



Near to God ... or Far Away

DRAW NEAR TO GOD

GO ON WILLFULLY SINNING



WHAT DOES MY LIFE REVEAL?

AM I NEAR TO GOD OR FAR AWAY?

WHAT DOES MY LIFE REVEAL? TWO OPTIONS ...

OPTION 1: MY LIFE REVEALS SOMEONE WHO ENTERS THE HOLY PLACES OF GOD AND DRAWS NEAR TO HIM.

LET'S TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT INVOLVES.

1. All humans fall short of the glory of God and begin life on earth a humanly incalculable and incomprehensible distance from God.

- (Romans 3:23 LSB) **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**
- (Psalm 103:12 LSB) **As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**

A note of explanation for using this verse ... When God removes our sin it is a humanly incalculable and incomprehensible distance from his holy places. The distance between sin and a holy God must be infinite. It seems then that God's use of the phrase "as far as the east is from the west" in regard to our sin may be a helpful to us in understanding the infinite gap between sinful humans and a holy God.

2. **But we don't know it:** A substantial part of the problem is that we humans do not know and have no way of knowing in and of ourselves how far off—how separated and how alienated we are—from God.

- (Ephesians 2:12–13 ESV) **Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ,** alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**
- (Romans 3:11 ESV) **No one understands;** no one seeks for God.
- (Romans 3:16–17 ESV) In their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and **the way of peace they have not known.**
- (Ephesians 4:18 ESV) They are **darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.
- (Colossians 1:21–22 LSB) And although

you **were formerly alienated and enemies in mind and in evil deeds,** 22 but now He reconciled you in the body of His flesh through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.

3. We cannot know/see the truth of how far we are from God until he opens our blind eyes.

- (Isaiah 29:18 LSB) On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, **And out of darkness and thick darkness the eyes of the blind will see.**
- (Isaiah 35:5 LSB) **Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.**
- (Psalm 146:8 LSB) **Yahweh opens the eyes of the blind;** Yahweh raises up those who are bowed down; Yahweh loves the righteous.
- (1 Corinthians 2:10 LSB) **But to us God revealed them through the Spirit,** for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.
- (1 Corinthians 2:14 LSB) But a natural man does not accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, **and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually examined.**

4. We are directed to enter the holy places of God and draw near to him by the blood of Jesus—the one way to enter the presence of the Father.

- (Hebrews 10:19–22 LSB) Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,** 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- (John 14:6 LSB) Jesus said to him, **"I am the way,** and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father but through Me.**

5. The confidence spoken of here is the open, honest, free and fearless, joyful courage, boldness and assurance of the person who trusts solely in the sufficient work of the blood of Jesus.

10:19 Confidence ... boldness; the trait of being willing to undertake activities that involve risk or danger; especially that involve being honest and straightforward in attitude and speech; without concealment; without ambiguity or circumlocution; free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance.

Circumlocution is the use of many words where fewer would do, especially in a deliberate attempt to be vague or evasive.

6. The truly confident person puts no confidence in the flesh—his own abilities or standing.

- (Philippians 3:3 LSB) For we are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus **and put no confidence in the flesh.**
- (Philippians 3:9 LSB) **And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own** which is from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith.
- (2 Corinthians 3:4–5 LSB) **And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.**
- (1 John 2:28 LSB) And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He is manifested, **we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**
- (1 John 4:17 LSB) By this, love has been perfected with us, **so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment**, because as He is, so also are we in this world.

7. We need to have some beginning point, at the very least, as to what it means to draw near to God.

A. One absolute essential in drawing near to God is that we must draw near with our heart.

- (Isaiah 29:13 LSB) Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their mouth And honor Me with their lips, **But they remove their hearts far from Me**, And their fear of Me is in the command

of men learned by rote.”

Remove ... far ... to be disassociated; to be unconnected relationally with another, conceived of as being far away from another; to be or become far, be or become distant, be removed, to send far away.

B. Many humans do not believe that we cannot know apart from God that we cannot draw near to him and so their rebellious hearts lead them to add sin to sin.

- (Isaiah 30:1 LSB) “Woe to the rebellious children,” declares Yahweh, “**Who execute counsel, but not Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin.**”

8. Here some good, sound steps to get us on our way to drawing near to God.

A. Love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength.

Think about it. How could we be more near to God than loving him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength?

- (Mark 12:30 ESV) And you shall love the Lord your God **with all your heart** and **with all your soul** and **with all your mind** and **with all your strength.**

B. Keep the word of God and abide in his love.

- (John 15:10–11 LSB) If you **keep My commandments**, you will **abide in My love**; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so **that My joy may be in you**, and **that your joy may be complete.**

C. Make it our aim to please God in everything we do.

- (2 Corinthians 5:9 ESV) So whether we are at home or away, **we make it our aim to please him.**
- (Colossians 1:10 NIV) So that you may **live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way**: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

To make it our aim ... means to aspire; to have pleasing God as our cherished desire or a lofty goal.

D. Honor God and give him thanks.

- (Romans 1:21 ESV) For although they knew God, **they did not honor him as God or**

give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

E. Trust God fully.

- (Proverbs 3:5 LSB) **Trust in Yahweh with all your heart** And do not lean on your own understanding.

F. Glorify God in everything we do.

- (1 Corinthians 10:31 LSB) Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**
- (1 Peter 4:11b LSB) **So that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ**, to whom belongs the glory and might forever and ever. Amen.

9. Christ has inaugurated a new and living way for us to live by the blood of Jesus.

- (Hebrews 10:20–21 LSB) **By a new and living way which He inaugurated for us** through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God.

A. Those who draw near to God have confidence because they rely on the blood of Jesus as the full payment for sin.

B. He is the new and living way that was put into effect and made available when he bore our sins in his body on the cross.

to inaugurate v. – to put into effect or make available (for use) for the first time.

- (John 10:9 LSB) I am the door; **if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved**, and will go in and out and find pasture.

C. Those who are near to God have confidence because they have a great priest over the house of God.

- (Ephesians 2:19–21 LSB) So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, **and are of God's household.**

D. We can determine if we are near to God and so are not sinning willfully after receiving the truth by three powerful evidences.

- (Hebrews 10:22–25 LSB) **Let us draw near with a sincere 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 how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds**, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, **and all the more as you see the day drawing near.**

LORD WILLING, WE WILL FOCUS ON A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THESE THREE POWERFUL EVIDENCES NEXT WEEK.

Powerful evidence #1: We draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.

Powerful evidence #2: We hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.

Powerful evidence #3: We consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works.

Consider – to give careful thought or consideration to something.

OPTION 2: MY LIFE REVEALS SOMEONE WHO GOES ON WILLFULLY SINNING AND WILL ONE DAY FACE THE TERRIFYING JUDGMENT OF GOD.

There is no middle ground. There is not drawing somewhat near to God. There is one way to come into the presence of the Father and that one way is by the blood of Jesus Son of God.

If the powerful evidences listed above are absent from our lives, or if we are depending on any human alterations to right standing with God, then know this ...

Willful sinners that keep on willfully sinning have before them the terrifying expectation of judgment.

- (Hebrews 10:26–27 LSB) **For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 **but a terrifying expectation of judgment** and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.