

BEING NEAR TO GOD

Ephesians 2:11-13

Introduction: Everyone is nearer to someone than others. You have someone you are near to and someone is very near to you. However not everybody is near to the same person/people. God wants everybody to be close, near to Him and it would be wonderful if everybody wanted to be near to God, although that is just not true, for some people don't even know about God, others know about God but don't have time for Him, others know about God and don't want to have anything to do with Him, but for those who want to be near to God, just how does that happen?

I. ONE HAS TO BE "MADE" TO BE NEAR TO GOD

1. Obviously for the Church Age, being near to God comes by believing in His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - Near to God started with Adam for God made him from the dust of the earth and had daily fellowship with him until Adam sinned and God had to separate Himself.
 - Jesus was/is the first of His kind as He was the first of a new eternal "race" of people to be able to be near to God.
 - Jesus said that as a vine is to a branch, so a believer is to Jesus Christ (connected)
 - God's grace, man's faith in Jesus Christ equals birth into the new eternal race (family).
 - Jesus Christ is God in the flesh and being "reborn" by believing in Jesus puts one into Jesus Christ, and therefore "near" God.
 - Jesus Christ's blood removes the sin barrier between a person and God, it forms a covenant between God and man, enabling them to be near each other.
 - It is NOT the "incarnation" (birth of Jesus Christ) that brings one near to God, but it is the of Jesus Christ.

II. OBVIOUSLY THERE CAN BE/ARE DEGREES OF NEARNESS

1. Adam was very near God as God made him from the dust, but Adam lost that nearness when he sinned against God and God had to leave him.
 - We, of the Church Age, Christians, were much farther away than Adam in Eden with God.
 - God banished Adam, yet by God's grace, WE are made nearer than Adam ever was.
2. Israel was near God in the wilderness.
 - The tabernacle where God "stayed" was placed in the central place of their encampment and God's nearness was signified by a cloud and by fire.
 - There was a priestly group/tribe who were nearer to God than the others.
 - The High Priest was nearer to God than the other priests and the rest of the tribes.
 - The 12 tribes encamped surrounding the Tabernacle and were nearer to God than any other nation ever was. We, of the Church Age, Christians were much farther away from God than the 12 tribes who were encircled around the tabernacle where God "dwelt."
 - On the camp outskirts were the sick, lepers, outcasts BUT they were nearer to God than us.
 - We Christians have been farther from God than any of these of Israel, yet we have been brought closer to God by His Grace than they ever were.

3. When at Mt. Sinai, Israel was near to God.
 - God met Israel there where He was at the top of the mountain and they were scattered along the mountain side and base.
 - None dared to cross the appointed boundary and all promised to be faithful to God.
 - LET US FIND OUR PLACE THERE WITH ISRAEL:
 - Encamped around the base of the mountain, followers, faithful in words ONLY, for there was unrest and then rebellion.
 - Nadab, Abihu, Aaron and 70 priests went up the mountain midway.
 - They were selected for special favor but refused to stay and went back down.
 - Joshua went almost to the top and was at the fringe of God's cloud and was content to remain there in faithfulness even though he could hear the people calling him from the foot of the mountain.
 - Moses went all the way to the top, into God's very presence.
 - Moses mediated on behalf of the people with God. Moses was a man of God and was in God's very presence.
 - Of the various positions along the mountain, every body failed to go higher except Joshua and Moses.
 - God's judgment fell on those who went back and joined those in rebellion.
 - Judgment begins at the house of God
 - So, where are you on God's mountain? Where are you in being near to God?
 - Are you on some far off island? In some far off country? On the outside of the with the outcasts? Are you at the foot of the mountain with most of the others? Are you up the mountain a ways with the 70 priests who came back down? Are you near the top with Joshua? Are you all the way up with Moses?

III. WAYS TO BECOME NEAR TO GOD

1. By believing in God's Son, Jesus Christ, one is born into God's family, is indwelt with the very presence of God, the Holy Spirit.
 - Through baptism for that identifies publicly that person as being a part of God's family.
 - Through prayer for when God's child prays, God draws near.
 - Through the Lord's Supper, for those participating are remembering God's Son and His great sacrifice for them.
 - Through worship and praise, God draws near when His children are together as part of His family and are lifting up their hearts to Him in rejoicing and humbleness.
2. Then one day Jesus will come back for all believers and every Christians shall be in God's very presence for all eternity.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians live in the power from being near to God.
2. Christians enjoy being near to God and when they are, they are positive.
3. When near God, Christians exercise faith that grows from being near God.
4. When near God, one's daily life shows, reflects that nearness.
5. Every/any Christian can be as near God as he/she wants to be.