

“Hindered Prayer” - -1 Peter 3:7

By Philip Shields

April 2012

www.LightontheRock.org

Summary: How effective could we be as the Body of the Messiah, if more of us had powerful, effective, answered prayer – and less of us had “hindered prayer”? Discover 7 things God’s Word tells us hinder prayer.

Shalom and welcome everyone, to another teaching and message from Light on the Rock. This is your brother in the faith, Philip Shields with a teaching on prayer, specifically being sure we don’t end up having *hindered* prayer. Who wants *that*!? I’m not into hindered prayer, especially with my Maker and Father – or my Savior and Master.

Have you ever needed to get in touch with someone urgently but your cell phone battery had died or you couldn’t get reception or you didn’t even have a cell phone? Or when you did call, no one would pick up the phone and answer? Do you remember how panic-stricken you felt, especially if there was an emergency?

(Story about not being able to call my wife. Being unable to connect can even mean life or death.)

In the case of our spiritual warfare, our very LIVES can depend on having strong, smooth connections with Father and Yeshua. We certainly don’t want anything impeding or hindering it.

I believe that understanding and living this message can change our lives. Let others know about this website if it is a blessing to you. Remember that on this website www.LightontheRock.org, we also are posting a lot of short messages, or “blogs”. I recommend you check them out. Remember to click on the line that says “more”, at the bottom so you can read the entire blog.

Turn please to 1 Peter 3:7 as we get into today’s teaching. The Apostle Peter in his epistle is speaking to wives, and then husbands, and says this:

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them [wives] with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, **that your prayers may not be hindered.**

Let’s discuss today the phrase “that our prayers may not be hindered.” I don’t know about you, but I’m not into “hindered prayer”. How about you? I want to be sure my prayers are being heard by Someone other than just the wall. I have 7 points on what can hinder our prayer.

SO WHY do we need this topic?

- **Prayer is our communication to/from our Maker. Satan trembles when he sees Yahweh’s family on their knees. Today we’re going to examine what Satan will do to keep you from being effective when you talk to Abba, our dear Father.**
- We are coming into such a time of spiritual warfare far beyond anything we are already seeing. In time of war, the FIRST thing the enemy often seeks to knock out is the

communications system. Satan knows the importance of that very well. So if he can HINDER your effectiveness, or keep you from praying effectively, he will.

- Imagine what **power** the *ekklesia* – the called-out ones - - could be having if we simply had unhindered prayer going on. Healings. Open doors. Miracles. Powerful preaching and learning. An effective, cohesive body of believers, rather than the splintered groups we have. Yeshua in Mark 16:15-18 says these signs will follow those who believe: In His name “they will cast out demons, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, not be harmed by poison – and they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

We’ll come back to 1 Peter 3:7 and the marital context, but there’s so much more.

#1 – A huge reason for having hindered prayer: THE UNPRAYED PRAYER

Wayne Gretsky, the great hockey player, used to say “I miss 100% of the shots I don’t take.”

Why did I bring up that quote? Because we can’t score spiritually either, unless we’re taking “the shots at the goal” as often as we can. In this case, the “shot” is a session of prayer.

Too many of us are missing opportunities to “score” by simply NOT praying as much as we should. *We’re missing the shots we aren’t taking.* I’m referring to *the unprayed prayer*.

We are the House of God, His holy temple. Yeshua (Jesus) said His father’s house would be “a house of prayer” for all nations (Isaiah 56:6-7; Mark 11:17) including the Gentiles. Would an outside observer, after a few days of watching us, **say that we are a house of prayer?** Worth thinking about, isn’t it?

(On the audio I discuss how we make time for everything else under the sun it seems - - but we’re all too often willing to give up prayer time.)

We are to seek *first* the kingdom of God and its righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Have you ever given up breakfast or lunch so you can have time to pray? Have you given up sleep to pray? There are times Yeshua prayed all night! How about giving up your favorite not-to-miss TV show – so you can pray? Could any of us cut out some **Facebook** time for a session with our Savior? Or is that hitting too close to home?

Is the Body of Christ today a praying group of called-out ones who are fighting their battles on their knees? “People ought *always* to pray, and not lose heart” (Matthew 18:1), Yeshua says. We should have dozens of prayer a day – dozens of contacts with Father – in addition to some real kneeling time by our bed in our bedroom each day.

Let’s be frank with one another! It’s easier to stew about something than to earnestly pray a believing, vibrant, positive, faith-filled prayer. It’s easier to write on someone’s Facebook, “You’re in my thoughts and prayers” -- than to be actually praying heartfelt prayers for someone. I wonder how many people really do follow up with fervent prayer when they text or Facebook someone that “you’re in my thoughts and prayers.”

The unprayed prayer, a huge hindrance to prayer. We need to just ask, just seek, and just knock!

Matthew 7

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

Now make your asking, your request, even more effective – Ask in Yeshua's name. Every year as we read the Savior's last words in John 13-17, it strikes me how often he chastises us for not asking, especially in His name. "Just ask, and do it in my name", He says, and it shall be done unto you. (**John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-27**). Yeshua seems amazed that we don't pray more, or don't ask more than we do! Look up those verses and see for yourself.

Turn please to Luke 18 – about the persistent widow. This parable comes on the heels of the end of Luke 17 which was about the signs of his 2nd coming. In context, it's almost like He's speaking directly to US, those living at the very end times. He wants us praying. Luke 18:1 begins with "men ought always to pray and not lose heart."

Let's make the unprayed prayer a thing of the past, shall we?

It's so easy to get **sidetracked from the vital and find ourselves doing the addictive!** *Anything you feel you HAVE to do or have each day is an addiction.*

Do you have **time wasters**? Satan is a master at using what my brother calls "**Weapons of Mass Distraction**" – like **Facebook**, or TV, or computer games. Facebook has hooked many of God's children so we're online at wee hours in the morning and late at night. People get addicted to **Facebook**. I think there's a place of Facebook. But if it is keeping you from praying or doing things more important than Facebook, cut it off for a while. Try just checking in on your friends once every 3-4 days for a half hour and then moving on to the things that will last a lifetime.

Working overtime, or constantly, can keep us from praying. I sure have to watch that, and if I do, then I am sure others have to watch that too. **TV** can lure you away. Facebook can.

Fatigue can set in as we put other things ahead of prayer. I've been there too. *Lack of motivation.* Lack of get-up-and-go. We just don't feel like praying, sometimes. Let's admit it. So we don't take the shot and the Unprayed Prayer happens once again.

Sometimes we just get too discouraged to pray. What's the use? Why bother? Or we're so affected by a trial we can't seem to look up. We just kneel by the bed and nothing comes out. We don't even know what to say. Kneel anyway. Say something anyway. We may just feel like weeping at times but wonder what's the use. Weep anyway. Say something, anyway. We miss 100% of the shots we don't take. So pray! Beg for Abba to have His Spirit pray for you, to pray with you, anyway. Pray for an intercessor to step into your life, anyway. Ask Father for an Aaron and a Hur to show up and lift up your arms, like they did for Moses in Exodus 17.

Romans 8:26-27

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will.

What's the cure for the unprayed prayer? How can we start praying more? Surely we have to come to see Prayer's importance. Tip: **let's stop thinking of prayer as an action, something we can cross off our "to do list" – and more like a relationship.** Or even as a two-way conversation.

It has helped me to think of prayer as always having Yahweh there beside me all the time.

It's easier to talk to someone whom you "see" as right beside you. So when we realize Father is right there, always, it's easier to acknowledge Him, to say something, when you sense His presence. Think of prayer as walking with God, not just time first and last thing in the day.

When you walk with someone, you're not always talking, but neither are you always silent. Last night my wife and I just sat on the love seat for half an hour together and just sat there quietly, no talk, just caught up in the moment with each other. Other times we both are talking a mile a minute. But it *is* easier to talk with someone when you're together, and realize you're together. Does that make sense? It works for me. I love to talk with Father or Yeshua while gardening. As I enjoy His creation, it seems to come more naturally to me.

I do pray on my knees in "formal prayer", but I also enjoy spontaneous outbursts throughout the day; brief sentences here and there as warranted. We're told to "pray always". I think of prayer more as keeping an open channel to Father where He can talk to me (if I'm listening!) or I can say something. I'll say again: powerful prayer is as much listening and hearing HIM speak, as it is us speaking to Father. If this is foreign to you, hear the sermons on "Hearing God's Voice" (Feb 2009).

My point: "SEE" Father as being with you, beside you –even right now and always.

Use that awareness for the *dozens* of quick, short prayers every day besides the longer prayers on our knees in the morning and evening. Think of this as "walking with God" or communing with your Creator as He and Adam/Eve used to do in the cool of the day before they sinned.

I will say this: the more we live with the awareness that He IS always there, always seeing everything we do, hearing everything we think and say – the more we will live in tune with Him, the more we'll pray.

SO MY FIRST POINT on hindered prayer: the MOST hindered prayer is the prayer that never gets prayed. Like Wayne Gretsky said, we miss 100% of the shots we don't take.

2ND POINT: SATAN DOES ALL HE CAN TO DIRECTLY HINDER OUR PRAYERS

Now the next point: Just remember we can read that there are times and circumstances when even the most righteous of men or women have prayers hindered! When you and I pray, there may be titanic battles going on in the unseen spirit world. That's why Paul said we need to realize we "fight not against flesh and blood but with spirits in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-14). What we think are struggles with our spouse or employer or with health – may really be just physical manifestations of a higher struggle. Satan and his armies (demons) do all they can to slow your progress, to discourage you, to keep you from praying, to make you give up.

Satan and his evil crew of demons try to keep our prayers from being answered. Daniel experienced that certainly in **Daniel 10:4-14**. There he describes seeing an angel come with a message from Yahweh. It was terrifying for Daniel, but revealing. Read it for yourself if you

aren't familiar with the story. When the angel speaks, here's what he said, as we pick up at Daniel 10:10. Keep in mind that when we are about to read of "the prince of Persia", we're talking about the spiritual guide of these kingdoms. In this case, it's not a good spirit, not a good angel!

Daniel 10:10-14

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. [A SPIRITUAL battle had been going on.]

13 ***But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.*** 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." (Comment)

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18

17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you — even I, Paul, time and again — **but Satan hindered us.**

Romans 1:13

13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (*but was hindered until now*), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

As in the first point – the unprayed prayer – Satan and his demons certainly will do all in their power to keep you from praying in the first place. Don't let them win.

But there's some good news: we have the strongest Power in the universe behind us by far! Father may allow some hindering to go on for a time, to test us, to see if we will look to Him or just give up, but know that we have a Greater Power with us.

1 John 4:4

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, ***because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*** [Satan is the god of this age – 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9]

This is why we have to pray, "May your kingdom come, may *your* will be done on earth, as it is in heaven". Here on earth, there is an Adversary (what "Satan" means) who wants to discourage or demotivate you and me. But in the end, Yahweh wins and we win with Him. Never forget that. Keep your communication alive.

Let me say this too: when you pray, let it be your words, your heart opening up. Don't read ritual prayers or do rote repetitions on a bunch of beads. Speak to your Father from your heart. Email me if you have questions, from anywhere in the world, and I will help you. I know many of you in Russia, China, Ecuador, the Philippines, England and France are also using this site and I'd love to hear from you. The Gentiles are also invited by Father to come pray to Him (**Isa. 56:6-7**). He loves you Gentiles as much as anyone else in the universe.

#3 Point: DOUBT, LACK OF FAITH, DISBELIEF will hinder your prayers

That last point – the ADVERSARY tries to hinder us – is now going to play heavily in all the remaining points. Satan knows warfare and knows – as in any war – He has to destroy your ability to communicate with your higher command. He desperately wants to knock out your communications system with your Leader. So he'll get us feeling unmotivated – and then make you doubt. He knows doubt can kill prayer's effectiveness.

James 1:5-7

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 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. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

James 5:15

And the **prayer of faith will save the sick**, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Remember that Yeshua Himself was hindered from being able to heal as many people as might have been healed in his home town of Nazareth. Why? Because they didn't believe! (read Mark 6:4-6; Matthew 13:53-58). It says in Mark 6:5-6 that "He could do no mighty work there, except He laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled at their unbelief..."

Another time, Matthew 17:14-21, His disciples could not cast out a strong demon. Yeshua (Jesus) said, "O faithless generation..." and healed the child. Let's pick up in Matt. 17:19-21.

Matthew 17:19-21

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind **does not go out except by prayer and fasting."**

Matthew 21:21-22

21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, **if you have faith and do not doubt**, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 **And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."**

I've given sermons just on living by faith. Check them out -- June 2007 on Faith, and Oct-Nov-Dec 2004 right on this website. If we doubt, we will not receive powerful answers. Faith is based on our confidence in Yahweh, not on what we see or feel. We must believe when we pray.

It's easy to say we have faith when everything is pretty smooth. But when you're given "the bad news" of anything critical, like terminal illness, a disastrous accident, that severe pain that just won't go away, the unemployment issues – whatever it is, in those times real faith will be much harder. I hope we'll all focus just for a few minutes on how important faith is in avoiding hindered prayer.

#4 - HINDERED PRAYERS CAN OCCUR WHEN WE SELFISHLY PRAY JUST FOR OURSELVES, AND NOT FOR OTHERS WHO NEED US TO PRAY

Here again, Satan will do all in his power to get us forgetting about others. Maybe, just maybe, one reason *our* prayers are sometimes being hindered is precisely *because* we're not lifting the hands of our brothers and sisters in *their* time of need.

James 4:3 ASB

You ask and don't receive *because you ask wrongly*, so that you may spend it on *your* desires for pleasure.

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, *and pray for one another, that you may be healed*. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

When we pray for Joe or Mary over there, by lifting up his and her hands in their time of need, WE get blessed too! This is unselfish. This is also more likely to be within God's will. That's another key to answered prayer of course: praying according to God's will. But especially when we're praying for someone else.

Even JOB, after all his severe trials, had everything restored at the end, but do you remember what happened first before his blessings were restored?

Job 42:10

And Yahweh restored Job's losses *when he prayed for his friends*. Indeed Yahweh gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Perhaps we should cover "intercessory prayer" in a future sermon. Again and again, Yahweh ties answered prayer to the amount of caring He sees us having for others in need. Re-read Isaiah 58 carefully. In Isaiah 58:3, the people are asking Yahweh, "Why do we fast and you don't hear us?" Well, go read His answer. Let's pick up, from vs. 7-9.

Isaiah 58:7-9

7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

8 *Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily*, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. 9 *Then you shall call, and Yahweh will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'*

You want unhindered powerful prayer? Then Father has to see us caring more for others, doing something for them, praying for them with all our heart. Then we need Him to hear us, He's much more apt to.

I gave a sermon a while back about **our obligation to the poor**, starting with our own needy family. There's scripture after scripture warning us that if we don't hear and answer the cries of the poor, Yahweh takes that personally and won't be as willing to answer *us* when *we* need help (Proverbs 21:13; Prov. 14:31; 17:5; Proverbs 19:17). This too, could be a reason why our prayers are being hindered: walking away from people we should be helping.

Proverbs 21:13

Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.

If you or I were out of a job, how hard would we pray? Now go pray that hard for someone else who is out of a job. If we were dying with cancer, how hard would we pray? Now pray that kind of prayer for someone else with a health issue. I'm sure you got the point.

Again, my father – Clyde Shields – set us a great example by putting his whole adult life after World War II into helping orphans and widows at his Bible school in San Fernando, La Union in the Philippines. He called it Miracle Bible Institute. He saved hundreds of lives literally. He and my mom actually adopted two very sick Filipino boys as their own children, before my parents even had their own children.

So do YOU want unhindered prayer? Pray for others. Yahweh loves answering those prayers when they are so unselfish. It's a prayer for others. The bonus: when you need answers for yourself, Scripture is clear that you're much more likely to be heard when you've prayed for others first.

Would you pray for your enemies? For those who threw you out of their fellowship? Want unhindered prayer? Pray as hard for someone else who badly needs your prayers, as you would for *yourself* if you found out *you* were the one with cancer!

POINT 5 – HINDERED PRAYER IS A SYMPTOM OF RELATIONSHIPS GONE BAD

We started this sermon with 1 Peter 3:7. One big reason for prayers going unanswered and being hindered is the marriage relationship going bad. Husbands not honoring their wives but treating them like their maid or slave. And wives not respecting and honoring their husbands.

But it's more than just relationships in marriage: prayer effectiveness is really affected a lot by what our relationships with people generally is like. Especially relationships that involved a covenant. Break covenants and agreements and watch your prayer effectiveness plummet.

1 Peter 3:7

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs *together* of the grace of life, that your **prayers may not be hindered**.

Yeshua's *not eager to answer our prayers when we are treating one another so badly. Or, if He sees us breaking agreements and covenants we've made with various ones.* I'm putting our relationships with man even ahead, in numerical sequence, of our relationship with Yahweh, because HE is the One who says, "Don't even finish your prayer until you've resolved things with people who are offended."

Matthew 5:22-24

22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against

you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. ***First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.***

Mark 11:25

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, *so that* your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

Are we getting it? When any of our *relationships* are off, *our prayers will be hindered*. Not just the husband-wife relationship, but all relationships. **Life is all about having close, loving relationships. Answered prayer is about – and because - -of our close, loving relationships.** He’s not going to be so fast to answer our requests when we let relationships go south. I’m going to talk about the ultimate relationship too, in a minute – the one with Yahweh and Yeshua – but for now, let’s talk about each other.

He even says one big reason many are sick and some die (sleep), is the fact that we’re not “recognizing” each other as being part of the body of Christ. Could we be having hindered prayer because of the way we are splitting up into splinter groups, and not loving one another? Paul says absolutely so! It’s about “discerning Yahweh’s body”. We have often limited that to being literally the actual body of Messiah, but we know the Body of Christ is the Church (Col. 1:18) and we are members of His body and of one another (Romans 12:4-5). Read those scriptures if you need to be refreshed on this. *When we mistreat one another, we are mistreating HIM. When we pray for and love one another, we are treating HIM well* – and He blesses us with more healing.

1 Corinthians 11:29-30

29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, *not discerning Yahweh's body*. 30 *For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.*

With the recent Passover season, surely this should have been impressed on our hearts: Forgive. Reconcile. **When we washed each other’s feet** on the eve of the 14th of Abib, SURE, it was about service and humility. Sure, we get that. But it was more than just a symbol of humility and being willing to serve one another (see John 13:1-17). *The footwashing was also saying to each other, “I need to be washed, and I see you as having been washed by the Savior, so who am I to hold anything against you?”* As He said to Peter, “If I don’t wash you, you will have no part in me”. But He did wash Peter, and you and me... so we *are* a part of Him and we need to accept one another now. If we want *unhindered* prayer, we need to continue with this footwashing attitude from now on. It never stops. “Yeshua washed his or her feet already” – that should be on our minds.

When we broke the unleavened bread at the memorial of the bread/wine of Yeshua, what did we say by that? Sure, we were partaking of His body. But *we* are His body (Col 1:18) and when we break Passover bread, we should be reminded that we all come from the same One Bread.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

So it was also a reminder of the unity, the oneness, we are supposed to have with fellow believers, imperfect though we all are.

Romans 12:4-5

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Father is NOT happy with me and you when we are unkind to other family members in the body of Christ. Or with the person at the check-out counter, or the waiter. When things go badly, how are we? Would we be ashamed to see and hear ourselves on TV via hidden camera? I'm DEFINITELY preaching to myself here too. We have to watch our words, our conduct, as we hold the reputation of "God's people" in our hands. I know today, I just feel SICK to my stomach over the times in MY past when I did not represent my God properly, or the calling He had given me. But thanks be to Yahweh, who – as Passover showed us – passes over our sins and lets us be fresh and clean again and start to build a new life in Him. KINDNESS to one another is looming more and more in my mind as something so drastically important to Yahweh.

In ancient Israel, we have examples where Yahweh let the whole nation suffer with famines or droughts, because someone broke a covenant with people, or mistreated someone. If you want a sharp example of this, look at **2 Samuel 21:1-17**, where God sent famine into Israel for 3 years before David figured it out: it was because Yahweh was still angry at the way Saul and his sons had treated some Gibeonites years before! Read it yourself. They broke the covenant Joshua had made with them. Yahweh gets VERY upset when we break covenant with someone, when we don't keep our word.

What contract, what covenants have *you* made? Your wife/husband, your boss/employer, with Yahweh himself at Passover? This is why Yahweh is clear in **Malachi 2:14-16 that He hates divorce**. He hates the way we treat "the wife of the covenant". In those days it was far easier for a man to divorce his wife than the other way around. It wasn't fair, but that's the way it was.

God Almighty created marriage. How do you think He feels when we trample all over the sanctity of marriage? I know. I've had to repent of that too. I'm sure it breaks His heart when we break each other's heart with broken covenants, infidelity, adultery – and divorce! When we break our covenant, it breaks the heart of the ones involved . . . and since Father is Witness to our covenants, it breaks HIS too. Thankfully He can forgive our sin, but please be aware how important this is in the overall picture of answered prayer.

And this is one huge reason we are not seeing as many powerfully answered prayers as we should – because of the way we are treating one another, people we have covenanted with before. There's way, way too much divorcing going on in the Body of Christ! Way too much. There are allowable cases for divorce, but they should be few and far between. Father's *not* happy with us when we break any contract, covenant or promise. Turn to Malachi 2. Here we again see how marriage covenant breaking – divorce – causes our Maker not to answer our prayer. We all have to work on our marriages. Surely we divorce too easily. By the way, gentlemen, the focus of this passage is to the men: that we have dealt treacherously with our wives. And Father has witnessed it all, as we're about to read.

Malachi 2:13-16

13 And this is the second thing you do:

You cover the altar of Yahweh with tears,
 With weeping and crying;
**So He does not regard the offering anymore,
 Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.**

14 Yet you say, "For what reason?"

Because Yahweh has been witness between you and the wife of your youth,
 With whom you have dealt treacherously;
 Yet she is your companion **and your wife by covenant.**

15 But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit?
 And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

16 "For Yahweh Elohim of Israel says that He hates divorce,
 For it covers one's garment with violence," says Yahweh of hosts.

Malachi is an end-time book, written to us at the 2nd coming (see Mal 3 and 4). **Yahweh our Maker is saying clearly: "I don't answer your prayers like you want because of the way you are treating your wives.** Because of the way you disrespect covenant vows you've made. Enough already! I hate it. Get your acts together – and maybe you'll start to see more powerfully answered prayer."

Men, we've been called to lead our homes, our marriages – acting as Christ Himself would act. We've been called to give of ourselves, to love our wife as our own body, to die for her and serve her, as Master demonstrated to us. For God's sake, for the sake of the Body of Christ, time is short. Let's get our act together! I'm not into hindered prayer.

The entirety of Scripture starts and ends with covenants. I'll speak much more on this in future. Yahweh is terribly upset with us when we disregard or break agreements.

Especially the marriage covenant. And so what does Satan do? He makes it acceptable to have Bachelor parties and bachelorette parties – which today include a rowdy night with strippers and lap dancers and who knows what else? So we end up breaking the wedding vows before we even get started!

So we started this section with 1 Peter 3:7 – how a sour marital relationship without honor for each other = hindered prayers on the way. But that principle applies to *all* our relationships.

Now let's kick it up a huge notch! Hindered prayers will definitely happen when our relationship with the supreme relationship has gone awry. What relationship is that? Obviously our relationship with Father and our Redeemer.

POINT 6 –SIN DEFINITELY HINDERS PRAYER.

THIS IS AGAIN ABOUT RELATIONSHIP: THIS TIME, WITH YAHWEH

Isaiah 59:1-2

Behold, Yahweh's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;
 Nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

***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[lawlessness] in my heart, Yahweh will not hear.

Sin, in its simplest form, is breaking the covenant we “cut” with Yahweh. It’s breaking our wedding vow with our Maker and Savior. It upsets Him, angers Him and hurts Him. Read his reaction after the gold calf incident and the hurt you feel (Ex. 32 and 33). Yahweh had just covenanted with Israel (Ex 24:1-8), and so the gold calf was like coming home and finding your wife in bed with another man. Only worse: because Israel even said the gold calf was their god who brought them out of Egypt.

The entire Bible is about the Creator preparing you and me to marry the Son of God and to be His people. And Satan’s goal is to get us to break those vows. Blessings and curses – all tied to keeping covenant. We agreed to be the *people* of God and He be our God, and we would obey His laws. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), which in its simplest terms, ***is breaking the covenant we made with Yahweh.***

So what can hinder the power of *your* prayer? SIN. Plain and simple. A life of sin. A life of unrepented sin, of intentional sin especially. Sins of knowledge, sins we know are sins as we do them – very, very serious stuff. Satan will do all in his power to help you break your Passover covenant with your Savior.

Our Father loves us even when we go astray. The story of the Father and the Prodigal son makes that very clear. But let’s not mix up “love” for a child for “being pleased with” a child. Father loves us regardless of our behavior. But He can get very angry at disobedience. He can become unresponsive when we defy Him, break His laws, do the things not pleasing to Him.

Let’s reverse that to the positive. When we live in obedience, when we do the things pleasing to Father, we have more confidence that our prayers will be answered. I’m not going to preach the easy-going message that says we can do whatever we want and somehow we can have confidence that our prayers will be answered.

I am not saying we must always be sinless before we can have confidence. But when we sin, let’s repent quickly. Let’s be reconciled to Abba, and He is quick and willing to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9) and to restore the relationship. When David repented of his murder of Uriah and for stealing and committing adultery (see Psalm 51), he was confident he would be forgiven. He knew he could once again come and joyfully worship.

We know God does not hear *unrepentant* sinners (John 9:31). But we do know He absolutely will hear *repentant* sinners. Remember the stories of the prodigal son, Zacchaeus, the story of Nineveh, and on and on.

So just like we had to be reconciled with a person we had offended first – and then continue our prayers – it’s even more so with our relationship with God. We have to first be reconciled, then we can have confidence. I started with our relationship with mankind first, because God says – get that done first, then come see me. Forgive people first, then I will forgive you. That’s why I put it first. But in every prayer on our knees, we should ask forgiveness for anything and anywhere we fell short.

1 John 3:18-24

18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 21 ***Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*** 22 ***And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*** 23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and *love one another*, as He gave us commandment. 24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Yeshua was confident He would be heard, and he tells us why: because He always did that which pleased his Father! See John 8:29 – “I always do those things which please Him”. Wow. ALWAYS. He is simply amazing. Look at the example HE set for us:

John 8:28-29

28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. 29 And He who sent Me is with Me. **The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.**"

Hebrews 5:6-8

6 As He also says in another place:

"You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek";

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and **was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience** by the things which He suffered.

There's more!

- Yeshua's whole "food" was to do the things pleasing to Father (John 4:34).
- Yeshua always sought Father's will, not His own (John 5:30; 6:38)
- He said He always did all His father's commandments (John 14:31; 15:10). He also ties this in to abiding in His love, because He always kept the commandments. There's a soft theology by some that preaches God loves everyone all the time, but it's also clear that he is most pleased with those who obey and gets angry at those who don't obey. I can have 2 sons and love them the same, but be more *pleased* with one who is responsible than I would be with one who is not.

Oh what a perfect and beautiful example. Now He's also willing to cover us with His life, His righteousness if we will accept it. But please get this: if Christ lives again in us, He will live in us the way He did before: righteously, *obediently*.

As I am recording this in late April 2012, we've just concluded the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. We put leavening products out, the yeast, and all leavened products. There's a huge lesson here: we can't take leaven out of something already leavened. Neither can we make ourselves righteous. That would be SELF-righteousness. *We have to purge, cast out, the old leaven and go bake or buy fresh unleavened bread. In the same way, we have to let the old self die and let HIS life become our life (Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20). It is now His righteousness that Father*

sees. This is why Paul says in Philippians 3:9-11 that he wanted to KNOW Him and the power of HIS resurrection, living in us again. Check out the website for the series on God's righteousness

After all, we are to seek first the kingdom of God and ITS righteousness.

Let Yeshua come into your life and live His life again in you, obediently. See/hear my sermon On Jan 2011 about Pleasing Him. When you and I fail, let's be quick to come back to Father and repent – come back to covenant and relationship.

What can hinder answered prayer? SIN. Plain and simple. A life of sin. A life of unrepented sin, of intentional sin especially. Sins of knowledge, sins we know are sins as we do them – very, very serious stuff. Just like we read earlier – “your sins have cut you off from me” (Isa. 59:1-2).

So *powerful praying is the result of powerful RELATIONSHIPS in play*. Prayer results can often be instant when we have our relationships intact. There *are* times when Yahweh decrees certain things will not be instant, so we accept that and continue to build our relationship.

So, so far I have mentioned 6 things:

- The unprayed prayer, the unasked petitions
- Satan will do all in his power to dissuade and discourage and hinder prayer.
- Selfish prayer, instead of praying for one another - - will hinder prayer.
- Human relationships that have gone south on us will hinder our prayers
- Most of all, our relationship with Yahweh himself. Unrepented sin cuts us off.

PART 7 LACK OF HEART-FELT FERVENCY WILL HINDER PRAYER. A LOT OF HEART = MORE LIKELY TO BE HEARD

James 5:16-18

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The **effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much**. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Let's look at a woman who had incredibly powerful prayer. We think “fervent, effective prayer” means someone who is talking loudly. No, brethren. It means your heart is in it. You can just be mouthing the words, or even just thinking the words – Father hears it! Remember Luke 18:1 about the Persistent widow? It starts with “...that they ought always to pray **and not to lose heart**”. You can read this next story in **1 Samuel 1**. Please be turning there.

Hannah, a woman we read about in 1 Samuel 1, wanted badly to have children. The “other wife” made her feel bad for not having children (v.6). One day she is at the Tabernacle praying from her heart and we can learn a LOT from this example by Hannah, so let's pick up in verse 8.

1 Samuel 1:8-20

8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

9 So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of Yahweh. 10 **And she**

was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to Yahweh and wept in anguish. 11 Then she made a vow and said, "O Yahweh of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

12 And it happened, as she continued praying before Yahweh, that Eli watched her mouth. 13 **Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.** Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!"

15 But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before Yahweh. 16 Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

17 Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him." [He blessed her. Let's start blessing one another more too!]

You know the rest of the story. Eventually Samuel was conceived and born for God was moved by her passion in her praying. Samuel means "Heard by El" or "heard by God".

Do you pray with your whole heart? Is your heart in your praying, or do you just go thru the motions? That's also why we should not pray ritual prayers, but prayers from our heart (Matthew 6:5-7)

So let's conclude with this thought: Our Father and Savior have not gone into retirement. They are still capable of everything we have ever read in the Bible. Elohim is the Almighty, the El Shaddai. If we're having hindered prayers, prayers that aren't going anywhere... there's a reason.

Pray for me too, and this website. There are over 100 sermons on this site, plus many blogs. If this site has blessed you, please spread the word. The sermons and information has always been free. And thank you for your prayers and other support. May Yahweh bless and keep you. 'Til next time, this is your servant and brother in Yeshua, Philip Shields, signing off.