

Hindrances to Prayer

Psalms 139:23-24 HCSB Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns.
24 See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way.

INTRODUCTION: God wants us to pray, but the devil seeks to hinder us, knowing we do more through praying than through working.

- **Psalms 66:18 HCSB** If I had been aware of malice in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.
- **Isaiah 59:1-2 HCSB** Indeed, the LORD's hand is not too short to save, and His ear is not too deaf to hear. **2** But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God, and your sins have made Him hide *His* face from you so that He does not listen.

No sin is too small to hinder prayer, especially the sins of:

1. **Doubt.** Possibly the greatest hindrance to prayer

- **James 1:6-8 HCSB** But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. **8** An indecisive man is unstable in all his ways.

2. **Self.** A full hand cannot take Christ's gifts. Pride prevents prayer, for prayer is a humbling thing.

- **Psalms 37:4 HCSB** Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you your heart's desires.

3. **Lack of love in the Heart.** We cannot be wrong with men and right with God.

- **Matthew 5:23-24 HCSB** **So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

4. **Refusal to Do Our Part.** When we pray for the conversion of others, are we willing to be the means?

- **Hebrews 13:15-17 HCSB** Therefore, through Him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess His name. **(16)** Don't neglect to do good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices. **(17)** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

5. **Praying Only in Secret.** How often our Lord refers to united prayer!

In Exodus the people collectively groan (2:23) and worship (4:31; 12:27). Joshua intercedes for the people when Achan sins (Josh. 7:6–9), the people cry out to Yahweh when they find themselves oppressed by other nations in Judges (Judg. 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6–7, etc.). Samuel intercedes for the nation when they want a king (1 Sam. 8) and reminds them of the way the Lord answered their prayers in the days of the Judges (1 Sam. 12:10–11); and the people urge Samuel to pray for them (12:19), which he promises to do as he says that Yahweh will not forsake them "for his great name's sake" (12:22–23).

When we come to the New Testament, biblical history begins anew with the birth of a son of David and Abraham (Matt. 1:1), who will eventually plead before the Father to keep his disciples from the evil one, to sanctify them in truth, and to make them one (John 17:15-21). This mediator of a new covenant taught not just individuals but a people to pray. After all, they are united under one Father ("*Our* Father") and were to ask not just for their own bread and deliverance from temptation and evil, but for one another's ("Give us ...lead us...deliver us...," Matt. 6:9–13).

6. **Failure to Praise the Lord.** Paul tells us to rejoice, pray, then give thanks.
- [1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 HCSB](#) [16](#) Rejoice always! [17](#) Pray constantly. [18](#) Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION: Our text asks the Lord to search us for any prayer-hindering sin, and to lead us in the way everlasting.