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# Campbell Chapel

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Sermon by Bob Bradley



# What is hindering me from God answering my prayer?

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1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

1 John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Praying is a great thing. It is avenue that we have that we go to God and we speak to God and He speaks to us. He instituted that a long time ago.

Before we get there, John in writing in chapter 5 here; He is telling us some things that we know as Christians, as genuine, true, born again, children of God. There are some things that we absolutely know. John mentions them. When you read here you will find out that John mentions what we know. There are things that we absolutely know. We know beyond any shadow of a doubt, there are things we know about God.

We know that Jesus is God, when you read in the first part of this chapter. We know that Jesus is God.

We know that when you read 11 through 13, we know genuine, born again, people know that they have eternal life.

When you read 14 and 15, that I just read to you. We know that God answers prayer.

When you read verses 16 through 19, true, born again Christians; we know that we don't practice sin. We don't do that.

When you read 20 through 21, we know that true, genuine, born again Christian people know that this life is a real life. We know that the Christian life is a real life.

If we know those things, as we go through life then it will make life so much easier to deal with. The things that we know when we know those things; it does matter.

Anyway, we want to talk tonight about praying. We want to talk about that we know genuine, born again, Christian people know that God answers prayer. How many know that tonight? How many knows that God answers prayer tonight? Everybody should know that. If you have been a Christian very long at all, in life; you should know that God answers prayer. Many times, we pray for things that are very insignificant, maybe to other people. Sometimes we pray about things that are very significant to us and that is going on in life. The thing about praying is that it is an avenue that we know that we can get the help we need when we take our petitions to the God of heaven.

When Jesus was here, He cared about people. Didn't He? When Jesus was here, He helped people. Do you know the great thing about Him today? Jesus is the same Jesus. He is the same God that He was when He walked here on earth. He has not changed any. The Bible says that He is the same yesterday, today and forever. We understand that. Jesus is concerned about our problems. The things that we face every day, Jesus Christ is concerned about those things.

Praying should be something that is just as natural to us as opening our eyes in the morning and going and brushing our teeth or eating or whatever our habit is every day. Going to God in prayer and knowing that God is going to answer prayer should be a habit just like that. We should have a routine that we go to God and that we know that God is going to answer prayer.

I know some of us do. I know that we do. I know that we have that and do that. Reading your Bible and praying is the two greatest things you will ever do in your life. The greatest things that you will do as a Christian individual is talking to the God of heaven and reading His Word. There are so many great things we can say about prayer. We could talk about that one subject for hours and hours. How that devoted people, people facing tragedy, and people that were facing distress in biblical times went to God in prayer and God answered prayer. God gave deliverance. God did some great things in their life. Do you know why? It is because God cares about His people. God cares about what we are facing. God cares about what is going on in your life. If we are truly born again, children of God; real Christians—I'm not talking about make believe and fake people, but if we are truly born-again children of Almighty God then we know that God answers prayer.

Sometimes we think, we pray and God doesn't answer. We pray and God doesn't answer quickly. God has a time table. God's time table may not be ours. We may want God to do things in our time table and if He would do that then we would be in a complete mess. I know that for sure.

What I want to talk about just for a moment is this. This is the thought. What is it that hinders me when I go to prayer? What is it that hinders me from God answering my prayer?

God answers our prayer. God loves us. God wants to help us. However, there is a condition and there are some conditions that we must meet if God is going to answer our prayer. Genuine, born again, people, saved and on our way to heaven; there are some conditions that we must meet. Not for salvation. We say "Yes to Jesus." We are saved. We are born again. We understand that. However, for God to answer our prayer then there are some things that we must do and there are some things that we must not do if God is going to answer our prayer. That is the part about praying that we don't like. That is the part about living in a way that God can answer our prayers sometimes that we don't like. Not everybody lives in the area, not everybody lives in the space where God is going to answer the prayer because they are not meeting the

conditions that God expects in my life and in your life. If He is going to answer our prayers, then sometimes we don't live in those conditions.

When you read the Bible, when you go back over just a few chapters here, when you read in 1 John 3:21-22 it says this.

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

Do you know what that tells me? We have confidence. When we are living in the will of God—there is a condition there—when we keep His commandments and live in a way that our lives are pleasing in His sight then do you know what we know? We know that when we go to Him, He is going to answer our prayer. Isn't that great tonight?

The word *confidence* when you look it up in the Greek and the Hebrew; it means freedom of speech.

When we are living right, when we are being obedient to Almighty God, when we are living, when we are living in a way that our lives are pleasing to God, then do you know what I can do? I have freedom of speech and I can take my petitions right before Almighty God. Do you know what I can know? I can know that God is going to answer my prayer. Isn't that great to know?

If you do not know that then there are some issues going on. Many times, there are things that hinders our prayers. There are things that is going on in our life—the greatest thing that hinders our prayer life is unconfessed sin. Things that are in our life that should not be there. Things that are going on in our life that nobody else may know except us. There may be things that everybody knows that is going on in life. However, unconfessed sin is the number one thing that hinders your prayer life. The thing that hinders you in your requests, when you take your requests to God; the number one reason that God does not answer your prayer is because there is unconfessed sin in your life. There is something going on between you and your brother. There is something going on between you and your wife. There is something going on between you and somebody at work that is not right. There may be some envy, strife, jealousy or whatever it is, but there is something going on there that is not right. When we have unconfessed sin in our lives we know that God, we absolutely must know that God is not going to answer our prayer. He is not going to do that.

When you read Psalms 66:18, it will tell you that. The Bible says...

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:

That is what it says. "If I regard iniquity in my heart..." That is what it says. If there is sin in my life, if I regard that, if I protect that, if that is there and it real and I know it is there—do you know what God is not going to do? God is not going to hear me. When I

pray, God is not going to be listening. Because I am not being obedient to Him. I'm not listening to His commandments, or doing His commandments. I'm not living right so therefore, God is not going to hear me when I pray. Amen!

Those are very basic things that we need to know. Unconfessed gets us in all kinds of trouble. When we have unconfessed sin in our lives and we go to God and pray and we pray about everything. Life is falling apart. It seems like God is not answering. Then we get to thinking in our minds, God doesn't love us and he doesn't care about me. Did I really ever get saved. Am I really on my way to heaven? We get to thinking all this stuff. Do you know why? Because it is unconfessed sin in our lives.

If we just go back a little while, and back up a few steps, we can figure out where the blessings stopped at. Where the blessing of God stopped in our life. What it was that we got involved in. What conversations that we were involved in. The activity that we were involved in that separated us from answered prayer. Do you know what we need to do?

When you read some of the great stories of some old great preachers; listen, it is one thing to sin but it is a whole lot worse not to *repent* of your sin. Christians—we sin. Everyone sitting here tonight, everyone listening to me tonight wherever you are; there are times in your life that you mess up and you sin. That is not a good thing. The Bible tells us that you would not sin. The Bible tells us that God does not want us to sin. The worst thing that sinning is that we will not repent of it. We won't say God I'm sorry, please forgive me. I should not have done that. I should not have gone there. I should not have entered into that conversation. I should not have participated in that. Lord, please forgive me. Do you know what God does? He forgives us when we do that and then we start living a life of obedience. Then He will start blessing our life and answering our prayers. Then we can move on. It is a dangerous thing; unconfessed sin in our lives. It hinders our relationship with Him.

We need *discernment* from Almighty God. In your everyday life, your raising kids, going to work and whatever you are doing in life; you need the discernment that comes from Almighty God. You need the ability to be able to choose right decisions instead of wrong decisions. You need the ability to be able to make right choices instead of wrong choices. That ability is a gift from Almighty God when you read the book. You and I need that when we face the battles and the struggles of life; we need discernment. Do you think you can make all the right decisions yourself? As you face life, and as you deal with everything in life; do you think you can make all the right decisions everyday by yourself? Probably everyone here has tried that. If we would all be honest, that did not work out very well. Amen! We need discernment.

Not only that but also, if we are going to have prayers, and our prayer life is going to be a success and God is going to answer our prayer; we need to *abide* in Him. We need to be at home with Him. We need to have a relationship with Him just like we have with our family. We are at home with Him and He is at home with us. We need to abide in

Him. We need to abide in His love. We need to abide in obedience. Amen! We need to abide in faith. We need to abide in being what we should be everyday as Christians. If God is going to answer our prayer, then we must abide in love and obedience and faith towards Him, if our prayers are going to be answered.

It is impossible to never *read* your Bible and never pray and then to think on the other side of that, that God is going to direct me, and I'm always going to have discernment, and I'm always going to go the right direction. If you never read your Bible, you are going to be a very spiritually immature individual. If you don't spend any time alone with God and praying; you are going to be a very spiritually immature Christian.

If you never spend time reading your Bible and praying; you are not going to know what direction you need to go. You are going to listen to all these voices in your head. You don't know what you need to do, where you need to go, or what you need to do.

However, when we listen to the voice of God, when we read His Word and pray and seek His will and we are living a life of obedience and we are abiding in Him; do you know what God does? God infuses us with great power as we pray. There is nothing any greater on this earth than when we can tap into the great power of Almighty God.

Not only that but also, we must pray.

Not only that but we must live in the will of God.

We must abide in Christ.

We must live right.

We must not have any unconfessed sin in our life.

We must pray according to the will of God. God does not give us our greed's. We are greedy people a lot of times. We want this and this and this and we want it now. We are greedy. God does not give us our greed's. God gives us our needs. There is a difference there. Okay! Only a few letters, but it is a big difference. Greedy is one thing. Need is something else. We must live in God's will.

Listen. I'm going to show you how important praying really is. When Jesus Christ was here; do you know what He understood? He understood how important prayer was. He spent time, many times we can read in scriptures that He spent time praying unto His heavenly Father. If Jesus Christ needed to pray, and seek the help and the strength that comes from yonder world; my friend, you and I need to pray. We need to seek God's will. God what is your will for my life?

We have to live right.

We have to be obedient.

We have to live a life of faith.

We have to follow His commandments.

There can't be unconfessed sin in our life.

Then we must live, and we must ask, and we must desire; Lord what is your will for my life?

Many times, I have talked to people over the years, and even in my own life; God's will for my life sometimes, has not been what I wanted. God's will sometimes in my life was a path that I did not want to walk down. I just did not want to go that way. I did not think that was the way that I wanted to go. Do you know what I learned in life? If God is going to bless my life, and bless what I am doing in life then I am going to follow Him. I am going to listen to His voice and I am going to walk the path that he gives me or there is not going to be any blessings there. It is going to be a cold, lonely, dark walk if we try to walk this way on our own. We must seek the will of God.

Jesus prayed, thy will be done; talking to His heavenly Father. We know that. We know that there is power in praying. We know that we can read the scriptures and we can read how men of old prayed and the heavens were shaken and fire came down and people were healed and people were saved. All kinds of things happened. When godly people pray, things happen. Amen!

Listen. Let's don't pray, "Lord, give me my will." I don't want the Lord to give me my will. I don't want the Lord—a lot of times in life, a lot of things I have asked in life; I am sure thankful today that God did not give me what I asked for. Amen! What I asked for was wrong. What I asked for would have brought disaster, if God would have given me what I asked for. There are times we need let things alone. There are times we need to let God work out things. Pray, "Lord, what is your will for this situation. Thy will be done." We need to pray in His will. We need to know what God's will is.

How do we determine that? People ask me that question. How can I know God's will and God's direction for my life? How can I know that? The first thing I ask people is this. How much time do you spend reading your Bible? How much time do you spend praying? I ask those two questions and do you know what I usually hear? Not very much. I don't have a set time to read my Bible. I don't pray a whole lot. This is going on and that is going on. Sometimes I pray when I am going down the road. That's good. Sometimes I read a little bit of Bible at lunch time or whatever but most generally they don't read a chapter or two a month. You can't know the will of God for your life that way. You can't know what God expects out of you if you never take time to read His Word, if you never seek His face, if you never spend time alone with God praying and asking, and seeking and talking to Him; you will never know the will of God for your life.

In this book, in His Word, in His Holy Word; His will for your life will be revealed. As you read it, as you study it, as you meditate upon it; His will for your life will be revealed to you. It may not happen overnight. It may not happen in a week or month. However, if you are faithful to Almighty God in reading and studying and praying; do you know what

you will find out? You will find out what the will of God is for your life, as you read, as you pray, as you live a life of obedience here. By trusting.

Not only that but also—here is a good one—as you read, study, pray and meditate; you live a life of obedience, you live a life of faith, you trust Him but you also listen to the voice of the spirit of Almighty God.

That is one thing I think we miss out on so much today. You hear so many—and I am not talking about anybody in particular—but we hear so many pastors and preachers try to convince people that you can't know, you can't hear, and you can't know the voice of God and God doesn't speak anymore like He used to speak. God does speak. There is the Holy Ghost that is within us; do you know what He does? He speaks. We can be sensitive unto His voice. We can be sensitive unto His presence. If there is any unconfessed sin in our life there is not going to be any sensitivity there. If we don't spend any time reading, studying, and praying, living a life of obedience; if that is far from us then we are not going to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Do you know what we are going to do? We are just going to do our best. That is a waste of time. God expects more out of me than just my best. God expects me to follow Him. God expects me to listen to His voice, as He speaks to us, and as He speaks through His Word to us; God expects us to listen to His voice.

That is not a fairy tale. The God that saved, the God saved you, the God that spoke this world into existence, the God that one day is going to come back and get me; is the God that is real and alive and He is speaking today. He speaking today. The question is are we listening? Are we living in a way, are we living in the sphere where we can hear His voice? As He speaks are we living right? Is our life all messed up with sin? Is there unconfessed sin in our life? Do we have a life of disobedience instead of obedience? Have we forgotten about trusting Him and giving to Him and living for Him, and trust Him; have we forgotten about all of that? If we have then prayer is not going to mean much to you. If your life is filled with all those things then your prayer life is not going to be much. You are not going to see God do much in your life, if all these things are prevalent in your life.

Not only that but also, we can know it is Him speaking. There are all kinds of voices speaking to us. there are all kinds of things that goes into our heads. They are out here everywhere.

Even today, just this day, I was thinking, and studying; the enemy is real also. He has a voice too, my friend. He has a voice and he can speak to you also. Even this day, today, in the last three hours; do you know what I had to do? Lord, I need some help here. This guy is aggravating me. He is getting in my thoughts and I need him out. Do you know what the Lord did? He got him out. Satan, if we will listen to him—and we have a world full of people listening to him—if we listen to him, he will get us in a mess. He will lead us down a road that we should not go down. Do you know what he will do when he gets us down the road a long way from safety, a long way from everybody that

loves us and cares about us; do you know what he will do when nobody else is around? He will kill you. Amen! We need each other. That has already been said tonight. We need each other. We can know his voice. We can hear his voice. We can make our requests known unto Him. The things we pray about, the things that troubles us, the desires of our heart, the things as we read, study, and pray, as we seek His will; things that God reveals in our life, the things we would like to see the Lord do. We have a vision. We have a plan that we would like to see God work out in our lives. Use us to bring about good things for people. We seek God's face in those things. God if this is your will. Lord, you know I would love to do this. Lord, you know I want to help. What do you think about this Lord? When we do that, do you know what God does? He either says yes or no. He either blesses it or says hey let it alone.

If you read about the Apostle Paul, there were times he wanted to go to certain areas to preach and to go to certain places to preach. Do you know what? He was forbidden by the Holy Ghost to go there. Amen! There are areas in our life that we don't need to be in. Even though we may think that they are great...there are places a child of God does not need to be. Amen! There are places like that.

Get this. The thing that breath is to your physical body, what it does for your physical body is the same thing that prayer does to your spiritual body. If you don't breathe, what happens to you? You faint quickly. Don't you? I think in three or four minutes, if we don't breathe we die. The scriptures tell us—if you read the book Luke 18:1, I think it is—we need to pray and if we don't pray, we faint. That is what it says. Amen! So, prayer, in my life, is just as important as breathing in my life. Prayer in your life is just as important as the breath that you are taking in just now. Without praying, you faint. You faint spiritually. You become unconscious spiritually. Amen! That is what fainting means. Praying is important guys. Praying is important.

Even Paul told us to pray without ceasing. To have a habit. To have a time, have a plan for praying. Some of you all, we have times that we pray together. Do you know what I do? I enjoy that. I enjoy knowing that when I'm going to pray; that there is somebody else that is also going to pray. That excites me. Do you know why it does? It is because we are talking to the same God. We are talking to the Savior, the same God that loves us and cares about us and that is listening to our requests. I can ask God to bless you guys, and you can ask God to bless us. Do you know the same God that hears all these prayers; He does that. Do you know what that should do? That should excite us.

Remember one thought. Jesus had to pray while He was here. He prayed. He was strengthened. Since He was God in the flesh, He needed to pray, therefore, I promise you that you need to pray. You need to have a habit. You need to have a pattern. You need to have a prayer life that is structured. Amen!

Your breathing goes in and it goes out. You don't think about breathing. Do you think about breathing? You don't think about breathing in and breathing out. That is just a

natural thing that happens. Your prayer life should be just as natural and without thought as your breathing is.

When you start that, and you need to, you need to do it tonight; if you don't have a pattern of prayer in your life, you need to start it tonight. If you don't have a time in your life where you read your Bible, you need to start this tonight. The attack is coming, the spiritual, the evil attack is coming to God's people. It is getting closer every day. You are going to need His help. Have a structured time that you get alone with Almighty God. Spend some time alone with Almighty God. Since Jesus needed to pray, you and I need to pray. When the battles come, and they are going to come; then we will be able to have the help that we need to be able to over the enemy as he comes. You need to pray. It is an absolute must for Christian people to pray.

Come and pray—