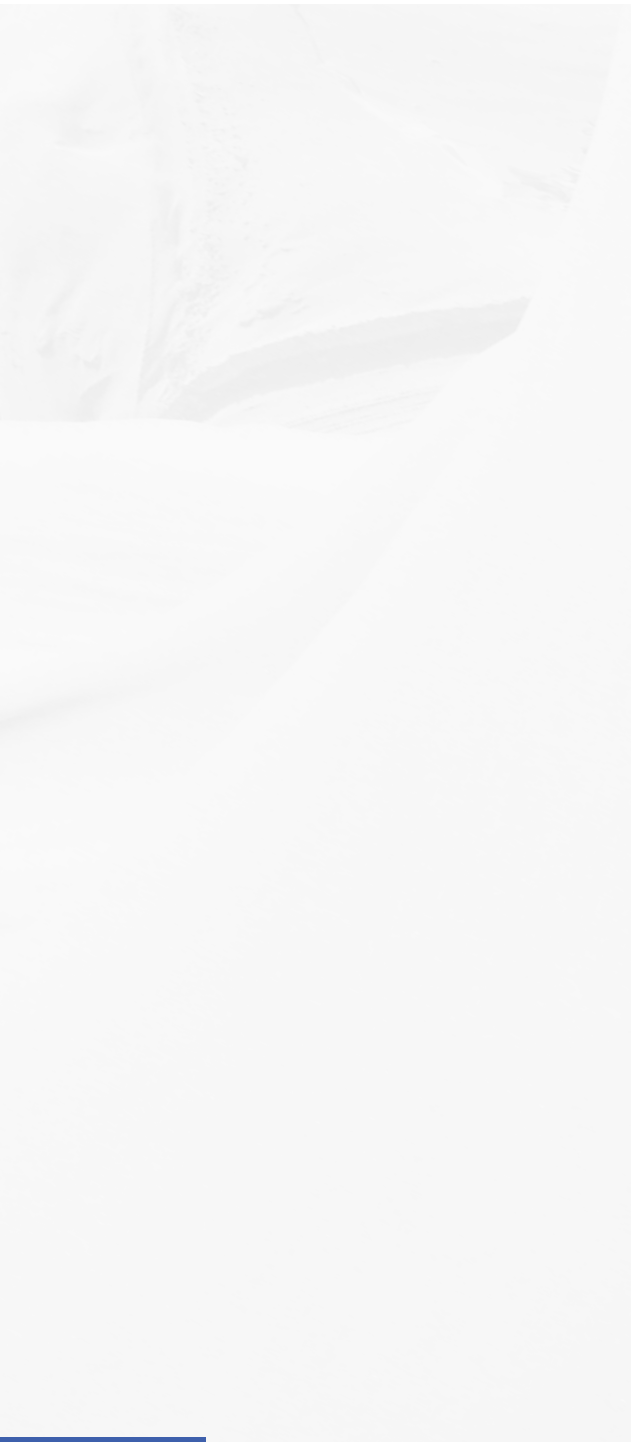


# PRAYER — PREPARING THE WAY





## PREPARING TO PRAY

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During this time of prayer...

We are asking God to meet us in power. So with one voice, we are seeking the face of God, standing in the gap in prayer for our friends, family and church.

As you pray for others, ask God to prepare you to hear as He speaks and to align you with His character, motives and will. Remember, before prayer becomes effective outside of us, God's Spirit has to be free to work inside of us. The best and most effective prayers actually begin in Heaven. Ask God to remove these barriers that will keep you from praying intimately, effectively and powerfully. God wants to answer!

Feel free to sit, stand, kneel or lie before God—whatever posture best fits your heart.

In the **DISCOVER** section, look up and read the verses with the guide provided. We are looking to discover reasons or barriers that scripture gives for your prayers not being answered or even heard. In the **CONTEMPLATE** section, you will walk back through each barrier and have a conversation with God, clearing the way for God to hear. Finally, in the **CLAIM** section, you will use the scripture given to renew your mind to your identity in Christ and to claim the cleansing and renewed communication you have with God.

SUGGESTED PRAYER:  
“ FATHER, I AM HERE TO MEET  
YOU. LEAD ME, USE ME,  
REVEAL YOURSELF TO ME,  
PRAY THROUGH ME. ”

# AS YOU PRAY AND WORK THROUGH THIS PRAYER EXPERIENCE:

## **Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.**

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In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (Romans 8:26)

## **Pray with confidence in the grace of God. You can come to Him just as you are because of Jesus Christ.**

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Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

## **Pray in faith! It is not the length of our prayers that moves God's heart; it is our faith. Ask God to help you believe Him.**

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Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

# DISCOVER

The Bible identifies at least six barriers that can keep your prayers from being heard by God. To discover these barriers, look up and read the following verses and write down the barrier each reveals.

## 1. Read James 4:3

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\_\_\_\_\_ keeps my prayers from being answered by God.

Sometimes we ask for the wrong things for the wrong reasons. But sometimes you ask for the right thing—a good thing—but your motive is wrong. The purpose of prayer is not to get what you want, but to get what God wants. God doesn't answer prayer for your pleasure, it's for His glory. Selfish motives rob prayer of power.

## 2. Read Isaiah 59:1–2 and Psalm 66:18

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\_\_\_\_\_ keeps my prayers from being heard by God.

Have you ever prayed about something and God never seemed to answer? If so, maybe God's answer to your request was "no." But maybe the problem was God couldn't even hear your prayers because you held on to some sin in your life. An act, an attitude, a mind-set or a secret sin and an unwillingness to part with them can actually keep God from even hearing your prayers.

## 3. Read Ezekiel 14:3

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\_\_\_\_\_ keeps my prayers from being answered by God.

In our day, we are way too sophisticated to have an actual idol in our house, but it doesn't keep us from establishing them in our heart. An idol is anything that takes the place of God or priority over God or that you love more than God. God alone has the right to the supreme place in your heart. Have you set up anything or anyone as an idol in your life (money, children, spouse/date, job, hobby, reputation, possessions, etc.)?

#### 4. Read Proverbs 21:13

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\_\_\_\_\_ keeps my prayers from being heard by God.

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

#### 5. Read Mark 11:25

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\_\_\_\_\_ keeps my prayers from being heard by God.

Anyone who bears a grudge or is unwilling to forgive the sins of another person closes the ears of God to their own cries for forgiveness.

#### 6. Read 1 Peter 3:7

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\_\_\_\_\_ keeps my prayers from being answered by God.

This one may require a little more thought to answer, but the indication is that when a man is not living well with his wife—mistreating her, not honoring her or not understanding her weaknesses—then his prayer life can be hindered, even if he is an otherwise “godly” man. The same can be said for a wife. If she lives with a dishonoring spirit and attitude toward her husband, her communication line to God gets hindered. Even if you are not married, the way you treat your date can keep God from honoring your prayers.

# CONTEMPLATE

**STEP 1:** Now that you have discovered the barriers, let's take time to contemplate each one and have a conversation with God. Clear the way for God to hear.

Begin by reading [Psalm 139:23–24](#).

Now go back to each of the six barriers and pray Psalm 139:23–24 over each one. As God brings things to your mind, confess them to Him.

**STEP 2:** Before you move forward work through the following probing questions. Don't rush. Deep prayer goes beyond the surface, so be still and give God time to speak. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal ways in you that have become barriers to praying and hearing from God.

## THOUGHTS

Ask the Lord to purify and examine your thoughts. Have you had any thoughts that would not be pleasing to Holy God?

## WAYS

Are there behaviors in your life that are disobedient to the Word of God?

## ACTIONS

Have you committed any act that is not pleasing to the Lord? (Stolen, lied, misled, broken the law, meanness, spitefulness, physical anger, etc.)

## ATTITUDES

Is there an attitude in you that is sinful? (pride, bitterness, anger, prejudice, critical spirit, etc).

## HABITS

Are there patterns in your life that have become destructive to your spiritual walk? (Pornography, over-eating, over-spending, lying, cursing, too much TV, etc.)

## WORDS

Have you said something that has been negative or critical of another person? Have you gossiped? Have you torn down another person in any way with your words?

## RELATIONAL OFFENSE

Is there someone that you have a broken relationship with that needs to be forgiven?

## NEGLECT

Have you neglected your walk with the Lord in any way? Have you not acted in an area that he has given you instruction? Have you been faithful in your stewardship of resources? Confess your sin of self-sufficiency to Him and repent.



**“ SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW  
MY HEART; TRY ME AND KNOW  
MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS; AND  
SEE IF THERE BE ANY HURTFUL  
WAY IN ME, AND LEAD ME IN  
THE EVERLASTING WAY. ”**

PSALM 139:23-24

SUGGESTED PRAYER:

**“ GOD, FORGIVE ME FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
I TURN AWAY FROM SIN IN  
THIS MOMENT. HOLY SPIRIT,  
WASH ME CLEAN FROM MY  
REBELLION AGAINST YOU.  
FILL MY HEART. CHANGE ME. ”**

# CONFESSION

The way we remove barriers from our life is through confession and repentance.

**Consider the following verses:**

## **PSALM 130:3-4**

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“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.”

## **JAMES 4:8 & 10**

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“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

## **ACTS 3:19**

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“Therefore repent and return so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord:”

**Now take time to confess what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you through the probing questions you asked of yourself. Be as specific as you can be as you confess your sins.**

# CLAIM

Your identity in Christ is stronger than you know! Use the scripture below to renew your mind to your true identity in Christ. Claim the cleansed and renewed communication you have with God.

## “ GOD, THANK YOU THAT YOU HAVE MADE ME... ”

### BELOVED

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.” Jeremiah 31:3

### A CHILD OF GOD

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” 1 John 3:1

### DELIGHTED IN

“The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.” Zephaniah 3:17

### FORGIVEN

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.” 1 Peter 2:24

### WASHED CLEAN

“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.” Isaiah 1:18

### FREE

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1

### A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” 1 Corinthians 6:19

### ADOPTED INTO GOD’S FAMILY

“The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Romans 8:15

### CO-HEIR WITH CHRIST

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.” Romans 8:17

### RIGHTEOUS

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

**NEW**

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: The old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

**A SAINT**

“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:11

**SET APART**

“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.” 1 Peter 2:9

**AN  
AMBASSADOR  
OF CHRIST**

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” 2 Corinthians 5:20

**A  
CO-LABORER**

“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” 1 Corinthians 3:9

**A SWEET  
AROMA  
OF CHRIST**

“For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.” 2 Corinthians 2:15

**NEVER  
ALONE**

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:8

**A  
MASTERPIECE**

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10

**WONDERFULLY  
MADE**

“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Psalm 139:14

**BOLD**

“Since we have such a hope, we are very bold.” 2 Corinthians 3:12

**HAVING  
GUARANTEED  
VICTORY**

“You have given me your shield of victory. Your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great.” Psalm 18:35

**HOLDING A  
SECURED  
FUTURE**

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” Jeremiah 29:11

**WHOLE IN  
CHRIST**

“In Christ you have been brought to fullness.” Colossians 2:10

## NOTES:

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