

Published based on [Seven Hindrances to Prayer -- sermon](#)

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SEVEN HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

(The following points were pulled out of R. A. Torrey's book, HOW TO PRAY. It is not a full excerpt. Hope you enjoy them. Bold print mine not the author's. I have added some points in brackets.)

1. **[SELFISHNESS]** The first hindrance to prayer we will find in James 4:3, "Ye ask and receive not BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS, THAT YE MAY SPEND IT IN YOUR PLEASURES."

A selfish purpose in prayer robs prayer of power. Very many prayers are selfish. These may be prayers for things for which it is perfectly proper to ask, for things which it is the will of God to give, but the motive of the prayer is entirely wrong, and so the prayer falls powerless to the ground...

2. **[SIN]** The second hindrance to prayer we find in Is. 59:1,2:"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But YOUR INIQUITIES HAVE SEPARATED BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR GOD, and YOUR SINS HAVE HID HIS FACE FROM YOU, THAT HE WILL NOT HEAR."...

Sin hinders prayer. Many a man prays and prays and prays, and gets absolutely no answer to his prayer. Perhaps he is tempted to think that it is not the will of God to answer, or he may think that the days when God answered prayer, if He ever did, are over.

3. **[IDOLATRY]** The third hindrance to prayer is found in Ez. 14:3, "Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?"(R.V.) **IDOLS IN THE HEART CAUSE GOD TO REFUSE TO LISTEN TO OUR PRAYERS.**

What is an idol? An idol is anything that takes the place of God, anything that is the supreme object of our affection. God alone has the right to the supreme place in our hearts. Everything and everyone else must be subordinate to Him.

4. **[STINGINESS]** The fourth hindrance to prayer is found in Prov. 21:13,"WHOSO STOPPETH HIS EARS AT THE CRY OF THE POOR, HE ALSO SHALL CRY HIMSELF, BUT SHALL NOT BE HEARD."

There is perhaps no greater hindrance to prayer than stinginess, the lack of liberality toward the poor and toward God's work. It is the one who gives generously to others who receives generously from God.

5. **[UNFORGIVENESS]** The fifth hindrance to prayer is found in Mark 11:25, "And when ye stand praying, FORGIVE, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

An unforgiving spirit is one of the commonest hindrances to prayer. Prayer is answered on the basis that our sins are forgiven; and God cannot deal with us on the basis of forgiveness while we are harboring ill-will against those who have wronged us. Any one who is nursing a grudge against another has fast closed the ear of God against his own petition.

6. **[SPOUSAL DISUNITY]** The sixth hindrance to prayer is found in 1 Peter 3:7, "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered." (R.V.) Here we are plainly told that **A WRONG RELATION BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE IS A HINDRANCE TO PRAYER.**

7. **[UNBELIEF]** The seventh hindrance to prayer is found in James 1:5-7, "But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask IN FAITH, NOTHING DOUBTING: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." (R.V.)

Prayers are hindered by unbelief. God demands that we shall believe His Word absolutely. To question it is to make Him a liar.

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