

A Little Lad had just come home from Sunday School where the lesson had dealt with "A close fellowship with God"

He made his way ^{sadly} around the house to a place he always found his dad working in the yard on the Lord's Day

The little fellow walked up to his dad and asked this question,

"Daddy, how close are you to God"

And the daddy replied:

"I'm just as close as I choose to be"

And dear hearts, that's how it is,

"You and I are only as close to God as we choose to be"

And sometimes, that's not as close as we ought to be —

May I ask, How close to God are you?

In James 4:8 We have this Admonition

"Draw Near to God, And He Will
draw near to you"

This does Not mean that God has
withdrew Himself from you,
It means when you return, you'll
find God right where you left Him.

You see the writer of Hebrews said:
"Jesus will never leave you nor
forsake you" Heb. 13:5

If you don't feel the presence of
God, it's not His fault. Amen

Many after the Psalmist cried out:
"Why, Oh Lord, do you stand
so far away?"

OR
"Why O Lord, do you hide
yourself from me?"

On the surface, it would seem
that God had deserted His
people. Not so. Sin had
separated the people from
God — Their sin, not His.

12/
Their Guilt had caused them to
Withdraw from God, yet they
tried to Lay the blame at His
feet. (Unsuccessfully I might add)

When Adam sinned, it was more
than he could handle, alone

He tried first to hide from God,
then to Blame God -

Adam still had a Relationship with
God, but Sin, and Guilt had
interrupted the fellowship between
them. Instead of drawing Near
to God, Adam ran from God

Could it be that Guilt is keeping you
who were once faithful, from being
faithful now? If so, you'll
you tell them, (even as I have)
that it won't get any better
until they Draw Near to God

Would you also tell them that God is
Right when they left Him -

In Psalm 13, Verse 1 & 2 We find these words:

"Oh Lord, how long will you forget me? Oh Lord, how long will you hide your face from me?"

(God had not forgotten, He was not hiding)

The Psalmist cries out: "Oh God, how long must my heart ache, how long will this sorrow remain?"
(these words were ~~the~~ that speak of David)

David was a ~~man~~ Person just like us, He knew the joy of being close to God, in close fellowship with Him.

David also knew the agony and anguish of one who had sinned and tried to hide from God rather than "Draw Near to God"

In 1 Samuel Chapter 17 you'll find the Account of David & Goliath. David was but a shepherd boy, but God had His eye on him.

You know how "Little David" volunteered
 his service to the Army of Israel
 you know how the Goliath was
 so heavy David couldn't move —
 you recall how he went out to
 meet Goliath, Armed with a sling,
 shot — you know how he killed
 Goliath —

It was a Great Victory, And David
 said: "Today God was near me,
 I felt His presence / I could
 not be defeated"

You see David had Drawn near to
 God // He felt the presence of
 God because of it // He won
 the victory —

God was Near David, He's near
 us, So Near that He can hear
 our cries for help — If we will
 cry out.

So Near that He can hear our
 cries for Mercy & Forgiveness.
 If we will cry out.

You David & God were in close
fellowship that day —

Oh but the Bible tells us
of another day, a day
when the battle was lost —

It was a day David took his eyes
off God. It was a day the sweet
fellowship that had existed
so often between the two
was interrupted — (It was a day
David walked away from God.)

In 2 Samuel Chapter 11 you'll
find the account —

One day David allowed the flesh
to overcome reason

He saw the wife of one of
his generals bathing. v. 2

He took her for himself (v. 4)
And when the sin could no
longer be hidden, David
had the obvious husband
killed (v. 15-17)

You know the rest of the story how David & Bath-sheba payed dearly for their sin - (2 Samuel 12: 13-19)

You see David had walked away from God in his sin // He had ~~DETERMINED~~ ^{DETERMINED} the distance he wanted to be away from God -

Many are doing the same today / They feel separated from God's Fellowship But they refuse to draw near to God # (they choose the distance they want to be from God)

Father, it won't get any better until we ~~do~~ return to God's presence
listen: "If drawing near to God restores the fellowship, and heightens the joy of it,

then walking away from God, can only widen the gap in ~~fellowship~~, and increase the guilt feeling -

David came to understand this. It prompted the writing of Psalm 51

In V. 1 David Cried out for mercy - He
begged God to blot out the sin.

{ You see he wanted to draw Near to God But
first he had to humble himself (So do we)

In V. 2 & 3 He Asked to be washed thoroughly //
Cleansed from his sins - David
Confessed his sins to God - He
wanted to forget them -

{ You see David wanted the fellowship to be
restored / but first he had to admit
that he was the cause it was broken ^{So do we}

Then in V. 4 David Admitted something we
don't like to admit: "That every sin
is Against God" (Did you know that?)
Sure is -

David Comm. Aed Adultery - It was A sin
Against God -

David was guilty of Conspiring
Unright to be killed It was
A sin Against God.

57 All Our Sins, whether by Omission or Commission are Against God —

David truly wanted to draw near to God,
But first he had to rid himself
from all that had caused the
Separation —

And David did so:

- ① He Acknowledged his sins (so must we)
- ② He Asked for forgiveness (so must we)
- ③ He Submitted himself to God (so must we)

David said: Oh God, do whatever is needed
Purge me / Purify me / Wash me
Blot out my sins —
create in me a new heart / Renew
a Right Spirit in me —

David wanted things back as they
once were... He desired being used
of God —

Many today are not being used of God,
But it's not ~~God's~~ fault —

They are void of the Sweet Fellowship
that once existed, It's not Paul's fault.

They may not have committed the Lying David
committed. But they have left
off being faithful & submissive to
God - That's the Sin of Omission
And "They are losing their Witnessing
power"

Little do people realize that each day
away from God hardens the heart
Each moment away from God
widens the gap between them
& God -

Folks, let me tell you something, If
ever there comes a time when
it doesn't hurt to be away from
God / His people / or His house

~~Folks~~ ~~Have~~ ~~not~~ a Real Problem
For Greater than they realize. Amen

So in closing let me ask again
How close are you to God?

6/ And let me quickly give the answer
You're only as close to God as
you choose to be

David said: "Lord, please close the gap"
please remove whatever hinders
our fellowship - Oh God let
things be as they once were -
Use me again, is my prayer
(Will you make it yours?)

How is it with you? Are you satisfied
with how close you are to God?

James Wake: Draw Near to God, and you'll
feel His presence & enjoy His fellowship

Remember, we are only as close to God as
we choose to be

Let us go for you away - They must
come to God -

Christians may need to Rededicate to
close the gap.

Unwieldy need to allow God to lead
so their witness will count.