

# Preventive Prayer

**Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;  
Don't let them rule over me.  
Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression.  
--Psalm 19:13**

For the longest time, I struggled with certain temptations, just wondering how long I might be able to hold out and not commit really "big sins." I would wonder, "What will happen if I slip and do something so wrong that I ruin my life or the life of someone else?"

The Bible's King David did something like that, and never stopped regretting it. But he learned a valuable lesson that God teaches you and me in Psalm 19. A lesson in something I've heard called "preventive prayer."

The Psalm starts out talking about how powerful God is, leading up to making the point that God even has power over our minds and actions, when we submit to Jesus and allow His Spirit to take control of our lives.

David, writing this Psalm, recognized that if he was going to from then on avoid the "great transgressions" or what we would call really big, bad sins, he would have to ask God to first keep him from committing "presumptuous sins." That basically means we have to protect ourselves from sins of the heart and mind -- sins of desires and decisions -- if we want to avoid greatly sinful actions that make our life go out of control.

A presumptuous sin is a sin that takes place in our heart and mind that can lead us to doing something very bad. Here are some examples: Harboring lust in our heart can be a "presumptuous sin" that leads us to having an immoral relationship. Coveting (wanting something that doesn't belong to us) might be a "presumptuous sin" that causes us to steal. Jealousy and envy might be a "presumptuous sin" that causes us to do something to hurt another person. Wrongful anger or holding a grudge might be a "presumptuous sin" that leads us to do something violent.

God's wisdom for us in this psalm is this: Focus on Me and let Me keep you from sinning in your mind and in your heart, and you will then be protected from doing something wrong that hurts you and others in the process.

The Bible teaches us that we become what we choose to focus on in our mind and our heart. When sins of the mind begin to "rule over us," that's when we are beginning to lose control of our actions. And that's when it's

time to practice "preventive prayer" -- asking God to change the way we think and change the way we desire bad things.

When we submit to God's Spiritual control of our minds, choosing to think about what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, virtuous, and praiseworthy, He takes control of our thought life. Then we can have confidence that we will be innocent of great sins that would ruin our lives.

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14)

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