

**“How Do I Grow Close To God?”**  
**September 27, 2009 \* Heb.10:19-25**

*I. Last week’s teaching points:*

- A. God wants us to be \_\_\_\_\_ to him.
- B. God himself has \_\_\_\_\_ the path for us.
- C. God promises to walk \_\_\_\_\_ us.
- D. God asks us to choose to \_\_\_\_\_ near to him.

What’s the difference between saying “Let us draw near to God” and “Let us hold unswerving” onto God?

Why do we have to grow stronger in our faith, and learn how to hold on tightly to Jesus?

Verses in Hebrews that tell us not to leave the path:

*II. Threats That Try To Knock Us Off The Path (From the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:4-15)*

**First, the T** \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. In the parable, what does Satan do?
- B. Why is the devil scared of the Word of God?
- C. How does he “steal” it from us?
  - 1. By keeping it out of our \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 2. By keeping it out of our \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3. By keeping it out of our \_\_\_\_\_.

**Second, T** \_\_\_\_\_.

A. What is a test?  
Anything that happens in life that causes you to \_\_\_\_\_  
God and \_\_\_\_\_ staying on his path.

- B. What do we need to know about tests?
  - 1. They are \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 2. We \_\_\_\_\_ tests because they make our faith \_\_\_\_\_.
    - a. By showing us what we still need to \_\_\_\_\_.
    - b. By helping build in us Christlike \_\_\_\_\_.

- C. True spiritual growth requires that we grow in four areas:
  - 1. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. \_\_\_\_\_

- D. What’s one more thing to remember about tests?
  - 1. They do not \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

**Third, T** \_\_\_\_\_ **and P** \_\_\_\_\_

- A. What is typically true of people the more money they have?
- B. Is it that God doesn’t want us to enjoy these things?
- C. How should I live then?

## **“How Do I Grow Close To God?”**

### **September 27, 2009 \* Heb.10:19-25**

#### *I. Last week's teaching points:*

- A. God wants us to be **close** to him.
- B. God himself has **cleared** the path for us.
- C. God promises to walk **alongside** us.
- D. God asks us to choose to **draw** near to him.

*What's the difference between saying “Let us draw near to God” and “Let us hold unswerving” onto God?*

**Drawing near is really just the first step in our spiritual journey. Accept the relationship that God wants to have with you. Seek him out. Put yourself in his presence. That's first. Now second, let's deepen that relationship. Let's make that relationship as strong as it can be.**

*Why do we have to grow stronger in our faith, and learn how to hold on tightly to Jesus?*

**Because there are things out there that want us to lose our balance, that want to take control over us, want to drag us right into the ground, want us to fall flat on our faces. And you better know that those things are out there, and you better make preparations right now to face them, or your faith will sooner or later fall apart.**

Verses in Hebrews that tell us not to leave the path:

**“We must pay more careful attention...to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.” (2:1). “See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.” (3:12). “It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance.” (6:4-6). “Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you**

**have done the will of God you will receive what he has promised.” (10:35-36).**

*II. Threats That Try To Knock Us Off The Path (From the Parable of the Sower, Luke 8:4-15)*

#### **First, the Tempter.**

*A. In the parable, what does Satan do?*

**Attempts to steal the Word of God from people's hearts.**

*B. Why is the devil scared of the Word of God?*

**The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to transform the sons and daughters of God. With this sword, God will cut away sin in your life. With this sword, God will defend you from danger. With this sword, God will use you to grow his kingdom and push back evil. There's nothing more powerful in all the earth than God's living and active word.**

*C. How does he “steal” it from us?*

*1. By keeping it out of our **hands**.*

*2. By keeping it out of our **heads**.*

**He'll keep you busy. You're just too busy to make Sunday School a priority. Too busy for youth groups. Too busy to join a Bible study. Or if busyness doesn't work, he'll do his best to convince you that that the Bible is so far above you, just leave it to the professionals. *You'll never understand it. You're not a reader. This isn't for you. Besides, you've tried it before, and never gotten anywhere with it.***

*3. By keeping it out of our **hearts**.*

**He'll try to get you to fall into some kind of habitual sin that you struggle to break free from. That way you'll get discouraged and quit. He's not called the Tempter without reason you know. Or he'll try to fill you full of pride at how smart you are, and boy isn't God lucky to have you on his side. “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble,” the Bible says, so if Satan can make you self-righteous, that'll keep your heart from being changed.**

## **Second, Testing.**

*A. What is a test?*

Anything that happens in life that causes you to **question** God and **reconsider** staying on his path.

*B. What do we need to know about tests?*

1. They are **going** to **come**.

2. We **needs** tests because they make our faith **stronger**.

*a. By showing us what we still need to **learn**.*

*b. By helping build in us Christlike **character**.*

*C. True spiritual growth requires that we grow in four areas:*

1. **Knowledge** / **Skill**

2. **Perspective**

Perspective is what you gain when you take your knowledge and apply it to life. You know all these Bible verses on servanthood. You gain perspective as you try to live them out in your marriage. Not easy, but you'll grow. You know all these Bible verses about money. You gain perspective as you try to get yourself out of a big pit of debt you dug for yourself, and start to develop new financial habits. This usually comes from living life and facing its test.

3. **Conviction**

Conviction is the fire in your belly that this is the right way to live, and you aren't giving it up for anything. When Peter said to Jesus before his arrest, "Lord, I will die for you!" and then turned around and denied him three times, that wasn't conviction, that was silly emotionalism. Years later, after he had been tested through suffering, Peter wrote in his first epistle, "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power forever and ever." (1 Peter 5:10), that was conviction.

## **4. Character**

The end product of knowledge, and perspective and conviction is the emergence of character, a soul on which the beautiful spirit, values and conduct of Jesus Christ has been stamped.

*D. What's one more thing to remember about tests?*

1. They do not **go** on **forever**.

It's just a time, a season. It won't go on and on. Tests will not get the last laugh over you. If you hold unswervingly to Jesus, sooner or later grace will take hold of your heart and you will know the presence and peace of God again.

## **Third, Treasures and Pleasures**

*A. What is typically true of people the more money they have?*

It's a simple sociological fact of life – on average, the more money a person has, the less religious they are. Jesus himself said, "How hard it is for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." Why do you suppose that is? There is something that happens when we get our hands on treasures and pleasures that dulls our spirits to our need for God.

*B. Is it that God doesn't want us to enjoy these things?*

He's the one who created our senses, and our nerve endings, and endorphins and serotonin, and all the ways in which we experience well-being and pleasure in life. "Taste and see that the Lord is good," the Bible says. God wants you to sample the goodness of life on this side of heaven. But he doesn't want you to think that this is heaven.

*C. How should I live then?*

This life is really, when all is said and done, just a testing ground, a proving ground for eternity. And so this life matters far more than you could possibly ever realize. But until you start living for eternity, until you learn how to hold unswervingly to the God who made you, and the Savior who died for you, then you will fall far short of your life's purpose.

