

Lange says:

He who would attain to the desired goal must not merely give heed to the Word of God, but must strive earnestly to enter into the Rest of God.
p. 96

Lange also quotes Fricke when he says:

The goal toward which we tend is indeed rest, but the way is toil and labor.
p. 97

Delitzsch points out:

Renewed exhortation [here is given] to enter into the rest of God, the intense earnestness of which is founded on the all-penetrating and all-disclosing vital energy of the divine word.
p. 200

Larry Richards points out:

A responsive attitude is critical. When we hear God's voice today, what is important to God and to us is simply that we trust ourselves to Him and obey.

Faith in God, expressed in an obedient response to His voice, is the critical principle which sums up the life-style of God's children. What you and I are to concentrate on in our Christian lives is entering God's rest by making faith's response whenever we hear His voice.
p. 37

John Phillips cites an interesting illustration of this 11th verse:

A missionary in Africa offered a ride in the back of his pickup truck to a national who was walking along struggling beneath the weight of a very heavy load. The African gladly accepted the ride. After a few miles the missionary glanced in his rear-view mirror and was astonished to see the Black man standing stiffly upright in the back of the truck, still holding his load on his shoulders. The missionary stopped the truck to see why the man was still carrying his load. "I didn't know the truck could carry both me and my load," was the man's reply!

Calvary rest frees us from the burden of our sin. We can rest it all on Christ along with all the other heartaches and problems of life. The writer wants to see this accomplished in his readers. He wants their state to be in keeping with their standing in Christ.
pp. 77-78

"LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT TO ENTER INTO THAT REST, LEST ANYONE FALL IN THE SAME EXAMPLE OF DISOBEDIENCE."

The COMMAND AND ADMONITION is given in the 1ST PART of the verse,
then the WARNING in the LAST PART of the verse.

"LEST ANYONE FALL IN THE SAME EXAMPLE OF DISOBEDIENCE."

In Numbers 14 beginning at verse 39 we read that the children of Israel decided to go but it was too late. They went anyway and they were beaten badly and doomed to wander in the wilderness until their deaths.

Picking up at Numbers 14:39 we read:

When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly. Early the next morning they went up toward the high hill country. "We have sinned," they said. "We will go up to the place the Lord promised." But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the Lord's command? This will not succeed! Do not go up, because the Lord is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the Lord, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword."

Because they were "A DAY LATE AND A DOLLAR SHORT," Moses warns them that they are going to be victims of the swords of the inhabitants of the land.

The rest of the passage records the fact that they were humiliated and defeated in their presumption as they went ahead with their plan that was too late.

Just as there was a need to trust God on the part of the children of Israel and favorably respond and go into the land, so their refusal to respond also cost them an opportunity to experience the land God had promised them.

This helps us understand the urgency of the writer, as over and over again he said previously, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts . . ."

Time on the clock is running out. You do not have much time left. Now is the time to respond.

Jeremiah 6:16

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Psalm 91:1

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

The hymn writer says it correctly:

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.

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.

("Near to the Heart of God" by C. B. McAfee. The New Church Hymnal, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #243)

Neil T. Anderson in his book Living Free in Christ says:

In helping people find their freedom in Christ, I've come to see that unforgiveness is the number one basis for Satan having access to the Church. Satan revels when Christians fight or harbor grudges and separate one another.
p. 35

Perhaps as you are preparing to respond to this challenge to "ENTER INTO HIS REST," there are some things that are really keeping you from that "REST":

Maybe it is a SPIRIT OF UNFORGIVENESS.

Maybe it is GUILT OVER A HABIT OR RELATIONSHIP.

Perhaps it is some PROBLEM IN BUSINESS.

Whatever it might be, can you bring that to Calvary at this time?

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

Allow the Lord Jesus to become totally adequate and allow those things which hinder you to be cut from your life, and for the first time to truly be free. To confess and forsake. To experience the joy of transparency and the openness of sincerity and honesty.

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

D. L. Moody experienced a breaking when he met George Mueller. Mueller listened to all the great things Moody said he had done for God. Mueller then said, "I have heard about the great things you have done for God. But what about all the great things God has done for you?" Watchman Nee wrote, "To have God do his own work through us, even once, is better than a lifetime of human striving."

pp. 240-41

Matthew 6:33

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

(First Things First by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill)

The key, however, is not to prioritize your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.
p. 88

With the "more is better" paradigm, we're always trying to fit more activities into the time we have. But what does it matter how much we do if what we're doing isn't what matters most?
p. 89

It's easy to say "no!" when there's a deeper "yes!" burning inside.
p. 103

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

A man who professes to be a true Christian, while he sits still, content with a very low degree of sanctification (if indeed he has any at all), and coolly tells you he 'can do nothing', is a very pitiable sight and a very ignorant man.
p. 19

(Carpe Diem by Tony Campolo)

Legend has it that when Sidhartha was a boy, he showed a keen interest in knowing about God. He asked everyone and anyone whom he thought could help him to give him instruction. Eventually, he heard of a special guru who lived alone, high in the mountains. It was said that this guru knew about the things of God more than any other teacher or prophet.

Having learned of this great and wonderful guru, Sidhartha went to find him, and when he did he asked the simple question, "How can I find God?"

The guru did not immediately answer. Instead, he asked the young Sidhartha to follow him. He led the boy to the edge of the lake, and then, unexpectedly and violently, grabbed the head of Sidhartha and shoved it under the water.

Sidhartha tried to escape the iron hold of the guru, but to no avail. Even when the strength that comes from the panic of drowning set in, he could not break the guru's hold.

Just when it seemed as though his lungs would burst and his life would end, the guru pulled Sidhartha's head out of the water. The boy gasped to regain his breath. And just as he was about to cry out against the guru for what he had done to him, the guru raised his hand to silence him. Then he said softly to Sidhartha, "When you want God as much as you have just wanted breath, you will find Him!"

p. 114

Lane makes the following observations in his commentary:

Those who remain insensitive to the voice of God in Scripture may discover that God's word is also a lethal weapon. When the past generation sought to contravene the oath of God and to enter Canaan, they were driven back and fell by the sword of the Amalekites and the Canaanites (Num 14:43-45). The word of God poses a judgment that is more threatening and sharper than any double-edged sword because it exposes the intentions of the heart and renders one defenseless before God's scrutinizing gaze.

p. 102

. . . "living and effective," signifies that it is performative; it possesses the power to effect its own utterance.

p. 103

The word of God is able to reach into the deepest recesses of the human personality. The discrimination of the heart's thoughts and intentions entails a sifting process that exhibits the penetrative and unmasking potency of the word.

p. 103

Delitzsch translates verses 12 and 13 in the following way:

For full of life is the word of God, and full of energy, and more cutting than any two-edged sword, and penetrating even to a dividing asunder of soul and spirit, as well as of joints and marrow, and passing judgment on the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nor is any creature hidden from it: but all things are bare and exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

p. 202

He says further:

Over the most secret occurrences of the inner life the word of God exercises a judicial scrutiny, for which it exhibits both authority and power.

p. 214

Phillips points out:

It is only the Word of God, brought to bear upon the issues of life, which can reveal what is carnal and what is spiritual. It is a "discerner" (4:12), a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. As we read the Word of God, it probes into the inner recesses of our beings and explores all our motives.

p. 78

Barelay points out:

He says that the word of God scrutinizes a man's desires and intentions. Desire is the emotional part of man, that part which is governed by his feelings and instincts and passions. Intention is the intellectual part of man, that part of him which is governed by his intellect and his will. It is as if he said: "Your emotional and intellectual life must alike be submitted to the scrutiny of God."

p. 36

Pink says:

"Let us give diligence therefore to enter into that rest . . . For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

p. 216

He says further:

Ere passing on let us earnestly press upon the reader what has just been before us, and ask, has the Word of God thus "pierced" you? Has it penetrated, as no word from man ever has, into your innermost being? Has it exposed the workings of your wicked heart? Has it detected to you the sink of iniquity which dwells within? Make no mistake about it, dear friend, the thrice holy God of Scripture "requireth truth in the inward parts" (Psa. 51.6). If the Word of God has searched you out, then you cried with Isaiah "Woe is me! for I am undone" (6:5); with Job, "I abhor myself" (42:63); with the publican, "God be merciful to me the sinner" (Luke 18:13). But if you are a stranger to these experiences, no matter what your profession or performances, no matter how highly you may think of yourself or Christians think of you, God says you are still dead in sin.
p. 218

Romans 7:24

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

1 John 1:6, 7

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

John 3:19-21

And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

M. R. DeHaan says:

What a strange place for this passage to occur in Hebrews concerning the power of the Word of God. The preceding verse urges us "to labour to enter into the rest" of a dedicated, separated, yielded life. In this entire chapter the born-again believer is reminded not to be satisfied with mere salvation, but to consider the claims of Christ to follow Him in the path of discipleship and service. This means a clean break with the world, a definite yielding to the call, "Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."
p. 80

English raises the questions:

Do you read the Word and lay it down, untouched by its appeal to your heart; or do you treasure it, and tremble at its mighty power and holiness? Does it comfort you? Does it rebuke you? Does it cleanse you? Does it guide you? Does it mould you? Does it master you? Does it thrill your soul and bring joy to your heart?
p. 125

Huebner is quoted in Lange's commentary:

The Word penetrates even through the thickest bulwarks of prejudice, of illusion, and into the hardest and grossest hearts; it seizes upon the inmost being, the very vital principle of man.-- How often has the declaration of the bible assailed and completely penetrated the hardened and the transgressor, or a promise awakened the sluggish and the timid.--The power of the word comes from God who has created both the word and the human soul.
p. 97

Stedman says:

In order to enter into this new principle we must repudiate the old. But the problem is, the old basis of activity is so ingrained in our thinking that we automatically respond to old thought-patterns. Thus, though the new life of the Lord Jesus may be in us, we find ourselves repudiating it and responding along old lines, reacting in bitterness, impatience, anger, frustration, anxiety, worry, fear, trepidation, uncertainty and inferiority. We do not know how to recognize the old in its practical appearance. What will help us? The Word of God!
pp. 54-55

When we come to the place where, like Jacob, we are ready to take a good look at ourselves, then there comes the marvelous, healing, wholesome, comforting, sweet, delivering Word that sets us on our feet again, and shows us, in Christ, every provision for every need. We need no longer to go on doggedly, wearily fighting a battle that is already lost, but we can step out each fresh, new day into the glorious experience of a victory that is already won.
p. 55

Draper says:

The Word of God and God are inseparable. Charles Haddon Spurgeon once said, "If you cut it (the Bible) into a thousand pieces, every piece would grow and live." It is not dead. It is not passive. It is not outmoded. It is eternally up-to-date, contemporary, alive. It meets my needs. It brings me to God.
p. 96

Hughes has this to say about the Word of God:

The character of the Word's aliveness is that it is "active," or as that word is sometimes rendered, "effective." God's Word vibrates with active, effectual power as it rushes to fulfill the purpose for which it was spoken. As Isaiah 55:11 so beautifully says: ". . . so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Indeed, the Word of God is alive and effectual!

(From: F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 80.)
p. 119

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The lesson he had just taught from the Old Testament Scriptures was not a mere historical tale. Instead, as had already been made clear by much he had said, it was powerfully relevant to his audience . . . It reaches the innermost being of a person . . . In doing this, it is able to discriminate successfully between what is spiritual in man and what is merely "soulish" or natural, and does so even when these often-contradictory inner elements are interwoven as closely as joints and marrow.

The inner life of the believer is often a strange mixture of motivations both genuinely spiritual and completely human. It takes a supernaturally discerning agent such as the Word of God to sort these out and to expose what is of the flesh. The readers might think that they were contemplating certain steps out of purely spiritual motivations when, as God's Word could show them, they were acting unfaithfully as did Israel of old.

Let us reflect for a few moments on some of these KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "WORD OF GOD" in verse 12:

1. "THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING"

1 Peter 1:23

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

Acts 7:38

"This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

John 6:63

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS":

1. "LIVING"
2. "EFFECTIVE"

Acts 19:20

So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

Acts 20:32

"And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

John 15:3

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS":

1. "LIVING"
2. "EFFECTIVE"
3. "SHARPER THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD"

This could well be a reference to Numbers 14:41-43 when the children of Israel decided too late to go ahead on into the land.

Numbers 14:41-43

But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the Lord's command? This will not succeed! Do not go up, because the Lord is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the Lord, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword."

Hewitt in his commentary says:

Robertson likens this to 'The surgeon who carries a bright and powerful light for every dark crevice and a sharp knife for the removal of the pus revealed by the light'. Opinions about man's heart are numerous, yet through lack of knowledge they are imperfect. But God's Word does not lack this knowledge; therefore to know fully the human heart one must know God's Word.
p. 90

Jeremiah 17:9, 10

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

(God Works the Night Shift by Ron Mehl)

The Lord's medical bag is full of options, and one of those options is surgery. He knows when to use a scalpel. He knows when surgery is the only method that will bring healing. He knows when simple day surgery will do the job, and He knows when He must cut deeply.

Do you remember His first patient? Adam was a healthy man, but he had a profound ache in the soul called loneliness. It was a pang so deep no alternative therapy would do. So he went under God's knife.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man (Genesis 2:21-22).

God wheeled Adam into recovery and, boy, did he have a surprise waiting for him when he came to! He had a most delightful visitor waiting for him. Yes, he had one fewer ribs, but I doubt if he missed it. I'll wager he felt more whole and optimistic than he'd ever felt in his life.

This was not only the first recorded surgery, it was the first use of anesthesia. God "caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam" before He opened up the man's side. Then, in Adam's darkness, the Great Physician did a profound work in the man's life.
pp. 172-3

My close friend, Blake Wesley, reflected with me recently about such a time in his own life. When I first met him, Blake was a young, fiery-haired Canadian playing for a semi-pro hockey club here in Portland. Beth, his beautiful bride-to-be, was a member of our congregation. When they began dating, she took it upon herself to get her athlete fiancé to church. They came to Sunday service whenever his team was in town, and over the months I saw their relationship grow. Ultimately, I had the privilege of performing their wedding.

Blake was drafted in the first round by the Philadelphia Flyers, and went on to play in the NHL for eight years. During his years in the league he became intimately acquainted with the confines of such storied sports palaces as Madison Square Garden, the Forum in Los Angeles, and the infamous Chicago Stadium. He was an immediate hit with the fans in Philly, who dubbed him "Big Red." He had lots of money, enjoyed the best hotels, and had all the toys and luxuries a Canadian boy ever dreamed of. On top of it all, he had a sweet, pretty wife and three adoring sons. No one could have asked for more.

Hockey, however, can be an unforgiving sport. The rigors of the game began to catch up to Big Red. Over the course of his career, Blake endured multiple surgeries to his knees, elbows, and wrists, and could count over two hundred stitches to his face. Constant pain began to shadow Blake's every move on the ice, and threatened to put a period on his career. Like other pro athletes before him, however, Blake found that ingesting pain killers allowed him to play while injured. His addiction to the limelight of sports stardom ultimately pulled him into other, darker addictions. First the pain killers. Then alcohol. Then the hard stuff.

Blake was his own anesthesiologist, but he wasn't a very careful one. He became numb to a lot of things, and it began to show up on the ice--and in his home. In time, the proud, battle-scarred NHL veteran endured the humiliation of being sent down to the minors. He was in such a poor state emotionally and physically and becoming so irresponsible as a father and husband, that Beth felt compelled to make a change. She couldn't bear allowing the boys to watch their dad self-destruct.

Eventually, it came down to a brief, intensely painful conversation. Beth told Blake she still loved him, but that she was going to leave. She would take the boys back to Oregon until he was ready to lead their family as she knew he could.

And then they were gone.

Blake had never been so alone in his life. He'd never known it to be so dark. He'd lived for hockey, and now that was coming to an end. His team had just been eliminated from the playoffs.

Blake had been the team captain, but his coach told him, "Red, you're never going to play another game for this organization. We want you to straighten up your life and get back to your family."

But his family was gone, too. His wife. His sons. His career. His money. His self-respect. What was left? He sat in the darkness of a seedy hotel room, feeling lonely, angry--and so very tired. Blake didn't know it at the time, but he was in surgery. In this, the darkest moment of his life, the Lord was cutting through skin and muscle and bone --through ego and pride and self-centeredness--probing the deepest parts of the young man's heart. The Master Surgeon was at work with His scalpel.

Inexplicably, Blake remembered the Lord. He felt an overwhelming Presence fill the room, and was driven to his knees. The awful weight of failures, foolish choices, and sins crushed down on his shoulders. There, in that dark, run-down hotel room that night, kneeling by the bed, Blake yielded to the Surgeon. He offered up his life to Jesus Christ. He surrendered with no conditions attached. With God's help, he wanted to start over. He wanted to become the husband and father the Lord had always intended him to be.

He groped for the phone and dialed a certain number in Oregon.

"Beth," he said, "I think I want to come home."

If you've ever experienced major surgery, you know that coming out from under the anesthetic can leave you feeling groggy and disoriented. You begin to feel the pain from the operation. It's the same with the Lord's surgery. Healing takes patience and time. Blake still had to walk through the rigors and humiliation of drug rehab, and enter into a season of protracted counseling with a wife he'd neglected for too long. But just as the pain after an operation is evidence of deep-down healing, so the leftover hurt and grogginess in our lives is a testament to the deep work which God is accomplishing.

In the end, the Lord restored this wonderful family. To this day, they are a great blessing to our congregation.
pp. 173-6

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS":

1. "LIVING"
2. "EFFECTIVE"
3. "SHARPER THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD"
4. "PIERCING AS FAR AS THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, OF BOTH JOINTS AND MARROW"

It goes down deep where no one else can go to handle the deep things of the heart and the personal motivations. The division of the flesh and the spirit. It goes deep as we experience its penetrating, piercing power to bring to light those things which are hidden from view.

Luke 2:34, 35

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--and a sword will pierce even your own soul--to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

I am reminded of the WOMAN AT THE WELL in John 4:15-18:

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw." He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

Wow! what a cut! and how deep that goes into the heart of this woman.

"FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS":

1. "LIVING"
2. "EFFECTIVE"
3. "SHARPER THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD"
4. "PIERCING AS FAR AS THE DIVISION OF SOUL AND SPIRIT, OF BOTH JOINTS AND MARROW"
5. "ABLE TO JUDGE THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART"

The word for "ABLE TO JUDGE" is a word that describes:

the SIFTING PROCESS,

the WINNOWING that goes on,

the BLOWING OUT OF THE CHAFF, that the real wheat might survive.

The Word of God does this with regard to "THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART." It deals with our MIND and our MOTIVATIONS.

Psalm 26:2, 3

Test me, O Lord, and try me,
 examine my heart and my mind;
 for your love is ever before me,
 and I walk continually in your truth.

Isaiah 55:11

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Psalm 37:31

The law of his God is in his heart;
his feet do not slip.

The man who would walk in the Word of God is a man who has:

1. TRUTH FOR THE MIND
2. LOVE FOR THE HEART
3. POWER FOR THE WILL

Has the Word of God done its work recently in your heart? Have you laid on the table and allowed God the Father to use the surgical instruments to cut away those things in your life that are not pleasing to Him and that are hindering you from being all that the Lord wants you to be?

v.13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Let them not suppose, therefore, that their motives would go undetected for **nothing is hidden from God's sight**. Readers are reminded of the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:12

So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If at that time their lives are seen to be marked by the kind of failure they have been warned against, the writer implied that they will suffer loss of reward (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15). In this context the loss they suffer will be that of their inheritance-rest.

The Word of God exposes us and the Lord knows whether or not we are at rest in Him.

It is real easy to hide our attitudes and actions from people but not from God.

Hewitt says:

The fact that we cannot hide from God and that He is the One with whom we have to do or 'with whom we have to reckon' means that we should believe His Word, obey His voice and seek His power in our lives, so that when we stand before the Judge we may not be ashamed, but be judged worthy, through a heart of faith, to enter His rest.
p. 91

Barclay says:

Kermit Eby writes in The God in You: "At some time or other, a man must stop running from himself and his God--possibly because there is just no other place to run to." There comes a time to every man when he has to meet that God from whose eyes nothing is and nothing ever can be concealed.
p. 37

Lane observes:

The surveillance predicated of God is exhaustive; nothing escapes his scrutiny. The images of nakedness and helpless exposure express vividly the plight of anyone who believes he can deceive his creator and judge.
p. 103

Wuest observes:

There is a day of reckoning coming, when these Hebrews will have to give account to God for the way in which they treated the New Testament truth.
p. 90

J. Vernon McGee observes:

He is the one who knows the thoughts of the heart, and everything is open to Him. My friend, your life is an open book to Him. People ask me, "Do you think we ought to confess everything to Him?" Well, why not? He already knows--you might just as well tell Him all about it.
p. 535

Wiersbe says much the same thing:

God sees the heart and uses His sword to help us see our true spiritual condition (Jer. 17:9). Spend time daily reading the Word and meditating on it, always applying its truths to your heart. One day you will give account to God of what you have done with His Word, so be faithful.
p. 815

Richards says:

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight" (4:13). Certainly our failures are laid bare before His eyes. Certainly the many areas of life in which we need to grow are uncovered to Him. But when we are asked to give account, the attitudes of our heart will be His first concern.

If you are concentrating, right now, on entering His rest--if you are committed to trust Him and obey--then you can both live in the present and face the future with confidence and joy.
p. 40

F. B. Meyer says:

On one occasion, when Saul had spared the spoils of a doomed city, together with its monarch, the latter came to Samuel, not as a criminal, but delicately, as a pampered friend. And Samuel said, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." Thus it is that we have spared too many of our sins, at the risk of our irreparable rejection from the throne of true manhood and righteousness. How much better to let Christ do his work of amputation and excision! If we do not know ourselves, let us ask Him to search us. If we cannot cut off the offending member, let us look to Him to rid us of it.

p. 24

"AND THERE IS NO CREATURE HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT"

It is

TOTAL EXPOSURE

and UTTER DEFENSELESSNESS.

Trying to hide something from God is like trying to hide daylight from a rooster.

Tony Evans in his new book Our God Is Awesome, when he is speaking on the omnipresence of God, says:

How does God's presence bear on your temptations? Paul says that "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Wherever you go, God goes; whatever you do, God does; you can go no place where He is not. That's why He can provide a way of escape. He knows what door you need to run through. He's with you when you are being tempted.

But this is also a call to holiness because it means that God stays with you when you fail, when you sin. In the context of the verse I just quoted, Paul is talking about the sin of sexual immorality. He says that when you engage in a sexual relationship outside of marriage, you have engaged God in the affair. It's not a private matter done in a secret room, in other words. Why? Because "you are not your own" (v. 19).

Now you haven't contaminated God, anymore than the sun can be contaminated by shining on cow dung. But His presence is associated with us when we sin. We've got to understand that when we sin, it's as if we were doing it in God's throne room. He watches us do what we're doing, think what we're thinking, say what we're saying, act like we're acting. He asks us, "How could you do that with me standing here?"

pp. 152-3

He says further:

It's obvious to anyone who goes outside that God's presence is everywhere. Just as light and air fill a room, God fills the universe and more. He is omnipresent. We can trick ourselves into thinking otherwise by becoming spiritual ostriches. Ostriches are said to put their heads in the ground when danger approaches, and they actually think that because they can't see you, you

can't see them. That's the way a lot of people live. They put their heads in the spiritual sand and say, "We can't see God, so God can't see us."
p. 147

Perhaps many of us are like Achan and we've got some things hidden in the floor of our tent that we need to deal with, recognizing the fact that the Lord already knows all about it.

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

"AND THERE IS NO CREATURE HIDDEN FROM HIS SIGHT, BUT [by contrast] ALL THINGS ARE":

1. "OPEN"
2. "LAID BARE TO THE EYES OF HIM WITH WHOM WE HAVE TO GIVE ACCOUNT"

The Greek word for "OPEN" is the word for NAKED. It is all there uncovered so that He can see everything just like it is.

The word translated "LAID BARE" is the word for THROAT or NECK.

Draper says:

It is a strange word used very seldom in Greek literature. It has two or three basic meanings, but the most revealing one is its use as it is related to criminals. In ancient Greece, when a criminal was arrested and brought to trial, or after he had been tried and was brought to execution, his natural tendency was to drop his head, to duck his head in order to hide his shame. As a result, the sharp point of a dagger was placed at his throat and his head was held high. Indeed, his head was pulled back. The dagger was set at his throat and he could not lower his head. While he went to the judge or while he went to be executed, his face, his eyes, his shame was there for all to see. That is the word used here.

We may live a long time, and we may hide our shame from men. We may hide our guilt from the eyes of our fellowmen, but someday we are going to be brought before him, and we are going to be compelled to look into the eyes of Jesus Christ. We will know that he sees it all. He sees our shame. He sees our guilt. We will be made to look into the eyes of him with whom we have to do. This is a sober and somber warning of judgment.

p. 102

Hughes observes:

We have been speaking of God's Word in its living, penetrating, and discerning powers. Now in verse 13 the discussion continues, but the focus switches from God's Word to God as a knowing and reckoning God. This is very natural because God and his Word cannot be separated. Verse 13 gives us one of Scripture's great descriptions of God's knowing: "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."
pp. 122-3

Proverbs 15:3

The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

Psalms 90:8

You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.

I am reminded of the record in Daniel 5 of the writing upon the wall for Belshazzar to see and for Daniel to interpret:

Daniel 5:25-28

"This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN. This is what these words mean: Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting. Peres: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

(Mama, Get the Hammer! There's a Fly on Papa's Head! by
Barbara Johnson)

They see the truth in the slogan:

WE ARE ONLY AS SICK AS OUR SECRETS.

p. 92

(God Works the Night Shift by Ron Mehl)

First of all, it's encouraging to remember He sees the strengths in my heart no one else may ever observe or note. Our world doesn't make values and commitments and faithfulness high priorities, but God does. The world doesn't see those agonizing decisions made in secret, but He does. The world doesn't see the victories in my thought life, but He sees. The world isn't aware of my faithfulness to a whispered promise, but He's aware. The hidden things mean everything to Him. He sees under the sometimes scuffed paint and peeling wallpaper of my life to give me credit for good wood underneath.

p. 41

A God who remembers everything good about us in His love, and then, in His mercy, remembers not to remember all of my sins? Man! That's a God who works overtime!

That's a God who works the night shift.

p. 54

How good it would be at this point in our study to pray Psalms 139:23, 24:

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Ray Stedman concludes his exposition of these verses by offering this little prayer:

"Lord Jesus, how this Word has searched our hearts. We have found it to be exactly what You have declared it to be, that which can pierce even the joints and the marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thank You for this wonderful surgery that sets us free. We rejoice that there is a rest remaining into which we can enter. Grant us that we shall.
In Your name,
Amen."

p. 57

v.14 Since then we are having a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us be holding fast our confession.

It is altogether fitting that the writer would turn our attention now to the Father's provision for our sins. In these remaining verses he is going to be focusing on the priesthood of Jesus Christ. We do not need to be feeling fearful or awkward if our hearts are right with the Lord.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

But this need not be so. On the contrary there is every reason **to hold firmly**. They had to know that the priesthood of their Lord offered them all the resources they needed.

Stedman says:

Because of this tendency to excuse ourselves when the pressure gets too great, the writer now says in effect, "I want you to take a closer look at the great High Priest who is our strength, our refuge, our fortress, our enabler."
p. 61

Westcott points out:

The simple fact that we have a High-priest is stated first (Having therefore a High-priest), and then His character and position are described: Having therefore a High-priest, great in His essential Nature (i. I ff.), and One Who hath passed through the heavens, and so come before the very Presence of God. The epithet megas does not go to complete the notion of High-priest, but characterises his dignity.
p. 105

Bruce observes:

With admonition is coupled positive encouragement. Jesus has already been presented to the readers as "a merciful and faithful high priest" (2:17), and they are now shown how he is the one from whom they can receive all the strength they need to maintain their confession and resist the temptation to let go and fall back.

p. 115

J. Vernon McGee says:

Beginning with verse 14 of this chapter through verse 28 of chapter 7, the writer of this epistle is going to show that Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood. This was very important for Hebrew believers to see because they were accustomed to approaching God through their high priest of the Levitical order, the priests who served first in the tabernacle and then in the temple. It was through them that they made their commitment to God and brought their sacrifices.

p. 535

Christ occupies a threefold office: (1) He was a prophet when He came over nineteen hundred years ago--that is the past; (2) He is a priest today--that is for the present; and (3) He is coming someday to rule as a king--that is for the future. He occupies all three of these offices, and He is the great subject of this Epistle to the Hebrews.

p. 536

Wuest says:

Having shown that Messiah is superior to the prophets, the angels, Moses, and Joshua, the writer now proceeds to prove on the basis of Old Testament Scripture that He is better than Aaron. Notice the ascending scale of importance. The prophets gave the Word to Israel, the Word was given to the prophets through the disposition of angels, Moses led Israel out of Egypt, and Joshua led the nation into Canaan. But all this would be of no avail if Israel did not have a high priest to mediate salvation. Aaron occupies the pinnacle of importance among the servants of God in Israel.

pp. 90-91

Hughes admits:

Today, in our individualistic, privatistic world, we often neglect the salutary benefit of public confession of the truth we hold. When we are going through hard times, we need to confess Christ as our "apostle and high priest"--to own his magnificent ministry as our own--to clutch it close! We ought not to limit our confession to congenial company alone. There are times to confess him in unfriendly surroundings. Such confession may be just what our soul needs. Confess and embrace your high priest!

p. 129

Owen says:

Believers have great encouragement unto and assistance in the constancy of their profession by and from the priesthood of Christ.

p. 75

Wiersbe comments:

Aaron was a "high priest," but Jesus Christ is the GREAT High Priest. No Old Testament priest could assume that title. But in what does our Lord's greatness consist?

To begin with, Jesus Christ is both God and man.

p. 47

Macaulay rightly observes:

Before opening his main topic, the sacred writer has brought us face to face with our need of a great high priest. He has made us tremble before the sharp, penetrating, searching Word of God and laid us low beneath the inescapable eyes of the Almighty. We can defend ourselves with some success against the criticisms of our fellows. We can at least throw the stones back that they hurl at us. But the Word of God is a critic which finds us out, strips us of our defensive coverings, and leaves us "naked and exposed unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do business" (Heb 4:13, author's trans.). It is a terrible picture. We can almost feel our necks bared for the stroke of the avenging sword! Then immediately the scene changes, and we behold our great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God. That is the end of fear. From here on our vocabulary stresses new words. Sympathy, confidence, grace, mercy, help--these give a new tone to the passage, and become the big words in our experience.
pp. 60-61

Lenski points out:

In the Jewish Tabernacle the high priest passed from the altar that was outside through the Holy Place and so stepped behind the veil of the Holy of Holies. So our great High Priest in a far more exalted manner, proceeded through what we call the created heavens into the presence of God.
p. 149

Whereas the priest on the earth would come from the court to the holy place to the holy of holies, so Jesus Christ, our priest, who has His priesthood in heaven and not on the earth is a priest who passed through the heavens and went into the very presence of God the Father to make sacrificial offering of His own blood for the sins of the whole world.

No wonder He is such a great high priest!

Phillips puts it this way:

He is a Priest of such a caliber that the writer insists that we "hold fast our confession" now that we know Him. This demand had a particular point for the early Hebrew Christians, for to confess Jesus as their great High Priest called for a sharp break with Judaism. This real Priest of ours is "Jesus," therefore He is truly human and can enter fully into human needs. He is "the Son of God" and is therefore truly divine, able to enter fully into the demands of Deity. There never was a priest like this before. To abandon Him for an obsolete and dead Judaism was indeed a serious matter.

p. 82

Delitzsch points out:

. . . how firm and joyous should our faith be in having a High Priest so gracious and so exalted!

p. 216

Because of His exaltation above this Levitical high priest the author calls Him megon; and from what has preceded, we already know wherein His greatness consists: raised high above the angels, He sits crowned (in consequence of death) with glory and honour, at the right hand of Divine Majesty, in highest places.

p. 219

The throne of God is the final goal of the Lord's transit through all the heavens.

p. 219

MacArthur says:

Throughout the book of Hebrews the high priesthood of Jesus Christ is exalted. In chapter 1 He is seen as the One who has made "purification of sins" (v. 3). In chapter 2 He is "a merciful and faithful high priest" (v. 17) and in chapter 3 He is "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (v. 1). Chapters 7-9 focus almost exclusively on Jesus' high priesthood. Here (4:14) he is called **a great high priest**.

pp. 108-9

English says:

Here we begin a new division of the epistle, having to do with the priesthood of our Lord. It is a phase of His ministry peculiar to Hebrews, and embraces the greater part of the letter. This treatise on the "better" things that are ours in Christ, having, to this place, shown Him to be better than the prophets, better than the angels, and better than Moses, and that the rest of His provision is better than the Canaan-rest of old, will now proceed to demonstrate that the priesthood of our great High Priest is better than that of Melchisedec, after whose order He is, and better than that of Aaron, which was the pattern of Christ's priesthood.
pp. 126-7

The verse ends with the 2ND EXHORTATION in the passage.

EXHORTATION #1 was back in verse 11:

"LET US THEREFORE BE DILIGENT"

And now here in verse 14 is EXHORTATION #2:

"LET US BE HOLDING FAST OUR CONFESSION"

A. T. Robertson correctly translates it when he says:

"Let us keep on holding fast." This keynote runs all through the Epistle, the exhortation to the Jewish Christians to hold on to the confession (3:1) of Christ already made.
p. 365

G. Campbell Morgan says:

"Let us hold fast our confession,"

by which he clearly meant that they were no longer to turn back to those divinely appointed methods which were illustrative and transient. Beyond the splendours of the robing of Aaron, beyond the glory of the ritual of the Tabernacle, beyond the suggestion of eternal values in rites and ceremonies, is Jesus the Son of God, as a Priest.
p. 64

1 Timothy 2:5, 6

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.

v.15 For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Just like back in verse 7, the EXHORTATION WAS FOLLOWED WITH A REASON,

so we have the same thing here in verses 14 and 15:

1. Back in verse 11 we read:

"Let us therefore be diligent"

And in verse 12:

"For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2. Here in verses 14 and 15, the second exhortation:

" . . . let us be holding fast our confession. For we are not having a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

In this 15th verse we have a NEGATIVE and a POSITIVE:

"FOR WE ARE NOT HAVING A HIGH PRIEST WHO IS [NEGATIVELY] NOT ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE WITH OUR WEAKNESSES, BUT [IN CONTRAST, POSITIVELY] ONE WHO HAS BEEN TEMPTED IN ALL THINGS AS WE ARE, YET WITHOUT SIN."

Wilbur M. Smith in his book Have You Considered Him? points out:

Fifteen million minutes of life on this earth in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation, every thought, every deed, every purpose, every word, privately and publicly, from the time he opened his baby eyes until he expired on the cross were all approved of God.

Hebrews 2:18

For in that He has suffered, having Himself been tempted, He is able to run to the cry of those who are being tempted.

MacArthur gives us an interesting illustration:

Dr. John Wilson often told the following story. Booth Tucker was conducting evangelistic meetings in the great Salvation Army Citadel in Chicago. One night, after he had preached on the sympathy of Jesus, a man came forward and asked Mr. Tucker how he could talk about a loving, understanding, sympathetic God. "If your wife had just died, like mine has," the man said, "and your babies were crying for their mother who would never come back, you wouldn't be saying what you're saying."

A few days later Mr. Tucker's wife was killed in a train wreck. Her body was brought to Chicago and carried to the Citadel for the funeral. After the service the bereaved preacher looked down into the silent face of his wife and then turned to those who were attending. "The other day when I was here," he said, "a man told me that, if my wife had just died and my children were crying for their mother, I would not be able to say that Christ was understanding and sympathetic, or that He was sufficient for every need. If that man is here, I want to tell him that Christ is sufficient. My heart is broken, it is crushed, but it has a song, and Christ put it here. I want to tell that man that Jesus Christ speaks comfort to me today." The man was there, and he came and knelt beside the casket while Booth Tucker introduced him to Jesus Christ.

We have a sympathetic High Priest, whose priesthood is perfect and whose Person is perfect.

p. 114

Delitzsch says:

Nothing is wanting to us, the author means to say, for encouragement to expect victory in the trials of our faith: we have a great, and at the same time a compassionate High Priest, who has without sin endured exactly the same temptations as ourselves, so that we can supplicate divine assistance with the joyful confidence of certainly obtaining it.

p. 222

Hughes quotes from C.S. Lewis when he says:

Even more, Jesus' experience of temptation was greater because the stakes were so high--and because he never gave in. As C.S. Lewis explained:

A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means--the only complete realist.

(From: C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 124, 125.)

Jesus knew depths and pains we can never know, precisely because he did not sin! No human was ever tempted like Jesus was! "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (2:18).

p. 131

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

Horatio R. Palmer, author and composer, was an American musician. One day while he was working on a music theory exercise, the idea for this hymn suddenly came to him. He wrote it down as quickly as possible and with few exceptions the hymn has remained as it was written. The hymn has been an excellent teaching song for both young and old in learning how to face the daily temptations of life.

Yield not to temptations for yielding is sin; each vict'ry will help you some other to win; fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue; look ever to Jesus--He'll carry you through.

Shun evil companions, bad language disdain; God's name hold in rev'rence, nor take it in vain; be thoughtful and earnest, kind-hearted and true; look ever to Jesus--He'll you carry you through.

To him that o'er-cometh God giveth a crown; thru faith we will conquer tho often cast down; He who is our Savior our strength will renew; look ever to Jesus--He'll carry you through.

Chorus: Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen and keep you; He is willing to aid you--He will carry you through.

p. 84

v.16 Let us therefore be drawing near with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

This is now the 3RD EXHORTATION where the author identifies with his readers:

1. The 1ST is back in verse 11:

"Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest"

2. The 2ND is in verse 14:

"Let us be holding fast our confession"

3. And now the 3RD is here in verse 16:

"LET US THEREFORE BE DRAWING NEAR WITH CONFIDENCE TO THE THRONE OF GRACE"

The PURPOSE is 2-FOLD for "DRAWING NEAR":

"IN ORDER THAT WE MAY":

1. "RECEIVE MERCY"
2. "FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED"

Wiersbe points out:

To the unsaved, God's throne is a throne of judgment (Rev. 20:11-15); but to God's children, it is a throne of grace.

p. 816

English observes:

All the help that any one of us requires, whether it be forgiveness, or cleansing, or wisdom, or patience, or love, or strength, or food, or raiment, or whatever, is treasured and stored for us in heaven in Christ.

pp. 132-3

Hughes points out:

And when we come boldly, what happens? "We . . . receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." We receive "mercy" for our past failures and "grace" to meet our present and future needs.¹⁰ We receive the full heart of God as he mercifully meets us in our sins and misery--and heals us. Then we receive the full hand of God's grace, his unmerited favor and loving regard that just keeps coming and coming--so that we say with James, "He gives us more grace" (4:6)--there is always more grace. And it always comes, our verse concludes, "in our time of need." That is, the help is always "appropriate to the time."¹¹ It is not according to our clock, but to Heaven's time--the perfect time.

¹⁰ (From: Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 109.)

¹¹ (From: Leon Morris, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 46, 47.)

p. 132

IT IS THERE ALL THE TIME! IT IS THERE EVERYTIME WE NEED IT!

A. T. Robertson reminds us that this is a PRESENT IMPERATIVE:

"Let us keep on coming to" our high priest, this sympathizing and great high priest. Instead of deserting him, let us make daily use of him.

p. 366

Eukairos is an old word also, [used] only here in N.T. [It could be translated] "For well-timed help," "for help in the nick of time," before too late.

p. 366

Westcott says:

'Let us therefore, trusting the divine power and the human sympathy of 'Jesus the Son of God,' draw near, as priests ourselves in fellowship with our High-priest,--and not remain standing afar off as the congregation of Israel,--to the throne of grace, no symbolic mercy-seat, but the very centre of divine sovereignty and love . . .'

p. 108

The twofold aim corresponds with the twofold necessity of life. Man needs mercy for past failure, and grace for present and future work. There is also a difference as to the mode of attainment in each case. Mercy is to be 'taken' as it is extended to man in his weakness; grace is to be 'sought' by man according to his necessity.

p. 109

Barclay says:

When you have been there it makes all the difference. And there is no part of human experience of which God cannot say: "I have been there." When we have a sad and sorry tale to tell, when life has drenched us with the tears of things, we do not go to a God who is quite incapable of understanding what has happened to us; we go to a God who has been there. That is why--if we may put it so--God finds it easy to forgive. (c) It makes God able to help. He knows our problems because He has come through them. The best person to give you advice and help on a journey is someone who has travelled the road before you. The best person to help you through an illness is someone who has come through it. God can help because He knows it all.

p. 41

Montefiore says:

Precisely because Christians have a compassionate high priest, they have grounds for confident assurance (cf. iii. 6; x. 19, 35) that the barriers between God and man have been removed. And so the Christian way is much better than the Judaism into which his readers are in danger of lapsing. For in Judaism only the priests could approach God, but our writer encourages all his readers: **Let us therefore confidently approach the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**
p. 92

Phillips makes this observation:

He knows not only our nature but our needs. "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (4:16). In Old Testament times the ordinary Israelite could not approach the Holy of Holies where God was enthroned, for that was the sole, annual prerogative of the high priest. But we can approach the throne of grace at any time, as often as we wish, whenever we have a need, knowing that our needs are fully known to our Priest and will be met with mercy and grace.
pp. 82-83

(The Message: Psalms by Eugene H. Peterson)

That clinches it--help's coming,
an answer's on the way,
everything's going to work out.
p. 29

(Living in the Lions' Den Without Being Eaten by William Carr Peel)

At the Promise Keepers Conference in July 1993, Wellington Boone gave the men in attendance an excellent formula for praying with perseverance:

P-U-S-H
Pray Until Something Happens.
p. 198

Nancy Spiegleberg describes my frustration with myself so well.

Lord,
I crawled across the barrenness to you
with my empty cup,
Uncertain
in asking any small drop of refreshment.
If I had only known you better,
I'd have come running with a bucket.
p. 202

(They Walked with God by James S. Bell, Jr.)

Jesus remembers the promises. He pleads with God on our behalf, and His plea is the divine promise. "He made intercession for the transgressors." For the good things that He has promised the Lord will be inquired of by us that He may do them for us; and that this inquiry may be carried out under the most encouraging circumstances, behold, the Lord Jesus Himself becomes the intercessor for us. For Zion's sake He does not hold His peace, but day and night He makes remembrance of the everlasting covenant and of the blood whereby it was sealed and ratified. At the back of every promise stands the living, pleading, and prevailing high priest of our profession.

We may forget the faithful promise, but He will not. He will present the incense of His merit, and the engagements of God on our behalf, in that place within the veil where He exercises omnipotent intercession.

Charles H. Spurgeon

12/31

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

Only One who fully resists temptation can know the extent of its force. Thus the sinless One has a greater capacity for compassion than any sinner could have for a fellow sinner.

In a book filled with lovely and captivating turns of expression, few excel the memorable phrase "throne of grace." Such a conception of the presence of God into which beleaguered Christians may come at any time, suggests both [His] sovereignty . . . and His benevolence.

(Shame and Grace by Lewis B. Smedes)

Most people who experience the grace of God at all experience it on one or more of four levels:

- We experience grace as pardon: we are forgiven for wrongs we have done. Pardoning grace is the answer to guilt.
- We experience grace as acceptance: we are reunited with God and our true selves, accepted, cradled, held, affirmed, and loved. Accepting grace is the answer to shame.
- We experience grace as power: it provides a spiritual energy to shed the heaviness of shame and, in the lightness of grace, move toward the true self God means us to be.
- We experience grace as gratitude: it gives us a sense for the gift of life, a sense of wonder and sometimes elation at the lavish generosity of God.

p. 108

We are accepted in our most fantastic contradictions and our boring corruptions. Accepted with our roaring vices and our purring virtues. We are damaged masterpieces, stunted saints; there are ogres and angels in our basements that we can hardly tell apart and that we have not dared to face up to. For the whole shadowed self each one of us is, grace has one loving phrase: you are accepted. Accepted. Accepted. Accepted.

p. 117

On Palm Sunday morning, April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee put on his finest dress uniform, mounted Traveller, and rode away from his tired and tattered troops to Appomatox, where he would surrender his beaten army to General Ulysses S. Grant. As Lee rode to meet his conqueror, he fully expected that his men would be herded like cattle into railroad cars and taken to a Union prison and that he, as their general, would be tried and executed as a disgraced traitor.

In the tidy living room of the home where the vanquished and the victor met, Lee asked Grant what his terms of surrender were to be. Grant told Lee that his men were free to take their horses with them and go back to their little farms and that Lee too was free to go home and create a new life. Lee offered Grant his sword; Grant refused it. Lee heaved a sigh; he came expecting to be humiliated, and he left with dignity and honor. As he watched General Lee mount Traveller and ride back to his troops, Grant took off his hat and saluted his defeated enemy. It was a gracious grace. And it deeply affected the defeated general: as long as he lived, Lee allowed no critical word of Grant to be spoken in his presence.

Grace graciously given honors our worth as it overlooks our undeserving.
p. 120

(Prayer: A Holy Occupation by Oswald Chambers)

Our prayers for God's help are often nothing but incarnate laziness, and God has to say, "Speak no more to Me of this matter. Get up!"
p. 114

What are my motives for
prayer--to get God to do things
my way or to get me to do things
His way?

p. 63

Get into the habit of saying, "Speak, Lord," and life will become a romance. Every time circumstances press, say, "Speak, Lord," and make time to listen. Chastening is more than a means of discipline, it is meant to get me to the place of saying, "Speak, Lord."
p. 67

John 16:24

"Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

God is our help in trouble; if you worry, you are on your own.
p. 366

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

Scripture suggests that the essence of the divine nature is compassion and that the heart of God is defined by tenderness. "By the tender mercy [compassion] of our God who from on high will bring the rising sun to visit us, to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79). Richard Foster wrote, "His heart is the most sensitive and tender of all. No act goes unnoticed, no matter how insignificant or small. A cup of cold water is enough to put tears in the eyes of God. Like the proud mother who is thrilled to receive a bouquet of wilted dandelions from her child, so God celebrates our feeble expressions of gratitude."

p. 65

EQUAL ACCESS

A man who frequently flew his own plane in and out of a busy airport was asked if he encountered any problems taking off and landing in a small craft at an airport that was dominated by large jets. His response was significant, for he said, "My plane may be small, but I have the same rights, the same privileges, and the same access to that airport as anyone else--yes, even the jumbo jets!"

It's the same with prayer, with the believer's approach to the throne of grace. No matter who we are--how small in comparison with others, or how low our station in life--we take a back seat to no one. No one is given priority treatment.

The world stands aside to let anyone pass who knows where he is going.

David Staff Jordan

More men fail through lack of purpose than lack of talent.

Billy Sunday

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: There are three exhortations we must respond to:

1. "Let us therefore be diligent"
2. "Let us be holding fast"
3. "Let us therefore be drawing near"

LESSON #2: Are you presently experiencing the rest that is yours in the adequacy of Christ?

LESSON #3: It is possible to miss the rest that is available to us in our relationship with Christ.

LESSON #4: The Word of God is described in 5 ways:

- 1."living"
- 2."effective"
- 3."sharper than any double-edged sword"
- 4."piercing"
- 5."able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart"

LESSON #5: Because God is omnipresent He sees and knows all that goes on in our lives.

LESSON #6: The Lord is right there with us when we sin, compromise, fall and fail.

LESSON #7: We are going to be held accountable for our lives as believers at the judgment seat of Christ.

LESSON #8: We have a high priest in Jesus Christ who can sympathize with our weaknesses.

LESSON #9: The Lord's throne is the throne of grace where we may find grace to help in any time of need.

LESSON #10: We can also receive mercy when we come and face the situation that is before us.

Macaulay concludes his exposition on this section with the following words:

Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Guardian of mankind appears.

He who for men their surety stood
And poured on earth His precious blood,
Pursues in heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.

Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies
His tears, His agonies, and cries.

Priests and saints and altars and shrines may not be your temptation. But you need someplace to go with your sins and your needs, your burdens, and your difficulties. They are too much for you to bear. Bring them to Jesus. Bring them to the throne of grace.

Come boldly, come quickly! For He has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

p. 66

(For Better, for Worse, for Keeps: Renewing Your Marriage in the Tough Times by Robert Moeller)

The story is told of a soldier during the Revolutionary War who had deserted the ranks and was later captured. He was tried and sentenced to die. The order was about to be carried out when a Methodist circuit-riding preacher by the name of Peter Miller rode breathless into the camp.

"I must see General Washington," he said. He was ushered into the general's tent. There he explained that he had ridden for an entire day to ask for a pardon for the condemned soldier.

"Is he a friend of yours?" Washington asked.

"No, he is one of my worst enemies," the preacher replied.

"You rode for an entire day to ask for a pardon for your worst enemy? Why?"

"Because he needs it," Miller replied.

Washington was so moved by Miller's act of grace that he granted the pardon. That's precisely the point of forgiveness. We offer it because it's needed, not because it's deserved.

p. 149

(The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein)

Once there was a tree . . .
and she loved a little boy.
And every day the boy would come
and he would gather her leaves
and make them into crowns and play king of the forest.
He would climb up her trunk
and swing from her branches
and eat apples.
And they would play hide-and-go-seek.
And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade.
And the boy loved the tree . . .
very much.
And the tree was happy.

But time went by.
And the boy grew older.
And the tree was often alone.
Then one day the boy came to the tree
and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb
up my trunk and swing from my branches
and eat apples and play in my shade
and be happy."
"I am too big to climb and play," said the boy.
"I want to buy things and have fun.
I want some money.
Can you give me some money?"
"I'm sorry," said the tree, "But I have no money.
I have only leaves and apples.
Take my apples, Boy, and sell them
in the city. Then you will have money
and you will be happy."
And so the boy climbed up the
tree and gathered
her apples
and carried them away.
And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away
 for a long time . . .
 and the tree was sad.
 And then one day
 the boy came back
 and the tree shook with joy
 and she said, "Come, Boy,
 climb up my trunk
 and swing from my branches
 and be happy."
 "I am too busy to climb trees,"
 said the boy.
 "I want a house to keep me warm,"
 he said.
 "I want a wife and I want children,
 and so I need a house.
 Can you give me a house?"
 "I have no house," said the tree.
 "The forest is my house,
 but you may cut off my branches
 and build a house.
 Then you will be happy."

And so the boy cut off
 her branches
 and carried them away
 to build his house.
 And the tree was happy.

But the boy stayed away
 for a long time.
 And when he came back,
 the tree was so happy
 she could hardly speak.
 "Come, Boy," she whispered,
 "come and play."
 "I am too old and sad to play,"
 said the boy.
 "I want a boat that will
 take me far away
 from here.
 Can you give me a boat?"
 "Cut down my trunk
 and make a boat," said the tree.
 "then you can sail away . . .
 and be happy."
 And so the boy cut down her trunk
 and made a boat and sailed away.
 And the tree was happy . . .
 but not really.

And after a long time
 the boy came back again.
 "I am sorry, Boy,"
 said the tree, "but I have nothing

left to give you--
 My apples are gone,"
 "My teeth are too weak
 for apples," said the boy.
 "My branches are gone,"
 said the tree. "You
 cannot swing on them--"
 "I am too old to swing
 on branches," said the boy.
 "My trunk is gone," said the tree.
 "You cannot climb--"
 "I am too tired to climb," said the boy.
 "I am sorry," sighed the tree.
 "I wish that I could
 give you something . . .
 but I have nothing left. I am just
 an old stump. I am sorry. . . ."
 "I don't need very much now,"
 said the boy,
 "just a quiet place to sit and rest.
 I am very tired."
 "Well," said the tree,
 straightening herself up
 as much as she could,
 "well, an old stump is good
 for sitting and resting.
 Come, Boy, sit down.
 Sit down and rest."
 And the boy did.
 And the tree was happy.
 The End.