

Hindrances

“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”
1 Thessalonians 2:18

Intro

How often have we wanted to do something for the Lord, or wanted to pray, or read our Bibles, or tell someone about the Lord, but didn't? How many times have we come up with a good idea, or have a desire to step out in faith in life, but didn't? How many times have we wanted to obey the Lord in work, or seeing a business venture go ahead, but there always seemed to be something that held us back or prevented any success at all? And we're not talking about gratifying some lust either. We're talking about the expression of our faith, the faith rest life and applying the Word to our life.

Why is it that sometimes it's like having a little voice in your head that says, 'it won't do any good'! Why bother reading the Bible; it won't do any good. Why bother sharing this passage of Scripture with someone else; it won't do any good. Why bother teaching the Word of God; it won't do any good, because they don't really care about the Word. Why bother trying to move forward, it won't do any good. Why is there that, “it can't do any good”, or, “it won't do any good” thinking stuck in our head?

We know that the flesh nature resists the advancement and expression of the things pertaining to the Lord, but there is also, for some inexplicable reason, something that puts down divine viewpoint, or the life that God wants us to live in his Word. It may not be words audibly spoken in the mind, but nonetheless one has this mental attitude or spirit of thought that leaves the impression on one's mind of that it won't do any good. And it's so effective that it stops us before we even get started!

We want to step out by faith, but something stops us. We want to live life in the filling of the Holy Spirit, but don't. We want to apply the Word, but don't. We feel led by the Holy Spirit to do something, but don't. There seems to be such a negative spirit abounding all around us that it puts down, nullifies, suppresses, opposes, or hinders any positive volition expression toward the Word. That is, any expression of positive volition toward the truth, toward getting the Word, toward applying the Word, toward living by faith, or communicating the Word to others.

It's a negative spirit, a hindering spirit, a spirit that is in opposition to the expression of positive volition to the things of the Lord. It's not just the flesh nature that we have to contend with, but a demonic spirit operating under the authority of Satan.

Now some will say that Satan can't put thoughts into our minds, but then I ask what about the Lord, when he was talking to Peter, told him that he had to go to Jerusalem to die and be raised on the third day. Whereupon Peter rebuked him for saying that! It was then that the Lord looked at Peter and said to him, *“Get thee behind me, Satan:”*! Matthew 16:22,23, *“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”* Now either the Lord was mistaken when he was addressing Peter, which he was not, or Satan actually motivated Peter to think and say this. The point is that Satan and his demons can and do at times put thoughts into our minds to detract us from faith and doing the will of God. He can hinder us both **externally and internally**.

A. Hindered by Satan.

“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”

1 Thessalonians 2:18 διο ηθελησαμεν ελθειν προς υμας εγω μεν παυλος και απαξ και δις και ενεκοψεν ημας ο σατανας

The English word hindered means to cause delay, to interrupt, to cause difficulty in, to hamper, to impede, to prevent from doing, acting, or happening; to stop.

The Greek word is *enkopto* and was a military term used for cutting slits in the path or street, or placing obstacles in the way to impede the advance of another army. Anything from tearing up the road, to placing large obstacles, such as boulders, or smaller obstacles such as mining the path, where sharp pieces of metal were laid out to impale the horses' hooves or the men's feet. And it basically meant to block the path of the advancing army using whatever means were at one's disposal.

External hindrances can be caused by the world system, the unsaved people of the world system, natural events, such as, storms, weather, floods, disasters, etc., “laws” and regulations, government authorities, other people's negative volition old sin nature activity, Satan and his demons, arrogant believers in reversionism caught up in the world system and just about anything one can think up outside one's own negative thoughts and lack of faith and faith activity.

Internal hindrances can be personal sin, unbelief, failure to act in faith, disobedience, failure to operate in the spiritual life dynamic, scar tissue problems in the soul, human viewpoint input from the world system via radio, TV, etc., listening to others, personal pride, having the mind absorbed in the world system, being caught up in one or more of the twenty five categories of personal lusts, being caught up in one or more of the seven emotional complexes.

There are three approaches that one can use in dealing with demonic and nondemonic external hindrances and all three will entail using faith, prayer and some factor of time will be involved. And these three approaches are not necessarily listed in the order of implementation. One, prayer and faith for the hinderance to be removed. Two, go around the hinderance so as to avoid it. Three, go through it and deal with it.

Prayer, faith and waiting would be used to determine which one of the three approaches the believer must employ in dealing with external hindrances. And they will also be used after one has made his decision concerning the approach he wants to take. For example, you're driving from one place to another on a back country road, but a storm has washed out the bridge. One, the problem will not go away in the near future. Two, one cannot go through the problem. Three, so the obvious answer to this is that has to find another road to take to arrive at the destination.

You're driving down the same road and the storm has fallen a tree blocking the road. One, you can wait for someone to remove it. Two, maybe there's room to drive around it. Three, you can get a saw out of the trunk, if you have one, and cut enough of it out so you can drive the car around it. It's about sizing up the situations in life and solving the problem by the faith rest life utilizing prayer, faith and the application of doctrinal principles. It is by utilizing one of these three approaches that the believer can deal with every form of external hindrances that life may throw at him, whether from nature, out of control repressive governments, or other people.

There are three concepts involved in dealing with external hindrances. One, there is the goal, the faith idea, or a biblical mandate that the believer has in view, which is the object desired. Two, there is the believer's faith or desire to do it, to see it, to have it become a reality in his life. Three, there are the hindrances, both internal and external that prevent it from coming to pass. So what is he to do? He can go around the hinderance, wait for it to be removed, or deal with it and go through it.

Evil governments pass laws that curtail our freedom of speech, forbidding believers to witness and evangelize the lost, or making it next to impossible to work and make a living for our families with all their *laws* (which are not law) and regulations. Are we to obey them? No! They don't have the right or authority to do that! No man has the right or authority to tell us that we can't work or serve our God. In fact, we are required to obey God instead of man! So, by faith and prayer we can determine which approach we are to take in the matter.

In dealing with internal hindrances, such as, personal sin, unbelief, failure to act in faith, disobedience, failure to operate in the spiritual life dynamic, scar tissue problems in the soul, human viewpoint input from the world system via radio, TV, etc., these are remedied by living in the spiritual life dynamic.

One, for spiritual recovery we confess our sins biblically via 1 John 1:9, "*If we confess (admit, confess, acknowledge, cite) our sins, (to God the Father), he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" Two, avoiding personal sin. Three, saturating our souls with the promises of God in the faith rest drill. Four, staying away from negative, non-faith people. Five, Stop listening to all non-faith inputs, such as, radio, TV, people, etc.. Six, start making your decisions and acting in faith. Seven, stop thinking you need other people to realize your dreams or faith goals – you only need God! Eight, deal with your scar tissue, or leave it behind.

In this passage, though, we see not an internal hinderance, but an external hinderance from Satan himself. And this brings up a third category of hindrances and that is demonic! Here's a case where both parties were believers in Christ, both wanted to fellowship and here the Word of the Lord, Paul tried to get back to see them, but Satan hindered him from doing so.

Which brings up the idea that Satan does try, and succeeds at times, to block the communicators of God's Word from the legitimate expression of their spiritual gift. How he does that can vary from situation to situation, but the end result is that God's people are hampered or blocked in the matter. And not just blocking the expression of one's spiritual gift function, but also blocking the expression of one's faith and/or positive volition concepts.

In this matter we have to realize that we are in the angelic conflict. Satan is the ruler of this world ever since Adam turned it over to him when he sinned against God. And ever since then the forces of Satan have been arrayed against the people of God as they try to live their lives before God, trying to block us every faith step of the way.

To deal with the hindrances of Satan we are going to have to utilize faith and prayer like we never have before, and enlist the priesthood function of other believers in the process. Focused prayer that has been agree upon, with other believers alongside of you, can accomplish much in this matter. James 5:16b, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man **availeth** (ischuo) much.*" *Availeth* is *ischuo* which has the idea of having the sufficiency of enough spiritual power to prevail over a situation so that you come out the victor. When Satan hinders us we are now entering into a spiritual battle and only in using spiritual weapons will we prevail over the situation.

B. Hindered by legalism.

“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” Galatians 5:7

When Paul wrote to the Galatians he was dealing with a problem in the lives of the believers there that had impacted their life of faith. He wanted to know who had cast a spell on them? Galatians 3:1, *“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”*

The matter centered around law-keeping, personal sense of morality, (although there is nothing wrong with being moral), works and self righteousness. That in opposition to living life as a believer in Christ in the filling of the Holy Spirit with just a simple faith in the Word of God!

So he brings out a historical fact that they were familiar with on how they got saved and how they received the Holy Spirit! He wants them to answer the question of how did they receive the Holy Spirit. Was it by keeping the Law? Or was it by faith in Christ? Galatians 3:2, *“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”*

He goes on in the passage to develop the doctrine on the matter, but he also brings them to a conclusion. They began the Christian life by faith in Christ; they were to live the Christian life by faith; and they were to go on to the completion of their faith. He then asks if they are so foolish, so stupid that if they were saved by faith, and received the Holy Spirit by faith, are they now going to be completed by the flesh? Galatians 3:3, *“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”* Absolutely not!

He then later goes on into chapter five and talked about who in the world had crept into their lives and congregation and robbed them of the freedom they have in Christ and hindered their life of faith? *“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” Galatians 5:7*

As we know, the Christian life is one of faith, faith in the Word of God and faith in the Father. It actually becomes a race for us in life beginning at the cross, where we believed on Christ as our Savior, and then following down a course that has been laid out for us by the Father.

But legalists had come into their church and their lives and detracted them from the faith life, faith in the Father's plan, faith in the Father's promises, faith in the Father's protection, faith in the Father's provisions, faith in the Father's power and faith in the process that the Father uses to perfect us, by getting them back under a system of law keeping, self righteousness and moralism. Galatians 2:4, *“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”*

Grace believers always have to be on the watch for the spirit of legalism encroaching into their lives for it always ends up with them being brought under the control and bondage of legalists, whether Christian or non Christian legalists, with the result that the believer will be governed by fear in their life and not the Spirit of God. Romans 8:15, *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”* **Legalists do not want to be set free, nor do they want freedom. They just resent that other people have it and want to take it from them!** 2 Corinthians 3:17, *“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

C. Hindered by personal sin.

1 Peter 3:7, *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”*

The Apostle Peter is instructing the men in the churches, who have wives, and how we are to treat them. He says to give honor to them, which has the idea of treating them with respect. Paul talked about not being embittered against them. And that we're to dwell together with them according to knowledge, *gnosis*, which is according to the teaching of the Word of God, or Bible Doctrine. There is no mandate from God, however, that we are to submit to them, or let them run the household. The man is the head of the house.

And the reason for all this is that our prayers will be not hindered. Mistreatment of our wives will hinder our prayer life before the Lord. The husband must realize that even though the Christian wife is the weaker vessel, she is also one who is justified before the Lord and holds an equal status of being a believer-priest. The wife must also bear in mind that even though she also is a believer-priest before the Lord, she still is under the authority of her husband and is to submit to his authority as unto the Lord.

Both the husband and the wife need to look at each other from the perspective that both are joint heirs of the grace of eternal life. By doing so it will bring a refreshing new perspective in the marriage relationship and a new found respect for each other.

What this will create in the home is harmony, and where there is harmony in the home, there you will find the blessing of God. The wives are to learn to love their husbands, the older women in the church are to teach the younger women to do this, men are to love, respect and cherish their wives as per the teaching of the Word, and both are to view each other as equally loved by God and heirs of eternity.

D. Hindered by the flesh nature.

Galatians 5:17, *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”*

There is a war that goes on in every Christian's life and that is the battle of the flesh against the Spirit. It, technically, isn't the idea of *enkopto*, but it does follow the English definition of hindering in that the flesh does cause difficulty, hampers, impedes, prevents the believer from doing what God wants us to do in living the spiritual life of peace and contentment.

The victory over this is found in confessing our sins to God, 1 John 1:9, living in the filling of the Holy Spirit, living by faith, and occupying our minds with the Word of God.