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Daily Devotional - Hindrances to Prayer

AUGUST 20TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Hindrances to Prayer

[Ephesians 3:14-21](#)

When you pray, are you confident that God is listening and will answer? Or do you, like many other believers, feel doubtful that your words are even heard?

Let's consider some obstacles to a healthy prayer life. First, poor concentration can inhibit our communication with the Lord. Human minds are prone to wander, and it is common for our thoughts to drift from prayer to other topics. One antidote for this is to realize with whom we are speaking. The more we grasp God's power, love, omniscience, and holiness, the easier it will be for us stay focused.

Second, we may feel unworthy to talk with the God of all creation. Guilt over sin in our life can tempt us to avoid time alone with Him, but He wants us to bring our wrongs into His light. On our own, we will never be worthy to be in the presence of pure perfection. But Jesus' death and resurrection brought us forgiveness and acceptance, so we can come to the Father without fear or embarrassment.

Third, fear can stand in our way. Some people worry, *What if I don't pray correctly?* The truth is, none of us knows how to pray in a manner worthy of a holy God. That's why the Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf. The Lord desires our hearts, not perfect words.

The Lord has made Himself available to us through prayer. Do you realize that the most powerful tool and greatest privilege is accessible to us? We can come before almighty God in prayer. Our heavenly Father is waiting to listen to our praise, confession, and

requests.

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Daily Devotional - Our Helper in Prayer

AUGUST 19TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

One of the most painful emotions is loneliness. Of course, there are times in life when being alone is unavoidable. But since God has sent His Spirit to live within us, we are never truly on our own. The Holy Spirit—whom Jesus referred to as our “Helper”—is with us and available every second of every day.

Let's think about ways that the Spirit of God helps us in our prayer life. First, He burdens us to pray. Have you ever felt a strong sense that you needed to spend time with the Lord? Perhaps you weren't even sure why. That is the Spirit convicting you. He has many reasons for doing this. For instance, He may know that you need strength because of an imminent difficulty. Or He sometimes encourages us to confess sin so that our fellowship with the Father is not hindered.

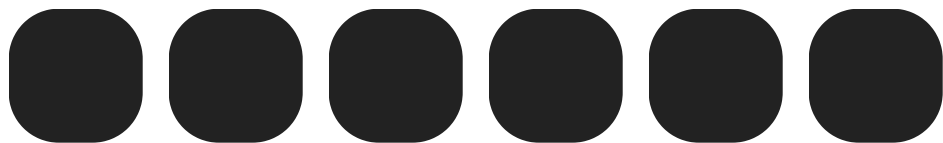
Second, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. There are times when we do not know how to pray—when sorrow or helplessness overwhelms us to the point that words are impossible to speak, even to the Lord. Thankfully, when all we can do is cry to Jesus, the Spirit will lead on our behalf. He understands the depth of our thoughts, feelings, and needs, and He translates them into effective supplication according to God's will.

The Savior loves you intimately—enough to die in your place and send a Helper to reside within you. What a privilege to have God's Spirit dwelling in your heart. Do you recognize His power and love throughout your day? He longs to comfort, enable, and guide you each and every moment.

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Daily Devotional - Sovereign Over Sin

AUGUST 18TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Sovereign Over Sin

Isaiah 14:24-27

God is sovereign. This means that He is the supreme authority over everything, including sin and its consequences. Yet He doesn't *cause* anyone to sin—to do so would violate His righteous and holy nature. The Lord does, however, *allow* temptation to enter our lives. And since we have free will and the Holy Spirit, we can decide how to respond and are fully equipped to resist. Thankfully, He retains ultimate control and weaves the consequences of our actions in accordance with His purposes.

Sometimes God permits our sin to run its full course. For instance, when the Israelites refused to turn away from their disobedience, He “gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices” ([Psalms 81:12](#)). Without divine protection, the nation succumbed to corrupt influences and ultimately was overrun. The Lord could have sheltered them, but the consequences drove the Israelites into repentance, which was His original plan.

Conversely, God will sometimes put an immediate halt to sin. Such was the case when King Abimelech took Abraham's wife to himself. The king had been misled by the couple and was not aware that he was about to commit a sin. But the Lord knew of the deception, and He intervened ([Genesis 20:1-6](#)).

Of course, the wisest plan is to obey fully so God never has to use either of these tactics. Temptation is inevitable, but sin is not. The Lord's sovereignty over our life means that any temptation must first pass through His permissive will. In this way, He makes sure His children are never tempted beyond what they can resist ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

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Daily Devotional - God is in Control

AUGUST 17TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - God is in Control

[1 Corinthians 13:12](#)

It is 100 percent true that God is good and that He's in control. These facts, however, do not prevent bad things from happening. Though it's within the Lord's power to give everyone a perfect existence, that wouldn't be in our best interest. Trials and suffering often drive people to the Father. And for those of us who are already His followers, God uses harsh circumstances to mature our faith and conform us to the image of His Son. To be made perfect and pleasing to our Father is indeed beneficial.

In His omniscience and wisdom, God will allow disaster and evil to touch our lives so we can grow from the experience. Growth, whether in compassion, trust, or knowledge, is good. If we could peek behind the scenes of our life, we'd see the Lord sovereignly working toward His ultimate purpose for us.

[Romans 8:28](#) affirms this: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." On occasion, we see immediate positive results from trials. But other times, we must wait months or years (or until we reach heaven) to fully understand what God was doing in

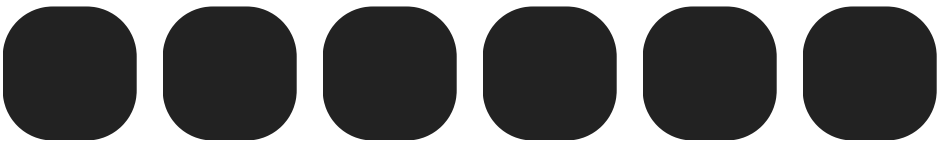
those difficult circumstances.

Suffering and evil are inevitable parts of a fallen world. But we have assurance that God is in control of the universe, including the tiny corner we occupy. When He permits bad things to happen, we can be sure that He will continue to provide comfort and guidance as He shapes us into the people He wants us to be.

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Daily Devotional - Grace Upon Grace

AUGUST 15TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Grace Upon Grace

[Colossians 1:6-12](#)

Have you ever stumbled onto an opportunity that far exceeded your original expectations? Or maybe you've encountered a source of treasure that no one else even knew existed? The theme of unanticipated riches appearing in unlikely places occurs in all kinds of literature. Jesus tapped into that theme with His story of the man who found a treasure hidden in a field. Apparently no one else knew of its existence, so he quickly covered it and ran in haste to secure the new property ([Matthew 13:44](#)).

Believers have inherited a vast treasure called the grace of God. For years, its great wealth may remain somewhat hidden from our view, but as we seek out its true dimensions, we are astonished to find how wealthy we are. This is what John was getting at when he exclaimed, "For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace" ([John 1:16](#)). Another version puts it like this: "From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another" (NLT).

Paul describes these successive blessings in Colossians 1: We can be filled with the knowledge of God's will "in *all* spiritual wisdom and understanding" and then we'll be able to please the Lord in "*all* respects" and bear fruit in "*every* good work." What's more, we will be strengthened with "*all* power" and thereby be able to attain "*all* steadfastness and patience" ([Colossians 1:9-11](#), emphasis added). Indeed, the Lord has an abundance of goodness and blessings for His children, and that is why we are richly endowed with "grace upon grace."

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