

How Sin Affects Your Prayer Life

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” – Psalm 66:18
Habitual sin in the life of a Christian can bring his or her prayer life to a screeching halt. That is not to say we have to be sinless to pray. If that were the case, none of us could ever approach God. The Bible even says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). It also tells us that when we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1). The Bible makes allowances for sin in our lives and offers God’s mercy and forgiveness to us, but unconfessed sin certainly can hinder our prayers. The psalmist said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (66:18). Another way to translate the word *regard* would be “hold on to.” In other words, if we cling to iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us.

There is a difference between sin and willful sin. There is a difference between stumbling, being sorry for it, and turning from it, and continually, willfully, and habitually sinning. If you are sensing God’s conviction and know what you’re doing isn’t right, that is God’s Holy Spirit lovingly trying to wake you up and warn you of the perilous path you have put yourself on.

Hebrews 12:6 says, “Whom the Lord loves He chastens.” Because He cares about you, he applies the “board of education” to your “seat of understanding.” When that happens, don’t recoil and complain that it’s unfair. Instead, rejoice that God loves you enough to deal with you as a father deals with his son or daughter.

Donald