

Study Guide “But I Was Close” from 8-19-2018

Key Scriptures: “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,...But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:1, 4, 5)

- John 3:3 “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
- Romans 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

Start Talking

- Have you ever heard an inspiring message or been to a great conference, and, despite your immediate excitement, soon found yourself being unchanged from the way you were before? Discuss why this sometimes happens.
- Pastor Baugh said, “Being close to the things Jesus is doing will not change you.” Why do you think that God wants a relationship with you that goes well beyond simple proximity? Describe this ideal relationship with God.
- Pastor Baugh said, “God didn’t come to make you the best version of yourself. He came to transform you.” How could someone change if they stopped holding on to parts of who they are, and start welcoming God’s transforming power?
- Read John 3:3. Do many lost people perceive becoming a Christian as just an adjustment to their lives as opposed to getting a totally new life. How do we reconcile being born again into a new creation with the problem issues that still remain within and upon us? Discuss.

Start Thinking:

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- Pastor Baugh said, “Some of us give him the minimum amount to avoid hell and be comfortable. He will only be able to use you minimally.” Now, carefully read Matthew 25:14-31. Did you receive, five, two, or one talent? Does it matter more about how much you received (Ephesians 4:7) or what you did with what received?
- Ephesians 2:1 reads, “...and you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...” If you were dead, could you make yourself alive, or is it only God who can made you alive? Discuss.

Start Sharing:

- Pastor Baugh quoted John Powell, who said, “We think we need to change to be loved. But rather, we are loved so we can change.” Are you more likely to change because of a person who does not love you, or from one who loves you deeply? Discuss.
- Describe the difference between trying to change, and letting God change you because you know that you are already truly loved by and are precious to God.
- Pastor Baugh said that he wanted his daughters to “...have Jesus be involved in every minute of their lives. To be so close to God, guided by the Holy Spirit...” What might cause your loved ones to develop a close personal relationship with God? What might hinder this?

Start Praying:

- “Lord, help us to open up and trust You into the deepest parts of our beings, so that we can be transformed and more useful to you. We are ready!”

Start Doing:

- Read Romans 12:2. Write down one way you “can be transformed by the renewing of your mind”?
- Have you let God pour Himself sufficiently into your internal life so that your external life will be transformed? Do you think that frequent prayer and meditation in God’s Word will perpetuate this process? Discuss.
- Pastor Baugh said, “...some of us just run out of time.” Are you running out of time to do something that you believe God wants you

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to do? Why do people procrastinate in giving Jesus our all in all?
List some reasons (excuses). If it applies, pray about changing this
in your own life.