



STAYING CLOSE TO JESUS!

Introduction:

- A. Closeness Is A Cherished Trait In Relationships.
 - 1. Husbands and wives should have a closeness that they share with **NO ONE** else in the world!
 - a. “One flesh.”
 - b. “Oneness in heart and mind.”
 - 2. Closeness with friends.
 - a. You can be yourself and “let your hair down” with friends.
 - b. Ac. 10:24 “And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and **close friends**.”
 - 3. Closeness with brethren.
 - a. We are “blood brethren.”
 - b. We should love our relationship: “Blest Be The Tie!”
 - 4. Closeness brings warmth, security, encouragement, support, and love.
 - 5. A lack of closeness brings sadness, insecurity, discouragement, and weakness.
- B. Yet, As We Live Life, As We Face Life’s Mundane Humdrum, Life’s Challenges, Life’s Burdens, Life’s Struggles, Fears, And Loneliness.
 - 1. It is easy to focus upon our life and its struggles and to draw back from family, friends, our brethren, and the Lord!
 - 2. Doing that is really dangerous!
- C. We Must **STRUGGLE** To Stay Close To Jesus -- Stay Near To God!
 - 1. If we do not stay close to Jesus, we are in **GREAT** danger!
 - a. We can become discouraged, become weak in faith, give up our faith, or even give up on life!

- b. Peter, one of the Lord's BELOVED Apostles, failed because he did not stay near to Jesus. Throughout Jesus' trial, "he followed at a distance."
Lk. 22:54
- 2. When we are not near to Jesus, we can be influenced by and deceived by other messages that can lead us away from Him.

I. (Slide #2) Sinners Are Brought Near To God By The Blood Of Christ And By Maintaining Appreciation Of It!

A. (Slide #3) Jesus Saves Sinners By His Blood; He Brought Jews And Gentiles Together Into One Spiritual Body By His Powerful Blood!

- 1. Eph. 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."
- 2. Eph. 2:17 "And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near."
- 3. I Pet. 1:18,19 "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

B. We Must Consider His Sacrifice And Stay Close To Christ!

C. "When I Survey The Cross!"

Verse 1:

**"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

Verse 2:

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

Verse 3:

**See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

Verse 4:

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
**Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."**

-- Words: Isaac Watts, 1707

-- Music: Lowell Mason, 1824

- D. **(Slide #4)** Our Prayer Must Be "Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross!" Or "Near The Cross"

Verse 1:

"Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain
Free to all, a healing stream
Flows from Calvary's mountain.

Refrain

*In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.*

Verse 2:

Near the cross, a trembling soul,
Love and mercy found me;
There the bright and morning star
Sheds its beams around me.

Refrain

*In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.*

Verse 3:

**Near the cross! O Lamb of God,
Bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day,
With its shadows o'er me.**

Refrain

*In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.*

Verse 4:

**Near the cross I'll watch and wait
Hoping, trusting ever,
Till I reach the golden strand,
Just beyond the river.**

Refrain

*In the cross, in the cross,
Be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river."*

-- Words -- Fanny Crosby, 1869
-- Music -- W. William Doane

II. (Slide #5) Be EAGER To Be Like Jesus!

- A. Sinners Drew Near Because They Wanted To Hear! Lk. 15:1,2 "Then **all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.**"²And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'"

- B. **The Woman With The Issue Of Blood Was Determined To Be Close To Jesus -- She LONGED For Healing!** Mt. 9:20-22 “And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and **touched the hem of His garment**. ²¹For she said to herself, ‘If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.’ ²²But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, ‘Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And the woman was made well from that hour.”
- C. Long To Imitate Him -- His Heart, His Actions, His Love, His Sacrifices, And His Devotion To Heavenly Things!
- D. I Pet. 2:21-24 “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps**: ²²*‘Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth’*; ²³who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.”

III. (Slide #6) Christians Stay Close To God By Feeding Upon His Truth!

- A. As Solomon Dedicated The Temple, He Blessed The People Of Israel: I Ki. 8:57-61 “May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, ⁵⁸that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, ⁶⁰that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God; *there is* no other. ⁶¹Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.”
- B. (Slide #7) Jn. 6:35 “And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”
- C. Mt. 5:6 “Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”

D. “Break Thou The Bread Of Life To Me!”

Verse 1:

**“Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O living Word!**

Verse 2:

Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord, to me, to me,
As Thou didst bless the bread by Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

Verse 3:

Thou art the bread of life, O Lord, to me,
Thy holy Word the truth that saveth me;
Give me to eat and live with Thee above;
Teach me to love Thy truth, for Thou art love.”

-- Words -- Mary A. Lathbury, 1877; Verse 3 by Alexander Groves, 1913.

-- Music -- William F. Sherwin, 1877

E. Feed On The Word; Cherish It; Determine To Live It!

- F. Dt. 30:14-20 “But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. ¹⁵See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

IV. (Slide #8) Christians Stay Close To God By Having The Proper Attitude Toward Sin!

- A. Rom. 9:1-14 “And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. ¹²The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.”

- B. When You Draw Near, Do You Draw Near With A Pure Heart? Or With An Evil Heart?
 - 1. Lk. 22:47 “And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him.”

 - 2. Oh, Judas was near; but his heart was SO evil and SO far away!

- C. Determine To Be Near To God; Regret And Repent Of Sin; Humble Yourself To Him! Js. 4:8 “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.”
 - 1. Submit to God! (Love His Will; Do It!) 7

 - 2. Resist the Devil! 7

 - 3. Grieve, mourn, and wail because of your sins! 9

 - 4. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord. 10

- D. Always Be Contrite When You Disappoint Him Or Sin Against Him! Ps. 34:18 “The LORD *is* near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.”

- E. (Slide #9) Be Like Christ -- He Chose The Cross Rather Than To Sin!

V. (Slide #10) Stay Close To Him By Worshiping Fervently!

- A. True Worship Arouses Glory For God!

- B. True Worship Enhances Our Love For Christ!

C. True Worship Keeps You Close To Him!

1. Be careful that you do not become envious of the wicked!
2. Ps. 73 WHOLE PSALM “A Psalm of Asaph. Truly God *is* good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. ²But **as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped.** ³**For I was envious of the boastful,** When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴For *there are* no pangs in their death, But their strength *is* firm. ⁵They *are* not in trouble *as other* men, Nor are they plagued like *other* men. ⁶Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them *like* a garment. ⁷Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. ⁸They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression; They speak loftily. ⁹They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. ¹⁰Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them. ¹¹And they say, ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?’ ¹²Behold, these *are* the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase *in* riches. ¹³Surely I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, And washed my hands in innocence. ¹⁴For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. ¹⁵If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. ¹⁶When I thought *how* to understand this, It *was* too painful for me-- ¹⁷Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end. ¹⁸Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. ¹⁹Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. ²⁰As a dream when *one* awakes, *So*, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. ²¹Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind. ²²I *was* so foolish and ignorant; I *was like* a beast before You. ²³**Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand.** ²⁴You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me *to* glory. ²⁵Whom have I in heaven *but* You? And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You. ²⁶My flesh and my heart fail; *But* God *is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. ²⁸But ***it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works.***”

VI. (Slide #11) Stay Close To Him In Prayerfulness!

- A. Ps. 5:1-3 “A Psalm of David. Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my meditation. ²Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. ³My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct *it* to You, And I will look up.”

- B. Ps. 116:1,2 “I love the LORD, because He has heard My voice *and* my supplications. ²Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live.”
- C. Ps. 145:18 “The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”
- D. Col. 4:2 “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;”
- E. I Thess. 5:17,18 “pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
- F. “Near To The Heart Of God!”

Verse 1:

**“There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.**

Refrain

*O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.*

Verse 2:

**There is a place of comfort sweet,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where we our Savior meet,
Near to the heart of God.**

Refrain

*O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.*

Verse 3:

**There is a place of full release,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where all is joy and peace,
Near to the heart of God.**

Refrain

***O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.”***

-- Words and Music by: Cleland B. McAfee

**VII.(Slide #12) Stay Close To Him By Longing To Be Nearer To God -- To Be With
The Godhead In Heaven!**

A. Heb. 10:22 “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

B. “Nearer My God To Thee!”

Verse 1:

**“Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!
E’en though it be a cross that raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee.**

Refrain

***Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!***

Verse 2:

Though like the wanderer, the sun gone down,
Darkness be over me, my rest a stone.
Yet in my dreams I’d be nearer, my God to Thee.

Refrain

*Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!*

Verse 3:

There let the way appear, steps unto Heav'n;
All that Thou sendest me, in mercy given;
Angels to beckon me nearer, my God, to Thee.

Refrain

*Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!*

Verse 4:

Then, with my waking thoughts bright with Thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be nearer, my God, to Thee.

Refrain

*Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!*

Verse 5:

Or, if on joyful wing cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot, upward I'll fly,
Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee.

Refrain

*Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!*

Verse 6:

There in my Father's home, safe and at rest,
There in my Savior's love, perfectly blest;
Age after age to be, nearer my God to Thee.

Refrain

*Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!"*

-- Words: Verses 1-5: Sarah F. Adams; Verse 6: Edward H. Bickersteth, Jr.,
1841

-- Music: Bethany Mason, 1856

Refrain

(Slide #13) Invitation:

A. Are You Genuinely Seeking And Determining To Be Close To Jesus?

B. "Nearer Still Nearer!"

Verse 1:

**"Nearer, still nearer, close to Thy heart,
Draw me, my Savior -- so precious Thou art!
Fold me, oh, fold me close to Thy breast.
Shelter me safe in that "Haven of Rest";
Shelter me safe in that "Haven of Rest."**

Verse 2:

Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,
Naught as an offering to Jesus, my King;
Only my sinful, now contrite heart.
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart.
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart.

Verse 3:

Nearer, still nearer, Lord, to be Thine!
Sin, with its follies, I gladly resign,
All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride,
Give me but Jesus, my Lord, crucified.
Give me but Jesus, my Lord, crucified.

Verse 4:

Nearer, still nearer, while life shall last.
Till safe in glory my anchor is cast;
Through endless ages ever to be
Nearer, my Savior, still nearer to Thee;
Nearer, my Savior, still nearer to Thee!"

-- Words and Music by Leila N. Morris, 1898

C. Determine To Live Near To Jesus; Stay Close To Him!