

## **DRAWING CLOSER TO GOD**

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(Taken from a Seminar at the World Missionary Conference)

*Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you...* James 4:8

*But it is good for me to draw near to God...* Psalm 73:28

We live in an age when everyone and everything around us seems to demand most of our time and energy. For example, we are bombarded by the mass media to purchase every new gadget on the market. Millions of books, magazines, and periodicals roll off the presses daily challenging us to read more and more. Electronic games, exotic travel packages, and every form of entertainment are available to us as never before. Moreover, our families make many demands upon us, our homes must be maintained, and our jobs are becoming more complex and demanding. Thus, we seem to be caught in a vicious circle. All of these forces tend to draw us away from God, unless we are willing to take time to be holy. That is what Drawing Closer to God is all about.

### **WAYS AND MEANS OF DRAWING CLOSER TO GOD**

The following are some suggestions which we can employ in our daily lives to help us draw closer to God, and more important, remain closer to God:

1. Setting aside time each day for meditation and prayer.
2. Fasting.
3. Reverence for Communion and Ordinances.
4. Seek to know and understand God's will in your life.
5. Study Scriptures prayerfully.
6. Being led by the Spirit & knowing the difference between the Spirit and the flesh.
7. Go to Church regularly.
8. Give your testimony to others.
9. Give alms to the poor.
10. Visit the sick.
11. Live righteously every day.
12. Pray without ceasing.
13. Sing unto yourselves hymns of praise.
14. Be willing to forgive others.
15. Love your enemies.
16. Speak not evil of one another.
17. Love one another as Christ loved us.
18. Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Jesus.
19. Be the Light of the World at all times and in all places.
20. Give generously to the Church so the Gospel may be brought to others.
21. Seek first the Kingdom of God.
22. Be willing to make personal sacrifices for the Gospel's sake.
23. Exercise your faith-live by faith.

Time will not permit us to address each of these items; therefore, a few have been chosen for discussion.

## **FASTING AND PRAYER**

Jesus showed the importance of Fasting by devoting forty consecutive days and nights to prayer and fasting.

For the purpose of discussion, let us assume that we have decided to fast because we want to draw closer to God.

### Questions:

1. When is the best time to start our fast?
2. Should we eat or drink during the fast?
3. I am on medication which I must take daily. Can I still fast?
4. How long should I fast?
5. I am offended at a member. May I still fast?

### Scriptural References on Fasting:

Alma 3:17, 6:6

Matthew 4:2

Luke 2:37

Acts 2:37, 10:30

I Corinthians 7:5

II Corinthians 6:5

### Follow-Up After the Fast:

You have fasted because you wanted to draw yourself closer to God. Now you must implement the things mentioned earlier such as visiting the sick, studying the Scriptures, etc., or else your fast is in vain.

## **REVERENCE FOR COMMUNION AND OTHER ORDINANCES**

If you wish to draw closer to God you must treat all Gospel ordinances with respect and reverence. Communion represents the body and blood of Christ, and He commanded us to partake of it often in remembrance of Him.

### Questions:

1. I feel unworthy because of something I did. Should I take Communion?
2. How long should I refrain from Sacrament?
3. What will those sitting around me think if they see me refuse?
4. I am offended at another member. Can I take Sacrament?
5. What are the consequences of taking Sacrament unworthily?

## **SEEK TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL IN YOUR LIFE**

If we want God to use us in His service, we must know and accept His Will. Often, we venture out on our own not knowing God's Will. The results are failure, disappointment, and discouragement.

### Questions:

1. How can I be sure what God's Will is for me?
2. How can I learn to accept God's Will?

## **STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES**

God has preserved the Holy Scriptures (Bible and Book of Mormon) throughout the centuries. No books have been mistreated more than these two books. Millions of Bibles have been burned in an attempt to destroy the work of God. But God loves us so much that He has kept His Word from extinction. If we really wish to draw closer to God, we must study His word prayerfully.

### How to Study:

The following is one suggested method of studying the Word of God.

1. Select a subject such as Faith.
2. Research the Scriptures on Faith and make notes as you go along.
3. Try to learn the following about Faith:

Its importance in your life.  
How to exercise and increase your Faith.  
What relationship does Faith have with works?  
Can you please God without Faith?  
How to live by Faith.  
How to be healed by Faith.  
How to draw closer to God by Faith.

Scriptures regarding Faith: Moroni 7; Alma 32; Hebrews 11; James 2; Romans 12:3; I Peter 1.

There are hundreds of references on Faith. Look them up and you draw closer to God.

### **WHAT IS FLESH AND WHAT IS SPIRIT?**

If you wish to draw closer to God, you must know how to distinguish the difference between the flesh and the Spirit of God.

John tells us: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God . . ." I John 4: 1

Paul said: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6

We can be sure of the difference if we live close to God and allow the Holy Ghost to lead, guide, and direct us.

It has and will always be the guiding light that is given to man who has received it at the time of laying on of hands.

The Holy Ghost will give to you the fruits that have been promised and it will also give to each person and to the Church some or all of the gifts. These gifts and fruits will never cease if we seek and do the will of the Father.

## **GIFTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST**

John 14:15-18

"And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter ... Even the Spirit of truth."

John 14:26

The Holy Ghost a comforter and teacher.

John 15:26

The Comforter to testify of Jesus.

John 16:13-14

To guide unto all truths and show things to come.

I Corinthians 12:4-11

Diversities of the Spirit:

1. Word of wisdom
2. Word of knowledge
3. Gifts of healings
4. Faith
5. Working of miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discerning of spirits
8. Diverse kinds of tongues
9. Interpretation of tongues

Galatians 5:22-26

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Longsuffering
5. Gentleness
6. Goodness
7. Faith
8. Meekness
9. Temperance

Romans 8:16

"The spirit . . . beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God."

II Peter 1:20-21

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

II Nephi 32:8-9

It teaches man how to pray.

II Nephi 33:1

Holy Ghost opens up hearts of men.

Moroni 10:4-19

Gifts of the Holy Ghost.