

a God who is faithful and loving in every way? The answer lies in where we place our trust. Many people place their trust in their friends, spouse, money, or themselves. Anything other than God is sure to disappoint, but even the smallest amount of faith can move mountains.

Prayer Killer #3: Disobedience

I remember one afternoon when I was seventeen lying on my bed at home studying my Bible. About a month before, I had rededicated my life to Christ and accepted the call to preach. This day I was working on memorizing 1 John and came across this verse: "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him" (1 John 3:21-23).

All of a sudden it seemed as if God unlocked a door in my mind and something clicked. I was flooded with understanding. I still remember it vividly, because it was one of those special moments of truth that a person experiences at turning points in his life. As I reread the verse, I circled the word because in my Bible. I realized that we receive from God because we obey Him. That's a condition that we must meet in order to approach Him in prayer.

If we are to grow in our relationship with God and become strong people of prayer, we must learn to obey. Keeping free from sin is not enough. Neither is faith. If our mouths say that we believe, but our actions don't back up that belief with a strong display of obedience, it shows the weakness of our belief. Obedience should be a natural outgrowth of faith in God. He that obeys God, trusts Him; he that trusts Him, obeys Him.

Norman Vincent Peale told a story from his boyhood that gives insight into the way disobedience hinders our prayers. As a boy, he once got ahold of a big black cigar. He headed into a back alley where he figured no one would see him, and he lit it.