

Transparency is a difficult thing for a lot of people. Many pastors I know have an especially hard time with it. But openness with others can have a profound effect on you. Transparency with God when you pray puts you on His agenda instead of your own. And it also releases other believers to pray for you strategically and specifically.

Prayer Killer #5: Unforgiveness

You may remember the Scripture passage in which Peter asked Jesus about forgiveness. He asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" (Matt. 18:21). Hebrew law required a person to forgive a person three times for an offense. Peter, by suggesting seven, thought he was being very lenient and forgiving. He was probably shocked when he heard Jesus' answer: "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Matt. 18:22).

Jesus was trying to teach Peter that forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics. Nor is it a choice of words. It is an attitude of the heart, and it is the Holy Spirit who empowers us to forgive. Why is forgiveness so important? The answer is found in Matthew 6:14-15, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Forgiving and being forgiven are inseparable twins. When a person refuses to forgive another, he is hurting himself, because his lack of forgiveness can take hold of him and make him bitter. And a person cannot enter prayer with bitterness and come out with blessings. Forgiveness allows your heart to be made not only right, but light.

Prayer Killer #6: Wrong Motives

I once heard a story about a minister who was taking a walk down a row of fine old Victorian homes one day. As he strolled