

"I Have Set The Lord Always Before Me"

Introduction. To me, drawing closer to the Lord is the key to faithful living; indeed, it is the key to everything. It is the key to overcoming sin, discouragement, and weakness, which is not pleasing to God (Revelation 3:15-16).

In Psalm 16:11, we are reminded that in the presence of God there is fullness of joy and true happiness. When we evaluate ourselves and find that we are lacking, what can we do to become close to God again? The answer is found in Psalm 16:8. When we "set the Lord before us" we receive the benefits of drawing near to Him (James 4:7-8). In this lesson, we will look at ways that you can draw closer to God, or to "set the Lord before you," anytime you find yourself drifting away from God (Hebrews 2:1).

I. ***Set The Lord Before You Through God's Creation***

- A. Let nature help you draw close to God.
 1. The creation speaks to us of God
 - a) It tells of His glory and His knowledge (Psalm 19:1-2).
 - b) It impresses us with His eternal power and His deity (Romans 1:20).
 - c) In their own way, such inanimate objects worship God (Psalm 68:7-8).
 2. It is beneficial to take time to contemplate God's creation.
 - a) We understand more of His power and of His person (Isaiah 42:5).
 - b) Just like any relationship (e.g., marriage), increasing understanding between friends enhances friendship.
- B. Others used natural settings in drawing closer to God.
 1. Isaac would go out into the fields to meditate (Genesis 24:63).
 2. Jesus would go to the mountains to pray (Matthew 14:23). It is often easier to draw closer to God in the midst of His creation (nature), than it is in man's creation (cities).
 3. Read verse one of "Walking Alone At Eve."

II. ***Set The Lord Before You Through God's Revelation***

- A. God's word provides the full revelation of God.
 1. Through nature we are limited in what we can learn from God.
 - a) We can see His power, divinity, glory, and knowledge.
 - b) But we learn nothing of His will and purpose for us.
 2. It is only through divine revelation that God has made His will fully known.

- a) He has revealed many wonderful mercies through His Spirit, who in turn revealed them through the apostles (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 Peter 1:12).
 - b) All of these were written for our benefit and understanding (Ephesians 3:3-5; Colossians 1:26; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- B. Others depended upon the word to remain close to God.
- 1. David used it in many ways to stay close to God (Psalm 119:92-93, 105, 147-148).
 - 2. On the other hand, Jesus used it to ward off Satan (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Use it to help you draw near to Him who is the source of peace and strength.
 - 3. Read verse two of "Walking Alone At Eve."

III. ***Set The Lord Before You Through Your Prayers***

- A. A close relationship must be a two-way street.
- 1. God has revealed Himself to us through His creation and revelation.
 - 2. We must reveal ourselves to Him, which we do through prayer.
 - a) It is the means by which we express every concern and receive appropriate blessings (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6-7).
 - b) It is the means by which we draw boldly to God, to obtain mercy and grace to help (Hebrews 4:14-16; James 1:5-6).
- B. Others found prayer a means to receive help from God.
- 1. David found that confessing sins to God brought forgiveness (Psalm 32:3-6).
 - 2. Jesus found prayer to be a source of strength in times of trial (Matthew 26:36-44).
 - 3. Read verse three of "Walking Alone At Eve."

IV. ***Set The Lord Before You Through Your Fellowship***

- A. Strength comes from assembling together.
- 1. There is strength in numbers (Genesis 2:18; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).
 - 2. In view of the very real danger of falling away, we have two responsibilities.
 - a) We need to exhort one another daily (Acts 11:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 3:12-13).
 - b) We need to admonish one another through our frequent assemblies (Hebrews 10:24-25). Like coals in a fire keeping each other hot, assembling together is designed to keep the "spark" alive in our relationship with God.
- B. The early church found strength by assembling together.
- 1. As when Peter and John were released after being arrested (Acts 4:23-31).
 - 2. As when Peter was imprisoned in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).

- C. Our assemblies can be a foretaste of God's presence.
1. We draw near to God together through singing, praying, and studying. In heaven, we will enjoy the fellowship of God and His servants (Revelation 7:9-17).
 2. Read chorus of "Walking Alone At Eve."

Conclusion. Do you want to draw closer to God? Then "set the Lord before you" by contemplating nature, meditating on God's word, spending time in prayer, and having fellowship with other Christians. Do this, and you can draw closer to God, singing with David: "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).