

Luther's Words...Many things hinder prayer

When I would speak and pray to God by myself, a hundred thousand hindrances at once intervene before I get at it. Then the devil can throw all sorts of reasons for delay into my path; he can block and hinder me on all sides; as a result, I go my way and never think of it again. Let him who has not experienced this only try it. Resolve to pray earnestly, and no doubt you will see how large an assortment of your own thoughts will rush in on you and distract you, so that you cannot begin aright.....For instance, to speak now only of the greatest and foremost hindrance, the first thing that hinders and delays us is the thought, inspired by the devil; Why, at present you are really not yet fit for praying; wait another half hour or day, until you become better prepared or have done this and that. Meanwhile the devil is there to lead you away for the half hour. Accordingly, you think no more of praying throughout the day, and so you go from one day to another, rushed and hindered by other business. This comes close to being the commonest hindrance and is a very bad trick and device of the devil, which he often plays on me and on others. Besides, he finds his advantage in our flesh and blood, because these are lazy and cold to begin with. Therefore we cannot pray as we ourselves should like to, and though we may begin, we soon flutter away with foreign, worthless thoughts and so lose the prayer.

(WLS #3456)