

“How Do I Stay Close To God?”
October 4, 2009 * Hebrews 10:19-25

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I. Our questions so far?

A. Is it possible to get close to God? Answer:

B. Is it possible to grow closer to God? Answer:

C. How do I stay close to God? Why is this question important to know the answer to?

II. Hebrews 10:19-25

A. What has Jesus done for us? (vss.19-21)

B. How should we live in response to what Jesus has done?

1. Vs. 22 – “Let us _____.”

2. Vs. 23 – “Let us _____.”

3. Vs. 24 – “Let us _____.”

C. How verses 24 and 25 ought to read:

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on...”

“...not giving up meeting together...”

“...but encouraging one another...”

III. The Two Indispensable Prerequisites of Christian Fellowship

Prerequisite #1 – To Stay Close To God We Must Keep On

A. Before a person falls away from their faith, they almost always:

_____ away from _____.

B. Does this happen all at once? What usually is the pattern?

Prerequisite #2 – To Stay Close To God We Must Keep On

_____.

A. Is ‘meeting together’ by itself enough?

B. The idea that we need to be “spurred on” says something uncomplimentary about human nature:

C. How do we encourage others?

1. _____ your _____.

2. Deliberately, intentionally _____ aside _____ to encourage others.

3. Other ideas?

“How Do I Stay Close To God?”
October 4, 2009 * Hebrews 10:19-25

I. Our questions so far?

A. Is it possible to get close to God? Answer:

Yes. God invites us to “draw near” to him.

B. Is it possible to grow closer to God? Answer:

Yes. God invites us to “hold unswervingly to him.”

C. How do I stay close to God? Why is this question important to know the answer to?

The path to God is meant to be a lifelong journey. Following Jesus is a commitment we make that is meant to cover each and every season of our lives. Jesus himself said, “He who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.”

II. Hebrews 10:19-25

A. What has Jesus done for us? (vss.19-21)

He cleared the path to God for us, by shedding his blood for us, by dying for us that we might be forgiven of our sin, that terrible obstacle that stands between a holy God and us.

B. How should we live in response to what Jesus has done?

1. Vs. 22 – “Let us **draw near...**”

2. Vs. 23 – “Let us **hold unswervingly...**”

3. Vs. 24 – “Let us **consider how we may spur one another on...**”

C. How verses 24 and 25 ought to read:

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on...”

“...not giving up meeting together...”

“...but encouraging one another...”

III. The Two Indispensable Prerequisites of Christian Fellowship

Prerequisite #1 – To Stay Close To God We Must Keep On Meeting Together.

A. Before a person falls away from their faith, they almost always:

break away from **fellowship**.

B. Does this happen all at once? What usually is the pattern?

You don’t just wake up one Sunday morning and suddenly, randomly decide that that’s it with church. You’re done. No – the pattern is you miss a Sunday here, and a Sunday there. And soon it become easier and easier to rationalize this choice. The warm fuzzies aren’t there anymore they way they used to be, you think to yourself. Well, duh, of course the warm fuzzies have gone. Satan’s got a claw in you, or you’re being tested, or you’re all ga-ga over those other treasures and pleasures.

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Ed is a most remarkable man in our church. Ed’s a man who wants to be with God’s people. And if the church has an event, hosts a potluck, holds a workday, forms a softball team, Ed is there. Ed doesn’t wait for people to invite him, or come up to him – he puts himself in contexts where relationships can happen. He sticks himself in community. We’re not saying you have to be a churchaholic, and be here each and every time the doors are open. Ed is a busy man. He is out and about in the community in all sorts of ways. He has all kinds of friends outside of church. But he loves to be with his church family. It’s a commitment he makes. And you have to make a commitment in your heart that you will meet together with the church family God has given you.

Prerequisite #2 – To Stay Close To God We Must Keep On Encouraging Each Other.

A. Is ‘meeting together’ by itself enough?

There’s nothing magical about just ‘meeting together’ if that’s all that happens. There are a lot of people who go to church, and nothing comes of it really, because the people are not encouraging one another. It’s just religion. You come in, punch a time clock, go

through the motions, and then go home, and the most meaningful interaction you have with other people is outside the church. What a travesty.

B. The idea that we need to be “spurred on” says something uncomplimentary about human nature:

It says to me that there’s an inherent weakness in us, an inherent fragility, and if we are left to ourselves, or if this thing we call Christianity is all up to me, myself and I, and I’m not rubbing shoulders with other brothers and sisters with regularity, then it’s not going to be pretty. Left to myself, I will default to a more ugly and selfish and miserable person. We need each other to stay strong.

C. How do we encourage others?

1. Open your eyes.

We need to open your eyes, look around the church family, and say to yourself, “Hmm, who could use a little encouragement today? Who is sagging a bit? Let me think about this.” “Let us consider...” It’s not going to happen accidentally.

2. Deliberately, intentionally set aside time to encourage others.

I was mulling over this passage in my quiet time back in August and this is what I wrote in my quiet time notebook. “I do not wake up in the morning thinking how I might serve other people. It takes a journey of thought to arrive at that place. I need to be spurred on to pursue love and good deeds because it is not the natural bent of my heart to do so. It takes encouragement to reach this place. Especially today. People were more community-oriented a generation or two ago, not because they were less selfish, but because they had to be. They couldn’t hide away in their houses with the TV and the Internet. They didn’t have cars which allowed them a thousand more options of things to do on a night off. There was no daytripping to the White Mountains. You were stuck in your town, and that compelled people to turn to each other for entertainment and friendship. It takes so much coordination today to bring people together. It’s the worst possible environment for a naturally self-centered creature to live in. I

wonder how our lives would change if we unplugged for just one week. No TV or computers or I-anything. We watched “Back to the Future III” last night. Maybe we all need to live for a spell in the Old West. When you call to mind what I’ve learned this summer that technology literally rewires our minds and alters our perception of the world, this becomes doubly critical. We’ve over-stimulated, over-indulged, over-worked, over-secular.”

3. Other ideas?