

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 5 (January 28-February 3, 2018)

After three weeks of focusing on prayer, I sat down at the computer a few nights ago to write week 5 devotions. For the first time that I can remember, I was completely blank. I now realize why God stopped me from writing on the next subject. In my six years of writing daily devotions, I have never written about the **hindrances to prayer**. God insists that I include this material in the other teachings on prayer, so I am following His directions.

Sunday, January 28 (read Psalm 66:18-20)

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened . . . (Psalm 66:18)

The Bible makes a distinction between **sinning** (something we all do) and **living in sin** (something none of us should do). The printed verse uses the verb “cherished.” We **will not** and **cannot** go to God in repentance, as long as we are cherishing the sin in our lives, believing that the momentary pleasure is worth the long-term consequences. Like the psalmist, we can know that God is hearing and answering our prayers because of His love for us (v. 19-20). I suggest you write down your prayer requests so that you can measure the results of your time with the Lord. Learn to hate the sin that remains in your life instead of cherishing it and God will listen to your prayers!

Monday, January 29 (read Isaiah 59:1-2)

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

People often ask, “Where is God when I am in a crisis?” Then they say, “I can’t seem to make contact with Him! It seems that He is not even listening!” One possible answer to their concerns is printed above. As we saw yesterday, those who persist in sin and cherish the ungodly life they are leading, cannot feel the presence of God when they pray. It’s not that His arm is too short or His ear too dull (v. 1); it’s that our chosen life of sin is blocking the path to powerful prayer. God turned His back on His own Son when He paid for our sins on Calvary, so we know that He cannot condone a lifestyle of willful sin in His children. If you want to experience a better prayer life in 2018, you must deal with the known sin in your life.

Tuesday, January 30 (read John 9:30-33)

We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does His will. (John 9:31)

After reading the printed verse, you may be thinking, “It’s no use for me to pray. I often still sin in my actions and words, as well as in my thoughts.” That’s why we can come to the Father **only** in the name of Jesus (John 14:6)! He covered our “oops” sins on Calvary when He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). That leaves us to deal with our **cherished** and **willful** sins, as we learned from the last two devotions. Jesus has already opened your eyes to your need for a **Savior** (v. 30), so now allow Him to open your eyes to your need for a **Lord**! Ask Him to lead you day by day and strengthen you where you are weak. He cannot work where we are refusing to let go. In the words of the old hymn, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day.” Are you willing to commit your cherished and willful sins to Him?

Wednesday, January 31 (read James 4:1-3)

You do not have, because you do not ask God. (James 4:2b)

The most obvious reason that God's people do not experience success in prayer is that they do not ask God for the things they need. His Word says, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). It also says, "And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). And then Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us?" Why on earth would we need something, and yet fail to pray about it? The biggest room in Heaven is the one that contains the treasures that God wants us to have, but for which we have never asked.

Thursday, February 1 (reread James 4:1-3)

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (James 4:3)

If you listen to some TV preachers, you may be asking for an air-conditioned doghouse and a condominium. You wonder why God hasn't answered **your** prayer since **the preacher** has received all these things from your donations to his/her ministry. The printed verse answers this in no uncertain terms! God has promised to supply your **needs**, not necessarily your selfish **wants**! Anything that you need the Lord to supply in order to accomplish His will in your life is a given. Jesus promises us that seven times on the last night of His life (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26).

Friday, February 2 (read James 1:5-7)

But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (James 1:6)

God finds no fault in His children who come to Him with a request for wisdom (v. 5). Many Christians feel unworthy to pray because they have returned to a sin that they promised Him they would never do again. Many others try to pray a specific promise back to Him, but they doubt that He will really do it. The printed verse declares that the doubting person will be tossed about by every wind and doctrine. That person will not receive what he has asked of God, because "he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does" (v. 7). Can you trust God to fulfill all His promises? Not one of them will ever fail (Joshua 23:14)

Saturday, February 3 (read 1 Peter 3:7)

*Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.
(1 Peter 3:7)*

Today is my bride's birthday. I didn't plan these devotions so well that this passage fell on her birthday, but I'm glad it did. One night, years ago, I tried to pray in the prayer garden at my church after she and I didn't agree on something. Try as I may, I couldn't touch base with God. My prayer was merely words with no meaning. I was a slow learner and stayed out there until almost 3:00 in the morning. Thinking she would be worried, I crept back into the house only to find that she had been asleep for five hours. I learned a valuable lesson, however. God is serious when He tells a man that he cannot pray while he is mad at his wife. By the way ladies, the "weaker partner" means **physically** weaker only!

