

PURSUING OUR CAPACITY

A person with a backpack stands on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast, hazy mountain range under a clear sky.

Praying With Intention

Hindrances to Prayer

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Wrong motive | James 4:3 |
| 2. Unforgiving spirit | Mark 11:25-26 |
| 3. Wrong treatment of spouse | 1 Peter 3:7 |
| 4. Harbours sin | Psalms 66:18 |
| 5. Unbelief | James 1:6-7 |
| 6. Idolatry | Ezekiel 14:1-11 |
| 7. Fear | Numbers 13 |

John 11:32-38 ESV

³² Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, **he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.** ³⁴ And he said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ **Jesus wept.** ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?” ³⁸ Then Jesus, **deeply moved again,** came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

1. Emotions

- **Trigger**
- **Result (a change because of)**
- **Effect (a change in the person)**

1 Sam. 1:10-18 NIV

¹⁰ In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, **weeping bitterly...**

¹⁵ “I am a woman who is **deeply troubled**. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD... ¹⁸ ... she **went her way and ate** something,...her face was **no longer downcast**.

- **Deterrent? (remember Cain)**

Acts 4:24-30 NIV

²⁴ ...“**Sovereign Lord,**” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ **You spoke by the Holy Spirit** through the mouth of your servant, our father David: ““Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain?...²⁷ **Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met** together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ **They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.** ²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to **heal and perform signs and wonders** through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

2. Intelligence

1. Evaluating the situation / desire / need
2. Recalling God's nature, name and words
3. Choosing to believe
4. Rightly applying knowledge

John 5:39-40 NIV

³⁹ You **study the Scriptures diligently** because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that **testify about me,** ⁴⁰ **yet you refuse** to come to me to have life.

Luke 18: 9-14 NIV

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ ¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**’

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home **justified before God**. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

3. Humility

- Soberness
- Repentance
- Gratefulness
- Dependent on Christ
- Obedience

“That which brings the praying soul near to God is humility of heart. That which gives wings to prayer is lowliness of mind...It gives access to God when other qualities fail. Its full portrait is found only in the Lord Jesus. *Our prayers must be set low before they can ever rise high*”

Mathew 21:18-21 NLT

¹⁸ ...as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, ¹⁹ and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” And immediately the fig tree withered up. ²⁰ The disciples were amazed when they saw this and asked, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?”

²¹ Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, **if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more.** You can even say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. ²² **You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.”**

4. Faith

“You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it.”

1 John 5:14-15 NIV

¹⁴ “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him”

Faith → Confidence → Trust → Alignment → His Will Be Done.

5. Persistence

Luke 18: 1-8 NIV *Parable of a Persistent Widow*

¹...Jesus told his disciples ...they should **always pray and not give up**. ² ...“In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town **who kept coming to him** with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally,... ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice... ⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And **will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?** ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. **However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”**

6. The Holy Spirit

Without the Holy Spirit

- deadness in prayer
- difficulty in prayer
- tongue-tied
- distracted
- nothing to say
- force ourselves to pray
- not feeling like
- babble

With the Holy Spirit

Rom. 8:26-27 NLT

²⁶ “And the Holy Spirit helps us in **our weakness**. For example, **we don’t know what God wants us to pray for**. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers **in harmony with God’s own will.**”

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