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“Five Things That Hinder Our Prayers”

Daniel 10

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Everyone knows that we need to pray more, but few of us actually pray. In Daniel 10 we learn some important things about “the other side of prayer.” What happens in the heavenly realm – the unseen spirit realm – regarding our prayers? Did you know that there are angels and demons who battle in the heavenlies when we pray? In addition to the spiritual warfare in the heavenly realm, in this message Pastor Gary shares about things that have the potential to hinder our prayer life.

Historical Background

1. Pastor Gary said, “Prayer in its simplest definition is communing and communicating with God. ... It’s [an opportunity for us] to connect [our] heart with the heart of God. And in the process, it can be about two things: a list and a listen.”
2. The Bible instructs us to bring our “lists” to God, but it’s also about listening.
 - a. **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; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*
 - b. **Psalms 46:10** – *“Be still, and know that I am God...”*
 - c. **John 10:27** – *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*
3. Pastor Gary said, “If everything we prayed for happened the way we wanted it [to happen] and when we wanted it [to happen], we’d be motivated to pray, wouldn’t we? If God was like a slot machine and every time we prayed it was like dropping money in the machine and then winning the jackpot, we’d be praying all the [time]! ... God is not a slot machine and prayer doesn’t work that way. So, when we don’t get what we want when we want it, we get discouraged and we pray less. And to make matters worse, there are things that we can actually do to sabotage our

[prayers].”

4. Daniel was a man of prayer, and we see the evidence of his unrelenting prayer life throughout this book.
5. In Daniel 10 we read about a message Daniel received from Jesus concerning the Tribulation, an event but that was going to be in the future.¹
 - a. **Daniel 10:5-6** - *“I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.”*
 - b. We know that Jesus is the one referred to because there is a similar description of Jesus in Revelation 1:12-16.
 - i. **Revelation 1:12-16** - *“Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.”*
6. When Daniel was *“in a deep sleep”* an unnamed angel took the place of Jesus.
 - a. **Daniel 10:10-14, 20-21** - *“Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. 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. 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. 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. 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. ... Then he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.)’*

¹ Revelation 6-18

- b. Pastor Gary said, “[These] references are not to human, physical beings. These are references are to spiritual beings.”

Things That Hinder Prayer - Unseen Warfare

7. Pastor Gary said, “We need to understand some [basic things]. There is a seen realm, [which] is where we exist right now. There is an unseen realm. That’s the difference between [the natural and the spiritual]. ... God exists in the spirit realm, in the heavenlies, in the unseen realm, as do angels and demons. ... We are surrounded by angels and demons, [but we] can’t see them. They are present in the unseen realm. ... They can at times [and] in different ways manifest themselves. ... There can be encounters we have with [beings] that we think are people, but they might actually be angels that have taken on physical form. ... Demons can actually manifest themselves by possessing a person who is not a Believer. ... We learn in this passage that there is a battle going on in the unseen realm between [the] angel that God has dispatched with a message for Daniel and *“the prince of Persia.”*”
- a. **Hebrews 13:2** - *“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.”*
8. The angel told Daniel that his prayer was heard, but the answer was delayed because there was a spiritual battle between the angel and *“the prince of Persia”* that lasted three weeks!
9. The angel told Daniel that if it hadn’t been for the archangel Michael joining him in battle, there might have been a longer delay.
- a. **Jude 9** - *“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’ ”*
10. **Ephesians 6:12** - *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*
11. We learn from Daniel 10 that there are territorial demons that are assigned to certain countries, regions, and cities, and their motive is to influence and oppress for evil.
12. Pastor Gary said, “It is very likely that is the explanation for why certain countries and cities seem to be so dominated, more so than others, in regard to crime or sex trafficking or murder. And it is likely a reason why certain regions and countries seem to be so spiritually dark. [For example,] voodoo lingers like a dark cloud over

places like Haiti and some nations of the Caribbean and west African countries [in which] more than sixty million people practice voodoo, which is basically a form of witchcraft. When that is happening, you better believe that demonic principalities have greater influence over those territories. [Think about the United States and] certain geographical regions where there seems to be spiritual darkness more so than other geographical regions. [Consider] New England for just a moment. New England was the bedrock of Christianity when the early settlers came [to America]. ... [If you do a little research] you will find that the first and second Great Awakenings [in which] revival spread across our country, emanated from New England [in the 18th century]. ... Out of [these periods of revival] were birthed Christian colleges, seminaries, and universities [that were created] with the explicit purpose of training pastors and missionaries to go out and share the Gospel. The schools in New England that were established as Christian colleges and universities and seminaries [include] Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Brown, Dartmouth, Columbia, [which] are all in New England. ... And now today, in what once was the bedrock of Christianity is the bastion of secularism. There are no large churches in New England [as compared] with the 'Bible Belt' of the south. Those institutions that were once strongly evangelical, pro-Christ, and [for] training pastors and missionaries are now some of the most liberal, anti-God institutions in our country. Why? Could it be that there are demonic principalities that are influencing regions as it appears to be the case in Daniel [chapter ten]?"

13. Daniel didn't do anything to invite spiritual warfare, so it's sometimes the case that spiritual warfare comes because we, like Daniel, are living for the Lord and doing his will.

14. Pastor Gary said, "Prayer delayed is not prayer denied. ... Be persistent in praying."

Things That Hinder Prayer - Unconfessed Sin

15. **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."*

16. **Psalm 66:18** - *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."*

- a. The Hebrew word for regard is ra'ah, which means to give attention to or to coddle.
- b. Giving attention to or coddling sin instead of confession will hinder prayer.

17. Pastor Gary said, "If [we] walk in direct disobedience to the known will of God, how can [we] ever expect God to reveal something to [us] as [we] pray to him?"

18. The great news for us is that when we confess our sin to the Lord, he will forgive us!

- a. **Psalm 32:5** - *"I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."*

Things That Hinder Prayer - Unforgiving Heart

19. **Mark 11:25a** - *"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."*
20. **Matthew 6:15** - *"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

Things That Hinder Prayer - Uncaring Attitudes

21. **Proverbs 21:13** - *"Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard."*
22. Pastor Gary said, "If we make our desires known while at the same time ignoring the needs of other people around us, then we are hindering our prayers from ever reaching the ears of God. We need to be mindful of people less fortunate than ourselves and minister to them, and help them and supply their needs, and attend to them, and have a caring heart and a caring attitude. Otherwise our prayers will be hindered."
23. **Matthew 25:34-40** - *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see you a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "*

Things That Hinder Prayer - Unacceptable Motives

24. **James 4:3** - *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."*

25. When we make our requests known to God, we should always defer to the will of God.
- [Luke 22:42](#) - “[Jesus said,] ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ ”
 - [Matthew 6:10b](#) - “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”
 - [1 John 5:14-15](#) - “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”
26. [Ephesians 3:20](#) - “[He] is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think...”
27. Pastor Gary said, “Never doubt God’s ability to [answer] your prayers, but always make sure that your faith is in him, and [that] you defer to his will. Let’s be consistent in prayer, and persistent in prayer, and in God’s timing, according to God’s will, watch him do immeasurably more than all we could ever ask or imagine.”

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Daniel 10:1-9](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s definition of prayer. (See #1 above)
3. Read and discuss [Philippians 4:6-7](#), [Psalm 46:10](#), and [John 10:27](#). (See #2 above)
4. How has your understanding of prayer changed since you came to faith in the Lord? (See #3 above)
5. Read and discuss [Daniel 10:5-6](#), [10-14](#), [20-21](#). (See #5 and #6 above)
6. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s comments about unseen warfare. (See #7 above)
7. Read and discuss Ephesians 6:12. (See #10 through #12 above)
8. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they recognized the reality of spiritual warfare.
9. Does the fact that spiritual warfare is real move you to pray more?
10. Read and discuss [Isaiah 59:2](#) and [Psalm 66:18](#). (See #15 and #16 above)

11. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they recognized that unconfessed sin was a hinderance to their prayers and their relationship with the Lord. (See #17 above)
12. Read and discuss [Mark 11:25a](#) and [Matthew 6:15](#).
13. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they recognized that an unforgiving heart was a hinderance to their prayers and their relationship with the Lord.
14. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they recognized that an uncaring attitude was a hinderance to their prayers and their relationship with the Lord.
15. Read and discuss [Proverbs 21:13](#) and [Matthew 25:34-40](#).
16. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they recognized that unacceptable motives were a hinderance to their prayers and their relationship with the Lord.
17. Read and discuss [James 4:3](#), [Luke 22:42](#), [Matthew 6:10b](#), and [1 John 5:14-15](#). (See #24 and #25 above)
18. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)