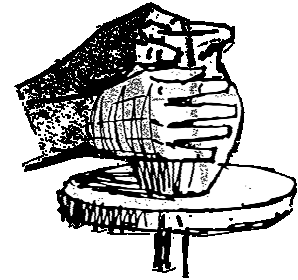


# His Workmanship: Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ  
Jesus for good works."*

—Ephesians 2:10



Vol. XXIV

March 8, 2015

No. 10

Isaiah 64:8

## So Your Prayers Will Not Be Hindered, by John

All answers to prayer depend on the death of Christ for our sins. The reason that a just and holy God is free to bless us with answers to prayer, even though we are sinners who deserve condemnation, is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and turned away the wrath of God from us. Everything beneficial, which fallen human beings have ever experienced, was purchased at Calvary. And therefore, all answers to prayer are free gifts based on God's mercy. We do not purchase answers to prayer by anything we say or do; we only plead for the overflow of mercy already purchased by the sacrifice of our Lord.

Answers to prayer also depend on our being obedient children. Becoming a Christian means being adopted into the family of God, so that all our praying is the talk of a child to his father. "I love you, daddy." "Thank you, daddy." "You're a good dad." "Daddy, I need help." If a child has certain bad attitudes and misbehaves, a good father will not give him everything he asks for. Accordingly, the Bible teaches that in order for our prayers to be answered, we must do our Father's will. Jesus said, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you," Jn 15:7. A child who disregards his father's

words (Christ's words are the Father's) is not fit to have his requests granted. We would not approve a father's behavior who did everything a rebellious child wanted—not just because the child doesn't deserve it, but because it would be bad for the child and a dishonor to the father's word. It is not good to confirm a child in his waywardness by giving him whatever he asks. No, if my words abide in you, son, then ask what you will and I'll do it.

Our heavenly Father would bring disgrace upon His own word and harm His children if He gave us whatever we asked for even while we were going on in some sin. This does not mean we must be sinlessly perfect in order to have our prayers answered, because then the prayer, "Forgive us our sins," would be a self-contradiction. You can't pray for your sins to be forgiven each day if you have to be free from all sin in order to have your prayers answered. Jesus did teach us to pray that our sins be forgiven, Mt 6:12. There is a difference between a perfect child and one who is characteristically obedient but not perfect. We must not presume to think that we can get God to do whatever we want if our hearts are not set on doing what He wants, 1 Jn 3:22; Jas 5:16; Jn 15:7; 9:31; Ps 66:16-19; Pr 15:29; Is 1:15; etc.

If we are unloving, irritable, holding a grudge, impatient, unkind, boastful, jealous, or resentful, we should not think that God is likely to answer our prayers. His will for us is that we love one another; therefore, He will be slow to prosper our cause when our attitudes are unloving.

Peter wrote, "You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered," 1 Pet 3:7. Then four verses later he said, "Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those that do evil," 3:11-12.

Surely, the word directed to husbands applies to both partners: if you are not considerate of each other, if you are not forgiving and kind and respectful at home, your prayers are going to be hindered, and not just in the making but in the answering. "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer." By "righteous" Peter means those who do what is right and loving in their family. And that is what James taught also, isn't it? "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has continued on p. 2

*continued from p. 1*

*great power in its effects,"* Jas 5:16. Why? Well, that is the way it is between a father and his child. A child who keeps his father's words and does what is right and humbly confesses his sins has clout with his father. He so honors his father's wisdom and goodness by following his ways, that the father feels compelled by his own honor to grant his child's requests. And besides that, he knows that whatever he gives his child will be an investment in righteousness and love.

God spoke to His wayward people Israel and said, *"When you spread forth your hands I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow,"* Is 1:15-18. Is there anyone here who conducts his business in a way that takes advantage of people, who deceives or exploits others? Is there anyone whose investments or procedures oppress and gouge the fatherless, the widow, the poor, or any disadvantaged people? If so, God's word to you is, *"Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen."* Christian, the answer to your prayers may depend on where your money is invested and how you do your business.

Two hundred years before Isaiah's time God said to Solomon, *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land,"* 2 Chr 7:14. The psalmist confirmed in his personal experience: *"I cried aloud to God, and He was extolled with my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer,"* Ps 66:17-19. Thus, we find it taught in the Old and New Testaments that if a child has certain bad attitudes and misbe-

haves, a good father will not give him everything he asks for. In order to have our prayers answered, we must be obedient children.

**Peter's Words about Prayer.** Peter mentioned prayer three times in his first letter. First, Peter had a word for husbands about prayer and their relationship with their wives, 3:7. Second, in the very next paragraph, v. 8, he spoke to all believers about being brotherly and kindhearted and humble and not returning evil for evil but instead giving a blessing. To support these admonitions he quoted Psalm 34 in vs. 10-12. Third, in 4:7 he said, *"The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer [literally: for the sake of prayers]."*

**What Is the Common Thread?** Now what is the unusual common thread running through those three references to prayer? All three teach us not that praying helps us live right, but that living right helps us pray. Now it's true that praying is one of the ways God has appointed to help us live the way we should (cf. Col 1:9-10). But Peter's point in every one of these texts is that it's true the other way around: God has appointed a way for us to live which will help us pray. There are ways to live that hinder prayers, and there is a way to live that helps prayer.

#### **Right Living Helps Our Praying.**

Let's look at these similarities again and ask, "what is Peter telling us about how living helps praying?"

#### **How Husbands Live with Their**

**Wives.** The first one in 3:7 tells husbands that there is a way to live with their wives that can clog their prayers, and a way to live with their wives that will help their prayers. If a man wants his prayers to be helped and not hindered he has to live with his wife in a certain way. There has to be an effort to understand her so as to know her needs. There has to be a special solicitude of her weaknesses and

what she especially needs from him. There has to be a recognition that she is a fellow heir of the grace of life and an accompanying bestowal of honor rather than any belittling or demeaning. When husbands live like this (with understanding, tender care, and honor), their prayers will not be hindered. If they do not live like this, their prayers will be hindered.

Here's how one good commentary put it: *"So concerned is God that Christian [sic] husbands live in an understanding and loving way with their wives, that He 'interrupts' His relationship with them when they are not doing so. No husband should presume to think that any spiritual good will be accomplished by his life without an effective ministry of prayer. And no husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife 'in an understanding way, bestowing honor' on her. To take the time to develop and maintain a good marriage is God's will; it is serving God; it is a spiritual activity pleasing in His sight,"* Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, p. 146. There is a way to live with wives that clogs prayers and ruins spiritual impact. And there is a way to live with wives that frees prayers and helps empower spiritual impact.

**How All Believers Live.** Second, Peter goes on in vs. 8-9 to call all of us, not just husbands, to be sympathetic, and brotherly-affectioned, kindhearted, and humble, and not to return evil for evil but to bless those who are unkind to us. Then he gives a reason for why we should live like this from Psalm 34; in v. 12 the reason comes to a climax with the same argument as in 3:7, namely, prayers are hindered if you don't live this way. God has a special openness to the prayers of those who pursue peace and whose lips are pure and who don't use guile (deceit). *"For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil,"* v. 12.

God listens to the prayers of those who live like this: they keep their

*continued on p. 3*



**God makes my heart clean in 2015** “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” —Ps 51:10

**Hindered Prayers**, from p. 2  
tongue from evil, refrain from guile, seek peace, do righteousness. So here again Peter is telling us how to keep our prayers from being hindered. It's the same thing Jesus was teaching in the Lord's Prayer when He told us to pray, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us," Mt 6:12. Not forgiving those who repent will clog our prayers. That's Peter's point, too. There is a way to live that hinders our prayers and a way to live that helps our prayers.

**Special Endeavors We Can Make.**  
Third, in 4:7 he says that there are special endeavors we can make so that our prayers will be helped and not hindered: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the sake of prayers." Two things: first, be of sound judgment for the sake of your prayers; second, be of sober spirit for the sake of your prayers. In other words, there is a way to think and live that will hinder your prayers and a way to think and live that will help your prayers.

**The Truth from These Texts.** So there is a doctrine—a Biblical truth—that we can now state with great confidence from these texts: Christians must endeavor to live in a way that does not hinder their prayers. It has three parts:

1. It implies that prayers can be hindered. Our prayers can be clogged, blocked.
2. What blocks prayer is often our lives—the way we live, the way we relate to wives or husbands or kids or

## Discipleship Here At Home

parents or colleagues or neighbors.  
3. Opening the way of prayer to God involves a conscious endeavor. In each of these texts Peter is telling us to resolve to do something so that our prayers will not be hindered.

In other words a free, open, real, satisfying life of prayer is not automatic. It doesn't just happen to you while you are passive. If it did, these three texts would be pointless. Your prayers in 2015 depend in part—under God and His enabling grace, 1 Cor 15:10—on how you choose to live at home and at work and in your private life of solitude. So another way to state the doctrine: do whatever you must do so that your prayers are not hindered. Form the resolution right now in your heart that you will not be passive about your prayer life this week, that you will take some active steps to make it good.

**Why Does It Matter?** You don't want your prayers to be hindered because hindered prayers mean that you are not connecting with God and that God himself starts to seem distant and unreal. Now, for an unbeliever who has never known a peaceful, personal walk with God, that would not be so unusual. Unless the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives, they have deadened themselves to Him. But for a person who has known God, loved Him, and tasted the sweetness of peace and fellowship and a sense of being right with God, nothing is more terrifying than the growing feeling that God does not seem to be there anymore.

- To wake up in the morning or to go to bed at night and to lie there and stare at the ceiling and feel, "It's not real. He's not listening."
- To feel like all the bolts in your mind are coming loose. Your thoughts won't hold still long enough to focus on anything, let alone God; there's an uneasy rattling and slipping of instability.

continued on p. 4

### PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

· **Ed Fink**—prostate cancer, treatment for brain tumors  
· **Pat Wilkes**—surgery recovery for torn shoulder tendon

· **Megan Sangellino**—Lasik eye surgery recovery

· **Bill Dennis**—moved to Bear Creek Rehab Ctr, 150 Spring St, Morrison 80465, 720-550-4695 following infected knee drainage; pseudo-gout

· **Sandra Perry**—possible kidney failure, may need dialysis or transplant; heart valve issues recently diagnosed; neuropathy from diabetes

· **Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, at St. Jude's in Memphis for brain cancer treatment; donate at [www.youcaring.com](http://www.youcaring.com), type her name at top

· **Judy Strand**—to schedule heart valve surgery Mon; hep C; approved for liver transplant

· **Mark Campbell**—in hospital last wk, Gr Junction

· **Chris Bennett**, former member—all tools for biz stolen; recovering from fall, fractured pelvis

· **Buford Wrather, Cheryl Reames's dad**—stroke, complicated by Parkinson's; in CO Springs

· **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's grandmother**—third stage pancreatic cancer; chemo

· **Judy Sartin**—cold; rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis; arthritis

· **Brittany Tope's mother**—breast cancer in spine; pain in broken ribs which tumor has injured; grandmother—on dialysis

· **Kim Howell's niece Tonya Robison**—delivered 32-week, 2 lb, 5 oz **Malachi Taylor Robison** Fri; he will be in NICU in Louisville, KY, at least a month

· **Kenny Boyd's coworker Kim Phillips**—asks our prayers for heart problems

· **Rick Robbins**, friend of Howells—brain surgery

### CHRONIC CONDITIONS

**Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Tim Huelsman**—asthma

**Nell Free**—pacemaker, heart; back pain

**Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease

**Jonathan Hadders**—RA

**Danielle Huelsman**—vertigo, CV syndrome

**Hannah Huelsman**—polycythemia, thickening of blood; heart murmur, acid reflux, chest pain

**Kirk Johnson**—MS

**Menards**—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;

**Virginia**, macular degeneration; high BP

**Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia

**Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness

“The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.”

—Søren Kierkegaard

### **So Your Prayers Are Not Hindered, from p. 3**

• To try to formulate a prayer and feel utterly phony because your mind is so full of worldly stuff and earthly feelings and fleshly desires that a sweet, peaceful, confident communion with God in prayer seems about as possible as flying to the moon.

These are terrifying experiences for a Christian who has known peace with God and unhindered communion with Him. Peter wants to spare you that. We want to avoid it at any price.

**Resolve to Take Peter's Teaching Seriously.** So Peter tells us: live in a way that does not hinder your prayers. Resolve this morning that you will take his teaching seriously and seek to do whatever you need to do to unclog your prayers and set them free.

• It may be that changes need to be made at home. Nothing is more important than unclogging the streams of prayer and power that are clogged at home.

• It may be that changes need to be made in the wider circle of relationships where there is bitterness or guile.

• Or it may be that there are simple awakenings that need to happen concerning the pattern of prayer in your life. When Peter says, "*Be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the sake of prayers,*" 4:7, he means that there are disciplines of the mind and the spirit which can preserve unhindered prayer in your life.

This is what God wants you to especially hear: make time for freshly awakened sound judgment regarding what hinders prayer in your life and sobriety of spirit regarding prayer. Sound mind. Sober spirit.

**Jesus Does Not Kiss a Drunk Wife.** Jesus does not kiss a drunk wife. He may carry her off the street and back home. He may be utterly patient with her, and set before her hot coffee and fresh starts. But he will not kiss a drunk wife. What do I mean? I mean that when the bride of Christ, the church, is drunk with the world, she may turn to Him for a brief kiss of prayer, but her breath wreaks so bad of worldliness that He turns His face away.

**Nobody Coasts into Sobriety.** "*Be sober for the sake of your prayers,*" Peter says. But whoever sobered up by coasting? Nobody coasts into sobriety. Not physical sobriety, and not spiritual sobriety. Sobriety happens when we begin to use sound judgment about our lives, sound judgment about how we spend our time, sound judgment about the spiritual climate of our homes, sound judgment about the worldliness of our leisure, sound judgment about the music we listen to, the movies we attend, the TV we watch.

Nobody sobers up without intentional steps to get the bottles of worldliness off the shelves, out of the cabinet, and out of the house. When that happens, then the spiritual breath begins to clear up and the kiss of prayer is not hindered.

**Helping Each Other to This End.** There are many ways we can be helpful to each other, many things God has been teaching some of you, and you can teach and exhort and encourage and if necessary rebuke each other. Pray about what God might want you to say to others, about questions and struggles to be shared. We need to hear about the real world of prayer warfare that you are waging.



meets at  
13789 W. 8th Avenue  
Golden, Colorado 80401  
720-295-4530

#### **Pastors**

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810  
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

#### **Preacher**

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

[info@thechurchingolden.com](mailto:info@thechurchingolden.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

### *Assembly Schedule*

#### **Sunday**

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

#### **Wednesday**

Bible classes	7:30 pm
---------------	---------

#### **Sunday morning**

• **adult Bible class**, Lesson 5,  
"I Have Become A Christian! Now  
What?" Jim Reingrover

• **Sermon**, "Peter's Epistle to Westside:  
1 Peter 3, Submission," Jim Reingrover

#### **Sunday afternoon**

• "A Christian's Personal Devotion," Nor-  
man Saayman, Uitenhage, South Africa

**Wednesday night class: Daniel: Deter-  
mined to Walk with God, chapter 9**