. 13) Surely God will not listen to an empty cry, Nor will the Almighty regard it.

Proverbs 1:24-32 **Forsaking God** hinders successful prayer.

24) Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; 25) And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof; 26) I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, 27) When your dread comes like a storm And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28) Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, 29) Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD. 30) They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. 31) So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices. 32) For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them.

Proverbs 15:29 **Wickedness** hinders successful prayer.

29) The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 21:13 **Refusal to help the poor** hinders successful prayer.

13) He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.

Isaiah 59:1-2 **Unconfessed sin** hinders successful prayer.

1) BEHOLD, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 2) But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Jeremiah 11:10-14 **Idolatry** hinders successful prayer.

10) They have turned back to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers. 11) Therefore thus says the LORD, Behold I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them. 12) Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they surely will not save them in the time of their disaster. 13) For your gods are as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to the shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal. 14) Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen when they call to Me because of their disaster.

Matthew 6:5 **Pretentiousness** hinders successful prayer.

5) When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:7 **Meaningless repetition** hinders successful prayer.

7) And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many word.

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Matthew 26:40-44 **Sleepiness / Exhaustion** hinders successful prayer.

40) And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? 41) Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42) He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." 43) Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44) And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

Mark 11:25 **The inability to forgive** hinders successful prayer.

25) Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions

Luke 18:9-14 **Self-righteousness** hinders successful prayer

9) And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 10) Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11) The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: "God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12) I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get." 13) But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" 14) I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

James 1:5-8 **Doubt** hinders successful prayer.

5) But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6) 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. 7) For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8) being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 4:3 **Selfishness** hinders successful prayer.

3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

1 Peter 3:7 **Poor marital relationship** hinders successful prayer.

7) You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

The hindrances to successful prayer are: pride, forsaking God, wickedness, refusal to help the poor, unconfessed sin, idolatry, pretentiousness, meaningless repetition, sleepiness, inability to forgive, self righteousness, doubt, selfishness, and poor marital relationship.

Hindrances to successful prayer... (page 3)

A concordance can be a very useful tool. Because the concordance is keyed to a word or term, one has the means to conduct a biblical survey on any particular subject. By listing all of the pertinent verses, one can gain a better sense of what God is saying and thus enable proper interpretation of relevant verses and correct application of the principles in life. However, there are 2 main **dangers** with topical studies using supporting verses: 1) Verses can be used **out of context**; there is the danger of forsaking the histo-cultural and literary context for the purpose of using the words of the verse to support anything. 2) Verses can be used **selectively**; there is the danger that one may choose a verse to support a position while other similar verses contradict the position. One must always bear in mind that without sound hermeneutic principles, one is at risk of misinterpretation and consequently misapplication.

“Apply yourself wholly to the text and apply the text wholly to yourself.” Johann Bengel (1742)

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