

What Hinders Prevailing Prayer?

By D.L. Moody

CLASSICS
Time-tested Truths



How often we go to prayer meetings without really asking for anything! Our prayers go all round the world, without anything definite being asked for. We do not expect anything. Many people would be greatly surprised if God did answer their prayers.

I remember hearing of a very eloquent man who was leading a meeting in prayer. There was not a single definite petition in the whole. A poor, earnest woman shouted out: "Ask Him, man." How often you hear what is called prayer without any asking! "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The only way to trouble God is not to come at all. He encourages us to come to Him repeatedly, and press our claims.

I believe you will find three kinds of Christians in the church today. The first are those who ask; the second those who seek; and the third those who knock.

"Teacher," said a bright, earnest-faced boy, "why is it that so many prayers are unanswered? I do not understand. The Bible says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' but it seems to me a great many knock and are not admitted."

“Did you never sit by your cheerful parlor fire,” said the teacher, “on some dark evening, and hear a loud knocking at the door? Going to answer the summons, have you not sometimes looked out into the darkness, seeing nothing, but hearing the pattering feet of some mischievous boy, who knocked but did not wish to enter, and therefore ran away? Thus is it often with us. We ask for blessings, but do not really expect them; we knock, but do not mean to enter; we fear that Jesus will not hear us, will not fulfill His promises, will not admit us; and so we go away.”

“Ah, I see,” said the earnest-faced boy, “Jesus cannot be expected to answer runaway knocks. He has never promised it. I mean to keep knocking, knocking, until He cannot help opening the door.”

Too often we knock at mercy’s door, and then run away, instead of waiting for an entrance and an answer. Thus we act as if we were afraid of having our prayers answered.

A great many people pray in that way; they do not wait for the answer. Our Lord teaches us here that we are not only to ask, but we are to wait for the answer; if it does not come, we must seek to find out the reason. I believe that we get a good many blessings just by asking; others we do not get, because there may be something in our life that needs to be brought to light.

Earnest, Knocking Prayer

Prayer is hardly ever mentioned in the Bible alone; it is prayer and earnestness; prayer and watchfulness; prayer and thanksgiving. The highest type of Christian is the one who has got clear beyond asking and seeking, and keeps knocking till the answer comes. If we knock, God has promised to open the door and grant our request. It may be years before the answer comes; He may keep us knocking; but He has promised that the

answer will come.

I heard of a wife in England who had an unconverted husband. She resolved that she would pray every day for twelve months for his conversion. Every day at twelve o'clock she went to her room alone and cried to God. Her husband would not allow her to speak to him on the subject; but she could speak to God on his behalf. The twelve months passed away, and there was no sign of his yielding. She resolved to pray for six months longer; so every day she went alone and prayed for the conversion of her husband. The six months passed, and still there was no sign, no answer.

The question arose in her mind, could she give him up?

"No," she said; "I will pray for him as long as God gives me breath."

That very day, when he came home to dinner, instead of going into the dining room he went upstairs. She waited, and waited, and waited; but he did not come down to dinner. Finally she went to his room, and found him on his knees crying to God to have mercy upon him. God convicted him of sin; he not only became a Christian, but the Word of God had free course, and was glorified in him. God used him mightily. That was God answering the prayers of this Christian wife; she knocked, and knocked, till the answer came.

We cannot be too frequent in our requests; God will not weary of His children's prayers. Sir Walter Raleigh asked a favor of Queen Elizabeth, to which she replied, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?"

"When your Majesty leaves off giving," he replied.

So long must we continue praying.

D.L. MOODY (1837–1899) was an American evangelist and publisher who founded Moody Church, the Moody Bible Institute,

and Moody Publishers.

Taken from *Prayer Connect* magazine.