



## Prayerlessness: A Reflection of Self-Centeredness

Only God can help us discover the real power and personal impact of sin, even though we may know the “definition” of sin. This is especially true with regard to prayerlessness. To begin with, prayerlessness indicates a lack of belief in the necessity of depending on Christ for all aspects of life (John 15:5). When we do not depend on the Lord and fail to follow His plan for our lives, then we are on shaky ground indeed (Matthew 7:26-27).

Neglecting to pray, with the excuses we make for it, is a greater sin than we know. It shows that we have little desire for fellowship with God and that our “faith” rests more on our own efforts than on the power of God. It demonstrates that we have little sense of what God can do with and through us. It reveals that we are not ready to sacrifice the ease and confidence of the flesh in order to wait on God. It proves that the spirituality of our lives—our abiding in Christ—is altogether too weak to drive us to prevail in prayer. It also reveals that we are not fully aware that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12). Life involves spiritual warfare; and the battles are won through prayer (Ephesians 6:18) . . . or lost, by prayerlessness or self-centered asking (James 4:2-3).

We may use the busyness of our daily lives, or even our work for Christ, as an excuse for not finding time to seek Him as our chief need. When that occurs, our sense of absolute dependence on God has been misplaced. It shows we have no significant understanding of the work of God in which we are His instruments. Furthermore, our prayerlessness indicates a lack of surrender to and delight in Christ Himself.

If we would allow God’s Spirit to show us that prayerlessness and misplaced priorities go hand in hand, then our reasons for failing to pray would vanish. We would cry, “We have sinned!” The prophet Samuel once said, “far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you” (1 Samuel 12:23).

We can’t get away from the reality that prayerlessness is sin against God. It is sin against the Body of Christ. It is sin against our friends and family. It is sin against those who do not know Christ. It is self-centeredness that needs to be confessed.

May God reveal the awesome responsibility of our need to pray as a way of life. We need to meditate on what it means to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We need to recognize the necessity of “devoting ourselves to prayer” (Colossians 4:2). We need to see that prayer is the divine alternative to worry and anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7). We need to know the correlation between a life of loving obedience to Scripture and answered prayer (1 John 3:22).

May our response to the privilege and responsibility of prayer be, simply, to pray. If there is **little or no** desire to pray, then start praying that God would give you and other believers an overwhelming desire to draw near to Him through prayer.

### SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

**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.”

**Matthew 7:26-27**, “And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

**Ephesians 6:12**, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

**Ephesians 6:18**, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints

**James 4:2b-3**, . . . You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

**1 Samuel 12:23**, “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.”

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

**Colossians 4:2**, Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

**Philippians 4:6-7**, Do not be anxious about anything, 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 your minds in Christ Jesus.

**1 John 3:22**, and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.