

DRAW ME NEARER TO MY GOD - What Does This Mean?

Intro:

- A. Today, the religious world celebrates Easter. A Day in which Drama plays, actual crucifixions take place, pomp and ceremony is seen everywhere and kids are taught the importance of Easter Egg hunting as opposed to searching for the One and True God, and His Word.
 1. I was talking with my girls this past week and Danielle said to me - "Her friend loves the movie Passion of Christ - and every year this during this time she re-watches it because it draws her closer to God."
 - a. It is sad in many ways that the world and yes even Christians themselves find the need to be drawn closer to God by external things and means - rather than the true way prescribed in the Word of God.
 - b. Each Lord's day - I realize the importance of the Lord's Death even more than I did in the past 6 days of the week - it is in this Memorial that we are to stop and focus more of what was done by God to redeem my soul from the gates of Hell.
- B. With this in mind our lesson this morning will focus of 4 passages of Scripture that talk about "Drawing Near" to God.
 1. **Psalm 145:18 ; Psalm 73:28 ; Hebrews 10:19-25 and James 4:7-10**
 2. The word Draw in the NKJV occurs in 44 verses but only in these scriptures does it mention our topic of thought today - "Draw Near To God"
- C. We will note these Four aspects of these scriptures!
 1. God Is Near All - BUT.....
 2. There are those that are NOT near to God
 3. And Those That Do Draw Near To God
 4. How This is Done

II. THE FIRST UNDERSTANDING WE HAVE - IS GOD IS NEAR ALL WHO....

- A. **Psalm 145:18-20** (NKJV) - 18 The Lord is near to **all who call upon Him**, To all who call upon **Him in truth**. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those **who fear Him**; He also **will hear their cry** and save them. 20 The Lord preserves **all who love Him**, But all the wicked He will destroy.
 1. Are we drawing NEAR TO HIM.....
 - a. I am reminded of this fact that it is NOT GOD WHO DEPARTS - it is us who leave the relationship due to our WILFUL SIN.
 - b. Thus it is not UP TO GOD to draw near to US - it is up to US to draw near to Him.
 2. Thus A Question we must ask ourselves : Am I Drawing Closer To God Each Day?
 - a. This is 24/7/365 not just 52 or 104
 - b. It is "DAILY" - thus at the end of each day as we lay our heads down to sleep we should be able to access ourselves and see the progress we are making.
 - (1) **What Did I Do, what Did I accomplish, What Did I learn?** All Questions we need to ask ourselves at the end of each day.
 - (2) In doing this we can see our failures and our successes - so that "IF" the Lord grants us another day - **I can get that much closer than I was in the past.**
- B. **It Will not happen by accident!**
 1. Must be something we truly desire!
 2. Must be something we diligently strive for!
- C. **There Is A Difference Between "Knowing About God" And "Knowing God!"**
 1. Mental acknowledgment is not sufficient to take us to Heaven, God wants a relationship with us.
 2. He is not interested in weekend visits He is interested in Everyday.

III. **SECONDLY - IT IS A GOOD THING FOR ME TO DRAW CLOSER TO GOD - Psalm 73**

- A. **Psalm 73:28** (NKJV) - 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works.
- B. In This Psalm the **Psalmist deals with those who are Not Near To God** in the first 12 verses of this text and emphasizes 9 certain facts:
1. The **boastful / prideful** – **Psa. 73:3,6**
 - a. **Psalm 73:3** (NKJV) - 3 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
 - b. **Psalm 73:6** (NKJV) - 6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment.
 2. **Prosperity means nothing** – **Psa. 73:3,7,12**
 - a. **Psalm 73:3** (NKJV) - 3 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
 - b. **Psalm 73:7** (NKJV) - 7 Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish.
 - c. **Psalm 73:12** (NKJV) - 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches.
 3. **Sin does NOT trouble their conscience** – **Psa. 73:4**
 - a. **Psalm 73:4** (NKJV) - 4 For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm.
 4. **Seemingly have less trouble in life** – **Psa. 73:5**
 - a. **Psalm 73:5** (NKJV) - 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men.
 5. **Scoff and speak wickedness** – **Psa. 73:8**
 - a. **Psalm 73:8** (NKJV) - 8 They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily.
 6. **Proud speech** – **Psa. 73:8,9**
 - a. **Psalm 73:8** (NKJV) - 8 They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily.
 - b. **Psalm 73:9** (NKJV) - 9 They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth.
 7. **Join with others who sin** – **Psa. 73:10**
 - a. **Psalm 73:10** (NKJV) - 10 Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them.
 8. **Lack respect** – **Psa. 73:11**
 - a. **Psalm 73:11** (NKJV) - 11 And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?”
 9. **At ease** – **Psa. 73:12**
 - a. **Psalm 73:12** (NKJV) - 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches.
- C. On the other hand the **Psalmist deals with those who Do Draw Near to God** as well: from vrs 13 all the way thru vrs 28 - the Psalmist here emphasizes 10 certain facts:
1. **Wash their hands** – **Psa. 73:13**
 - a. **Psalm 73:13** (NKJV) - 13 Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence.
 2. **Suffer Hardship** – **Psa. 73:14**
 - a. **Psalm 73:14** (NKJV) - 14 For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning.
 3. **Are concerned about influence on others** – **Psa. 73:15; Matt. 5:13-16**

- a. **Psalm 73:15** (NKJV) - 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.
- b. **Matthew 5:13-16** (NKJV) - 13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
- 4. **Understand the end of the wicked – Psalms 73:16-20, 27**
 - a. **Psalm 73:16-20** (NKJV) - 16 When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me— 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 19 Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. 20 As a dream when one awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.
 - b. **Psalm 73:27** (NKJV) - 27 For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry.
- 5. **Are penitent – Psalms 73:21,22**
 - a. **Psalm 73:21** (NKJV) - 21 Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind.
 - b. **Psalm 73:22** (NKJV) - 22 I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.
- 6. **Trust in God – Psalms 73:23,28**
 - a. **Psalm 73:23** (NKJV) - 23 Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand.
 - b. **Psalm 73:28** (NKJV) - 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works.
- 7. **Follows God's word, trusting His promises – Psalm 73:24**
 - a. **Psalm 73:24** (NKJV) - 24 You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.
- 8. **Desires God above everyone & everything else – Psalm 73:25**
 - a. **Psalm 73:25** (NKJV) - 25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.
- 9. **Doesn't trust in self – Psalm 73:26**
 - a. **Psalm 73:26** (NKJV) - 26 My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- 10. **Tells others of God – Psalm 73:28**
 - a. **Psalm 73:28** (NKJV) - 28 But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works.
- D. Are we Drawing Closer or are we Drawn Further away from God?

IV. **THIRDLY - IT IS EASY TO SAY WE MUST - BUT HOW DO I DRAW CLOSER TO GOD? - 11 Facts represented in our last two scriptures.**

- A. **Hebrews 10:19-25** (NKJV) - 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

1. **Knowing we can through Christ** – **Heb. 10:19-21; Jn 14:6**
 - a. **Hebrews 10:19-21** (NKJV) - 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,
 - b. **John 14:6** (NKJV) - 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
2. **A true heart** – **Heb. 10:22; Psal. 119:2,10,34,58, 69,80,145; Eph. 6:5**
 - a. **Hebrews 10:22** (NKJV) - 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
 - b. **Psalm 119:2** (NKJV) - 2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!
 - (1) **Psalm 119:10** (NKJV) - 10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
 - (2) **Psalm 119:34** (NKJV) - 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
 - (3) **Psalm 119:58** (NKJV) - 58 I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; Be merciful to me according to Your word.
 - (4) **Psalm 119:69** (NKJV) - 69 The proud have forged a lie against me, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.
 - (5) **Psalm 119:80** (NKJV) - 80 Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes, That I may not be ashamed.
 - (6) **Psalm 119:145** (NKJV) - 145 I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes.
 - c. **Ephesians 6:5** (NKJV) - 5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;
3. **Full assurance of faith** – **Heb. 10:22; 6:11; 11:6; James 1:6-9**
 - a. **Hebrews 10:22** (NKJV) - 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
 - b. **Hebrews 6:11** (NKJV) - 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,
 - c. **Hebrews 11:6** (NKJV) - 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
 - d. **James 1:6-9** (NKJV) - 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,
4. **Obey the gospel** – **Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; Acts 2:38; Col. 2:11-13; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21**
 - a. **Hebrews 10:22** (NKJV) - 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
 - b. **1 Peter 1:22** (NKJV) - 22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,
 - (1) **1 Peter 1:23** (NKJV) - 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,
 - c. **Acts 2:38** (NKJV) - 38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. **Colossians 2:11-13** (NKJV) - 11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision

made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

- e. **Titus 3:5** (NKJV) - 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
 - f. **1 Peter 3:21** (NKJV) - 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
5. **Holding fast the confession of our hope – Heb. 10:23; 3:6,14; Rev 3:11; 2 Pet. 1:5-10**
- a. **Hebrews 10:23** (NKJV) - 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.
 - b. **Hebrews 3:6** (NKJV) - 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.
 - (1) **Hebrews 3:14** (NKJV) - 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,
 - c. **Revelation 3:11** (NKJV) - 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
 - d. **2 Peter 1:5-10** (NKJV) - 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;
6. **Consider one another – encouraging one another to love and good works – Heb. 10:24; 2 Cor. 9:2**
- a. **Hebrews 10:24** (NKJV) - 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
 - (1) **2 Corinthians 9:2** (NKJV) - 2 for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.
 - b. **Attendance and participation – Heb. 10:25; Eph. 4:11-16**
 - (1) **Hebrews 10:25** (NKJV) - 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
 - (2) **Ephesians 4:11-16** (NKJV) - 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying

of itself in love.

- c. **Encouraging one another – Heb. 10:25; 13:3; Rom. 12:3-13**
 - (1) **Hebrews 10:25** (NKJV) - 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
 - (2) **Hebrews 13:3** (NKJV) - 3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.
 - (3) **Romans 12:3-13** (NKJV) - 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.
- B. **James 4:7–10** (NKJV) - 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.
 1. **Submit To God** – yielding our will & deeds in obedience - **Rom 6:16-18**
 - a. **Romans 6:16-18** (NKJV) - 16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
 2. **Resisting the devil** – Say no to / fight against - **Eph 4:27; 6:10-18**
 - a. **Ephesians 4:27** (NKJV) - 27 nor give place to the devil.
 - b. **Ephesians 6:10-18** (NKJV) - 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—
 3. **Cleanse our hands** – **Eph. 4:28**
 - a. **Ephesians 4:28** (NKJV) - 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

4. **Purify our hearts – Matt. 6:19-24**

a. **Matthew 6:19-24** (NKJV) - 19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

5. **Repent & humble ourselves - Matt. 5:3,4; 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 Pet 5:6**

a. **Matthew 5:3** (NKJV) - 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
(1) **Matthew 5:4** (NKJV) - 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
b. **2 Corinthians 7:10** (NKJV) - 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
c. **1 Peter 5:6** (NKJV) - 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

C. Are we doing these things to help us draw closer to God?

V. **In Conclusion:**

A. Remember....This

1. Will not happen by accident!
2. Must be something we truly desire!
3. Must be something we diligently strive for!

B. I must question myself....

1. Am I sincere?
2. Is my heart fixed on Him and undivided?
3. Do I have unwavering confidence in God, His Son Jesus and His word?
4. Am I coming humbly, obeying God’s will - completely surrendering my will to His?
5. Is there any sin in my life I need to deal with?

C. Am I Drawing Closer To God Each Day?

D. Is Your Current Direction Leading You Closer To God?

1. If you are headed in the wrong direction will you not - H + B+ R+ C+Bapt. = Sal
2. If you have done this and are still headed in the wrong direction - will you not R +C and pray for forgiveness so that your soul came be saved.

¹ *The New King James Version*. 1982. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.