



Midweek Study

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Strategies for Prevailing Prayer



OVERCOMING THE ENEMIES OF PRAYER

Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire? – Corrie Ten Boom¹

E - Excluding Prayer's Discipline

- James 4:2b: *"You do not have because you do not ask."*
- Matthew 7:7-8: *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17: *"Pray without ceasing."*

Excluding Prayer's Discipline
Nurturing Secret Sins
Evading Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Making Requests with Wrong Motives
Ignoring Others' Needs
Elevating Doubts over God
Surrendering to Fear

N - Nurturing Secret Sins

- Isaiah 59:2: *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."*
- Psalm 66:18: *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."*
- Proverbs 28:13: *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."*

E - Evading Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- Matthew 5:23-24: *"If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*
- Romans 12:18: *"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."*
- 1 Peter 3:7: *"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding... that your prayers may not be hindered."*

¹ Elesha Hodge, ed., *Today's Best Illustrations*, vol. 1-4, Today's Best Illustrations (Christianity Today International, 1997).

M - Making Requests with Wrong Motives

- James 4:3: *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."*
- Matthew 6:10: *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*
- 1 John 5:14: *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."*

I - Ignoring Others' Needs

- Proverbs 21:13: *"Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard."*
- Isaiah 58:6-9: *"Is this not the fast that I have chosen... to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out?"*
- 1 John 3:17: *"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?"*

E - Elevating Doubts Over God

- James 1:6-7: *"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."*
- Hebrews 11:6: *"But 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 diligently seek Him."*
- Mark 11:23: *"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."*

S - Surrendering to Fear

- 2 Timothy 1:7: *"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*
- Psalm 56:3: *"Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You."*
- Philippians 4:6-7: *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God."*

He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find him the rest of the day. - John Bunyan²

Personal Applications:

- 1) Take time this week to honestly evaluate your prayer life. Ask yourself which of the "enemies" of prayer is holding you back and make a plan to start overcoming it.
- 2) Commit to building a disciplined prayer routine. Set aside a specific time each day to meet with God, sharing your heart, seeking His guidance, and lifting up specific requests—for yourself and for others.
- 3) Be proactive in reconciling with others. If there's someone you need to ask forgiveness from, or someone you need to forgive, take the first step. Even when it's hard, let go of grudges to restore peace.
- 4) Take a closer look at the motives behind your prayers. Ask God to examine your heart and help you pray in line with His will, seeking His glory above your own desires.
- 5) Strengthen your trust in God by dwelling on His promises and remembering how He's been faithful in the past. Pray boldly, knowing that He hears you and will answer in His perfect way and timing.

² John Blanchard, *The Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians* (Webster, New York; Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2006), 463.