

Distance with God

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Ephesians 2:12–13 (NASB95)

¹²remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

- REMEMBER: if you know Christ you must remember where He brought you from by His grace.
- Without Jesus, no one can make it into God's kingdom: Now or in eternity.

REMEMBER: You were once far away.

Sin separates a person from God, from the life of God

Ephesians 4:17–19

¹⁷So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

- Gentiles are the world.

¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

- Darkened in their understanding: they do not know or desire to know truth.
- They are ignorant of the truth because their hearts are hardened.
 - Resisting or ignoring God hardens the heart
- The end result is to be EXCLUDED from the life of God; the life Jesus died to give every person; the life that is abundant with the blessings of God; the life that is eternal.

¹⁹and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

- To become callous is to be without feeling; spiritual numbness; closed off from God.

This describes the Gentiles; this describes the world. This is why things are getting worse because people are becoming callous.

People "have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

Are we in the world and separated from Christ, or are we in Christ separated from the world?

- To be separate from Christ is to be apart from God.
- To be apart from God is to be excluded from the life of God.
- To be without Christ is to be without hope.
 - Without hope in this life
 - Without hope for eternity

What keeps us from being close to God?

- Our endless wants and desires.
- Our obsessive desire to be friends of the world.
 - God is a jealous God
 - Christians commit spiritual adultery

James 4:7–10

⁷Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

- The devil wants us apart from God.
- He will use whatever wedge he can to get between us and God
- The command to “Resist the devil” means that we don’t have to allow him to succeed.
- We were far away but we have been brought close by the blood of Christ.
- **THERE IS POWER IN THE BLOOD!**

⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- Walk away from the things that put you at a distance from Christ.
- Move toward Christ by learning of Him. He is truth.
- Put away your old self and be renewed in the spirit of your mind.
- Don’t be double-minded > Such a person suffers from divided loyalties. On the one hand, he wishes to maintain a religious confession and desires the presence of God in his life; on the other hand, he loves the ways of the world and prefers to live according to its mores and ethics. (from the complete word study dictionary)

⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

- There is no cause for celebration in the life apart from God.
- There is no hope on death row.

¹⁰Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

- Selfishness and pride keeps us at length from Christ.
- God can work with a broken and contrite spirit.
- God raises a person up from the depths of sin.
- God exalts a person to the place of righteousness in Christ.
- In Christ, we have access to God and all the benefits of His kingdom.

This is no time to be at any distance from God. We are living in the last days. The world is passing away along with all of its ways and desires. Hell awaits all that opposes God. Heaven awaits the faithful in Christ. In Christ we will forever be close to God, in His presence, and living His life.