

GRACE
SO AMAZING
IS NEAR

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Acts 17:27-28

Acts 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, **though he be not far from every one of us:**

28 For **in him we live, and move, and have our being;** as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Have you ever felt that the Lord was far away from you? You do not sense that He is with you, nor blessing you. When you pray, you feel like your prayers are not getting higher than your ceiling.

During times of a spiritual drought, our adversary, who is a liar and murderer, will try to convince you that God is far away and unreachable. He is a master at discouragement, distraction, and despair.

This morning, we will consider that God's *Grace So Amazing is Near*. We begin by realizing that each of us is subject to feeling that God has abandoned us.

I. THE FEELING OF ABANDONMENT

- ❖ David, the “man after God’s own heart” was fearful of God abandoning him.

Psa. 22:11 **Be not far from me**; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.

Psa. 35:22 *This* thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: **O Lord, be not far from me.**

Psa. 38:21 Forsake me not, O LORD: **O my God, be not far from me.**

Psa. 71:12 **O God, be not far from me:** O my God, make haste for my help.

❖ Believers may also have a sense of loneliness, that God is not there.

❖ Loneliness can increase the amount of cortisol (you might know this as the stress hormone) in your body.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/loneliness-and-depression>

❖ Cortisol is widely known as the “stress hormone.”

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/22187-cortisol>

❖ Stress demands focus upon issues that plague the mind and soul, driving thoughts away from God and His Word.

Isa 26:3 **Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is stayed on thee***: because he trusteth in thee.

- ❖ One of God's titles that we observed some time ago is found in Ezek. 48:35:

Ezek. 48:35 *It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, **The LORD is there.***

Jehovah-Shammah = Jehovah is there.

- ❖ To counter the sense of God's abandonment is to trust who He is and His promises.

II. THE FOCUS OF AVAILABILITY

❖ The admonition is to “seek the Lord.”

Acts 17:27 That they should **seek the Lord**, if haply they might feel after him, and **find him, though he be not far from every one of us:**

Isa. 55:6 **Seek ye the LORD** while he may be found, call ye upon him while **he is near:**

❖ Many times, the Scriptures encourage mankind to know that the Lord is near and to seek Him.

Deut. 4:7 For what nation *is there so great*, **who hath God so nigh unto them**, as the LORD our God *is in all things that we call upon him for?*

Prov. 8:17 I love them that love me; and **those that seek me early shall find me.**

Jer. 29:13 And **ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**

Deut. 30:14 But **the word is very nigh unto thee**, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

- ❖ There are a few stipulations about calling on the Lord while He is near.

Psa. 34:18 **The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.**

Deut. 4:29 **But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.**

Psa. 145:18 **The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that **call upon him in truth.****

- ❖ There are ramifications regarding the stipulations.

III. THE FAILINGS THAT ALIENATE

- ❖ Sin is a separator. God is holy and too often believers drift into sin, causing broken fellowship:

Isa. 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But **your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.**

Psa. 66:18 **If I regard iniquity in my heart, *the Lord will not hear me:***

❖ Rejection is a separator:

1 Chron. 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; **but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.**

2 Chron. 15:2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD *is* with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but **if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.**

Prov. 1:24 Because **I have called, and ye refused**; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

28 **Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:**

29 For that **they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:**

30 They would **none of my counsel**: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they **eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.**

Mt. 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their **mouth**, and honoureth me with *their* lips; **but their heart is far from me.**

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

- ❖ Faith and fidelity are the keys to experiencing the nearness of God.

IV. THE FAITH FOR ACTION

Acts 17:27 That they should **seek the Lord**, if haply they might feel after him, and **find him, though he be not far from every one of us:**

❖ When a believer knows the promises of His nearness, then those promises must be acted upon according to His stipulations.

Jas. 4:8 **Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.** Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

Heb. 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of **a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.**

- ❖ Believers can focus upon the distractions that discourage or meditate on the Scriptures that strengthen.

Josh. 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but **thou shalt meditate therein day and night**, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for **then** thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psa. 1:2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and **in his law doth he meditate day and night.**

Psa. 77:12 **I will meditate** also of **all thy work**, and talk of **thy doings**.

Psa. 119:15 **I will meditate in thy precepts**, and have respect unto **thy ways**.

Heb. 13:5b “...for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**”

Eph. 2:14 For **he is our peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17 And **came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.**

18 For **through him** we both have **access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

Summary

- ❖ A common discouragement for believers is sensing that the Lord is afar off.
- ❖ The cause of such discouragement can be sin, satanic, or simply self.
- ❖ Sin and rejection causes separation from God.
- ❖ The solution to overcome this dilemma is to focus attention on fellowship with the Savior and meditating in His Word.

Jer. 23:23 **Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?**

Conclusion

- ❖ In the book of Lamentations, the writer states that his “...strength and my hope is perished from the LORD” – that the Lord is far from him.
- ❖ While remembering his “affliction” and “misery,” his attitude changes when his mind changes focus:

Lam. 3:18 And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:

19 **Remembering mine affliction and my misery**, the wormwood and the gall.

20 My soul hath *them* still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

21 **This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.**

22 *It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because **his compassions fail not.**

23 *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness.

24 **The LORD is my portion**, saith my soul; **therefore will I hope in him.**

25 **The LORD is good unto them that wait for him**, to the soul *that seeketh him.*

26 *It is* good that *a man* should **both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.**

31 For **the Lord will not cast off for ever:**

32 But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

33 For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.