A silhouette of a person with long hair, seen from the side, with their hands clasped in prayer. The background is a warm, out-of-focus sunset or sunrise.

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# **How to Pray Effectively**

## **21 Hindrances to Prayer**

**21 Days of**  
**Global Consecration**





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# Introduction

We appreciate your heart and willingness to join Jesus in prayer! There is nothing greater that we can do to release His will and advance His kingdom on earth. However, just because we pray does not mean God will answer. This guide is designed to help you not only pray but also experience **answered prayer**.

We see from God's Word that the most **powerful and effective way** to pray—whether in supplication, intercession, or spiritual warfare—is to declare the Word. We see that even Jesus opposed and resisted Satan with the Word (Matthew 4:4; James 4:7). Angels obey His commands (Psalm 103:20). The Lord watches over His Word to perform it (Jeremiah 1:12). His Word never returns void but always accomplishes His purpose (Isaiah 55:11).

Because of this, when we pray, we should use the Word first. Jesus, the apostles, and the early Church prayed using the Word. They declared Scripture, releasing the Lord's will (the answer) from heaven onto the earth, rather than focusing on the problem. They prayed specific verses that would transform and impact the Church, the sinner, the city, and the nation.

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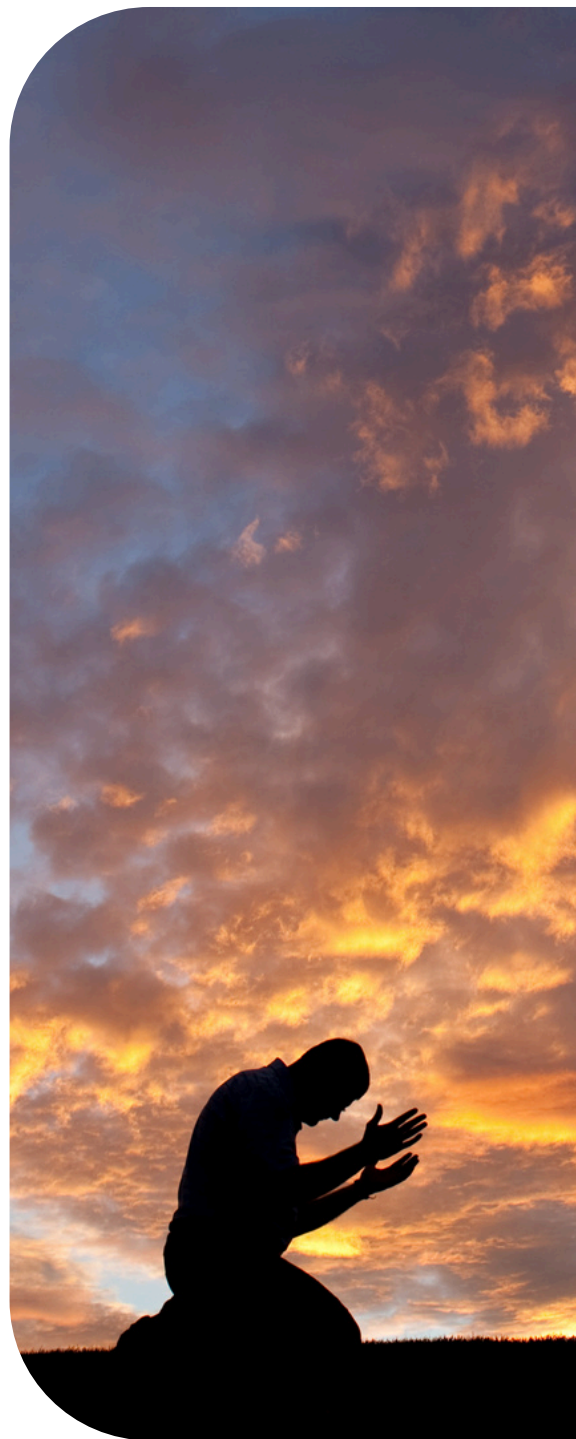
# Our greatest function

Our greatest function now and in the age to come is to be a royal priesthood (Revelation 5:10). We can and must intercede and repent for the sins of the church, people, and places for which we pray. However, just as the priests in the Bible could not stand in the gap and offer repentance for the sins of others until they themselves had repented and were holy before the Lord, we also must repent and confess our sins before we have full authority to intercede and ask forgiveness for the sins of others. Only then can we engage in biblical spiritual warfare: first removing all legal rights of Satan through repentance, then renouncing the authority and legal claims the enemy possesses because of those sins, and finally declaring the Word, Lordship, and authority of Jesus Christ.

Because of population and church growth and the increase in prayer in recent decades, we probably have more prayer being released on the earth than ever before in history. But we do not see the same power in prayer that marked the early Church. We have more churches than ever, yet evil continues to increase in our communities and nation. One reason is that we do not pray the Word as often as we should. Another major reason is that our prayers are not effective. We must obey 2 Chronicles 7:14 until the Lord hears us again and answers our prayers.

One of the **main obstacles** to the power of corporate prayer is the presence of intentional sin, offense, division, or unforgiveness among those gathered. This is why Jesus' response is so strong: He said that if a person does not listen and repent, they should be removed from the church, because if they remain, there can be no agreement in prayer (Matthew 18:15-21).

True repentance is not only asking God to forgive us but also committing to change our lives from that moment forward—it is literally “turning from our wicked ways” (2 Chronicles 7:14). Below are verses highlighting areas that hinder our prayers, where we must repent personally before praying, and then ask God for forgiveness on behalf of the Church in our city and nation. True repentance results in a commitment before God, by His grace, to stop sinning and to obey what He commands in His Word.



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# Hindrances to prayer

Several topics and verses indicate that God either directly says He **will not hear our prayers** or that the consequences and context imply it. The greatest of these is unforgiveness, which prevents our own sins from being forgiven. When we harbor intentional or unrepentant sin, God does **not listen to us**.

Even though there may be things in our lives that could hinder our prayers, we trust His mercy and still come before Him with confidence and faith because of the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19). The fervent prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Because of the sacrifice of Christ, we have been given the very righteousness of God, so when we pray, our faith rests not in our own righteousness but in His.

## HINDRANCES TO PRAYER - VERSES

### 1. Sin and iniquity

John 9:31 – “We know that God **does not listen to sinners**, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, God listens to him.”

Galatians 5:19-21 – “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will **not inherit the kingdom of God**.”

Isaiah 59:2 – “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He **will not hear**.”

Psalms 66:18 – “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the **Lord would not have listened**.”

### 2. Lack of Forgiveness

Mark 11:25 – “And 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.”

Matthew 6:14-15 – “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Ephesians 4:32 – “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

### 3. Lack of Abiding / Intimacy

John 15:5 – “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for **apart from me you can do nothing.**”

John 15:7 – “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

Jeremiah 29:12-13 – “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and **I will hear you.** You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”

2 Chronicles 7:14 – “If my people who are called by my name 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.”

### 4. Lack of Love / Broken Relationships

1 Corinthians 13:2 – “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but have not love,** I am nothing.” (useless, worthless, good for nothing, **completely ineffective**) (Greek: οὐθέν εἰμι [Outhen eimi])

Matthew 5:23-24 – “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

1 John 4:20 – “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

1 John 4:8 – “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

John 13:34-35 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

### 5. Lack of Faith

Hebrews 11:6 – “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for **whoever would draw near to God must believe** that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.”

Matthew 17:20 – “He said to them, ‘**Because of your little faith.** For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.’”

### 6. Disobedience

John 14:15 – “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”



Proverbs 1:28-29 – “Then they will call upon me, **but I will not answer**; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”

## 7. Divided Loyalty

James 4:4 – “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world **makes himself an enemy of God.**”

Matthew 6:25 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord].

## 8. Idolatry

Ezekiel 14:3 – “Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them?” (idol of the heart can be anything that we value, trust in, spend more of our free time or money on than God)

Jeremiah 11:10-11 – “They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers. Therefore, thus says the Lord, Behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though they cry to me, **I will not listen to them.**”

## 9. Vain Repetitions / Empty Words

Matthew 6:7 – “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for **they think that they will be heard for their many words.**”

## 10. Pride and Self-Righteousness

Luke 18:10-14 – “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

James 4:6 – “But He gives more grace. Therefore, it says, **‘God opposes the proud** but gives grace to the humble.’”(He will oppose our prayers)

## 11. Incorrect Motives

James 4:3 – “**You ask and do not receive**, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

Matthew 6:5 – “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, **they have received their reward.**”

## 12. Praying Contrary To God's Will & Word

1 John 5:14-15 – “And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He **hears us** in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.”

Luke 22:42 – “Saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’”

Proverbs 28:9 – “If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, **even his prayer is an abomination.**”

## 13. Not Asking Specifically Or In His Name

James 4:2 – “You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. **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.** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

John 16:24 – “Until now you have asked **nothing in my name.** Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

## 14. Lack of Persistence

Luke 18:1 – “And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought **always to pray and not lose heart.**”

Luke 18:7-8 – “And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them? I tell you, **He will give justice to them speedily.** Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?”

Hebrews 10:36 – “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you **may receive what is promised.**”

## 15. Stubborn Refusal to Listen / Hardening the Heart

Zechariah 7:13 – “‘As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, **and I would not hear,**’ says the Lord of hosts.”

## 16. Mistreating Spouse

1 Peter 3:7 – “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so **that your prayers may not be hindered.**”

## 17. Corrupt Spiritual Leadership and Exploitation Of Believers

Micah 3:4 – “Then they will cry to the Lord, but **He will not answer them;** He will hide His face from them at that time, because they have made their deeds evil.”

## 18. Double-Mindedness

James 1:6-8 – “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person **must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

## 19. Justice for Orphans and Widows Ignored

Isaiah 1:15-17 – “When you spread out 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 deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.”

James 1:27 – “**Religion that is pure and undefiled** before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”



## 20. Neglecting the Poor

Proverbs 21:13 – “Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself **call out and not be answered.**”

Isaiah 58:6-9 – “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am’.”

Matthew 25:45 – “Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

## 21. Prayers That Test God

Matthew 4:7 – “Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Isaiah 7:12-13 – “But Ahaz said, ‘**I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.**’ And he said, ‘Hear then, O house of David! Is it too

Psalms 78:18

“They tested God in their heart **by demanding the food they craved.**”



## Apostolic Prayers

You can [access here](#) documents with key verses Jesus and His apostles prayed. However, feel free to pray any other verses the Holy Spirit gives you.

It is important to **be specific when praying!** Say what, who, or where you are praying the Word. You do not have to pray the entire verse. You can pray the whole verse or just part of it.

**Example:** “*I pray Ephesians 1:17: Father, I ask that you give a spirit of wisdom and revelation to the young people of the Church in Houston, United States, to grow in the knowledge of who You are!*” Then pray the verse in your own words: *Father, reveal Christ to them in a greater way. Give them dreams, visions, and encounters. May they be radical followers of Jesus, sick with love. May they not love the world or the things of the world, but may they love only You! In Jesus’ name, amen!*”



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# Let's spread the word!

## 1. Reflect and Apply

Set aside time today to apply what you've read. Write your prayers, repent before the Lord, ask Him to speak to you personally and to give you grace to make necessary changes in your life.

## 2. Share the Journey

Don't take this journey alone. Invite your family, cell group, and church to join you in the 21 Days of Consecration:

- ➡ Share on your social networks what we've posted
- 📢 Download our materials at [globalconsecration.org/mobilize](https://globalconsecration.org/mobilize) and share in your own church/social media.
- 📝 Post a sentence of what God spoke to you.
- 🔗 Use #GlobalConsecration on [Instagram](#)/[Facebook](#) and tag us

## 3. Prepare for what's coming

You will receive more materials over the next few weeks. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart for what comes next.

## 4. Witness and Unity

You've already begun a historic journey with other Christians across the world. Pray that they will remain steadfast and for more to join you.

*For testimonies, access [globalconsecration.org/testimony](https://globalconsecration.org/testimony) to share what God is already doing in your heart.*

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