

Are You Drifting Spiritually?

Hebrews 2:1 - For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift away** from it.

If you have been a Christian for more than a few years, it is likely you have experienced a time in which you sensed you were beginning to drift spiritually. I have walked with Jesus for 40 years and confess there have been some times when that was my experience. And so this page will offer a number of quotes that relate to drifting spiritually. The English dictionary defines drift as "to be carried slowly by a current of air or water," "(especially of snow or leaves) be blown into heaps by the wind," "be in motion due to some air or water current," "cause to be carried by a current," "a force that moves something along," "wander from a direct course or at random," "move from a fixed point or course," "the gradual departure from an intended course due to external influences (as a ship or plane)." I could add other definitions but you get the "drift." So now let's look at the definition of the Greek word followed by quotes from a number of sources on drifting.

"Drifting is something that happens over time. It's slow and steady, almost imperceptible. It can happen so gradually in fact that it goes without notice. And just as a boat in a body of water so also is the human heart. We have the tendency to drift. And the real problem with drifting spiritually is that you don't know it's happening until it's already happened." ([Kelley](#))

Drift away ([3901](#)) (**pararrhúeo** from **pará** = by, past, beyond + **rhéo** = flow) literally means to "flow past" and so to glide, to be washed away, to drift away. Figuratively as in the present verse **pararrhúeo** means to slip or drift away from belief. It is a picture of a gradual, almost unnoticed movement past a certain point. It describes that carelessness of mind which, perhaps occupied by other things, is not aware it is losing ground. It is like a ship drifting without anchorage and so drifting away from its moorings and from a place of safety to one of danger. **Pararrhúeo** was used to describe mooring of ships (to moor a ship means to make it secure with cables, lines, or anchors) and the drift caused by winds and tides if ships are not moored. The word was also used to describe a river that flows by a place or flows aside from its normal channel, flooding or escaping it. It was used of something slipping from one's memory, of a ring slipping from one's finger, or of a crumb going down the wrong way. The Greek writer Xenophon used **pararrhúeo** to describe the river flowing by a certain place. It was used to picture the snow slipping off from the soldiers' bodies, of a ring slipping from one's finger or of a thought slipping out of one's memory. This verb thus presents a vivid picture of individuals who let themselves drift away from the haven of the gospel of Christ. One need not be violently opposed to the message to suffer loss but just to "drift" away from it!

[Adam Clarke](#) comments on "drift away": "Lest at any time we should leak out." This is a metaphor taken from unstanch vessels; the staves not being close together, the fluid put into them leaks through the chinks and crevices. Superficial hearers lose the benefit of the word preached, as the unseasoned vessel does its fluid; nor can any one hear to the saving of his soul, unless he give most earnest heed, which he will not do unless he consider the dignity of the speaker, the importance of the subject, and the absolute necessity of the salvation of his soul."

A B Bruce on **drifting** - The figure is a very significant one. It warns the Hebrews to beware lest they be carried away from the salvation preached by Christ, the blessings of the kingdom of God, as a boat is carried past the landing-place by the strong current of a river. The current by which the Hebrews were in danger of being carried headlong was that of established religious custom, which in transition times is specially perilous. By this current they were in danger of being carried away from the gospel and Christ and the eternal hope connected with faith in Him down to the Dead Sea of Judaism, and so of being involved in the calamities which were soon to overwhelm in ruin the unbelieving Jewish nation.

*Most of the people who failed in Scriptures
failed in the second-half of their lives.*

R Kent Hughes on slowly drifting - I have experienced this firsthand while fishing the tidal inlets of the California coast, when winds or surging tides have imperceptibly slipped the anchor from the seabed so that it hung suspended, and I, intent on my fishing, unknowingly moved several hundred yards and almost foundered on the rocks! Such dangerous drifting is not intentional, but comes rather from inattention and carelessness—which was precisely the problem with the pressured little church. They had become careless about their moorings in Christ. At first, in calm waters, that was not noticeable. But as the storms of opposition rose, some of them were drifting farther and farther away from Christ toward the shoals of shipwreck in their old world of Judaism." (See context in [Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul](#))

*"Use well opportunity, **drift not with the tide**; killing time is not murder, it's suicide!"
Indeed, eternity will magnify that which we have done in time.*

Brian Bell - Drifting requires no effort (1) "People seldom lose their religion by a blowout ...it is usually a slow leak." b) It's an unconscious effort (you might not even know you are drifting / eg. Beach) (1) Drifting is not intentional. It usually comes from inattention & carelessness. (a) It happens quietly, no friction, no dramatic sense of departure. (b) Winds of trouble blow into your life, the things of Christ are left behind...then pretty soon...they are out of sight. c) We never drift upstream or against the tide d) The speed downstream increases (when you hear the noise of the waterfall...it's too late) e) It is dangerous to others (it's a hazard to all other vessels at sea) It ends in shipwreck (it will crash on the rocks, or go over the falls) How are your moorings in Christ? (cables/ropes or frayed strings/tiny threads) (1) Some people who never consider walking in darkness sure enjoy a little stroll in the shade. (2) Samson was asleep when he lost his strength. (3) Still water and still religion freeze the quickest. (4) It's also scary to realize that most of the people who failed in Scriptures failed in the second-half of their lives. (**ED**: AT 79 THIS TRUTH MAKES ME TREMBLE!!!) (5) How many people have you met that left Christianity (**ED**: CLEARLY THIS GROUP REFERS TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS NOT BELIEVERS) because they logically reasoned it through & found it full of holes & faulty. – I think most simply drifted away. Have you drifted away from your early faith? Or from your fidelity to God? Consistent reading? Serious & passionate prayer times? Church attendance? Giving? Fellowship? Communion? Witnessing?

*The danger highlighted is that of
a great loss occurring unnoticed.*

Ray Stedman - The danger highlighted is that of a great loss *occurring unnoticed*. The cause is not taking seriously the words spoken to them. Inattention or apathy will rob them of their treasure. With these words, the writer reveals his shepherd's heart, since he is not content with instructing the mind with intriguing doctrine. He also longs to reach the heart and move the will to action... It is not necessary to openly renounce the gospel. One can remain lost by simply and quietly drifting away from hearing it, or hearing it with no comprehension of the seriousness of its message." ([The Great Danger in Ignoring the Son](#))

*To reach the port of heaven we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it.
But we must sail, not drift or lie at anchor.*
-- Oliver Wendell Holmes

B F Westcott explains that "The idea is not that of simple forgetfulness, but of being swept along past the sure anchorage which is within reach. The image is singularly expressive. We are all continuously exposed to the action of currents of opinion, habit, action, which tend to carry us away insensibly from the position which we ought to maintain." ([The Epistle to the Hebrews: the Greek text with notes and essays. London: Macmillan](#))

*Inattentive hearers
will soon be forgetful hearers.*

A W Pink writes that drifting (or not drifting) speaks of not persevering (or of persevering) explaining that "Perseverance in the faith, continuance in the Word, is a prime prerequisite of discipleship, see John 8:31+ ("Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you **abide** in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine"); Col 1:23+ ("[You will be presented before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach] if indeed you **continue** in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have **heard**...), etc. Many who **heard**, and once seemed really interested in spiritual things, "concerning the faith have made shipwreck" (1Ti 1:19+).

*It is strange: but life's currents drift us
So surely and swiftly on,
That we scarcely notice the changes
And how many things are gone.*

David Guzik writes that "If we do not give the more earnest heed, we will drift away. Drifting is something that happens quite automatically when we are not anchored to anything solid. If we are not "anchored" in the superiority of Jesus, we will drift with the currents of the world, the flesh, and the devil. One doesn't have to do anything to simply drift away... An ungodly farmer died, and they discovered in his will that he had left his farm to the Devil. In the court, they didn't quite know what to do with it -- how do you give a farm to the Devil? Finally, the judge decided: "The best way to carry out the wishes of the deceased is to allow the farm to grow weeds, the soil to erode, and the house and barn to rot. In our opinion, the best way to leave something to the Devil is to do nothing." We can leave our lives to the Devil the same way - doing nothing, drifting with whatever currents will drive us.

Few, they tell me, finish well...
--Dr Robert McQuilkin
[Let Me Get Home Before Dark](#)

F B Meyer described **drifting** writing that "Gradually and almost insensibly we lose our watchfulness over our thoughts; our relish for the society of God's people; our delight in God's house; our interest in the salvation of others; our sensitiveness of conscience as to

the conventionalities of trade or society. We do not realize it; we are not specially concerned; we have no idea that the white ant is eating out the substance of our furniture, and the dry-rot undermining the rafters of our house. Strangers are devouring our strength; grey hairs are indicating our decay—to all eyes but our own. We grow grey almost imperceptibly; the strength of our manhood is very slowly undermined; the degrees of spiritual declension are as the fall of the year through the last days of summer. But it need not be if we would regard ourselves in the mirror of God's Word. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily. Vol. 4, Page 190. Pleasant Places Press)

Related Resource:

- [Backsliding](#)

“A Slow Drift”

I did not hear the anchor slip,
Nor feel the current's gentle pull.
No tempest blew, no breakers roared—
The sea was calm, the air was cool.

I read the Word a little less,
I prayed with hurried, quiet breath.
I sang no song to stir my soul,
And so began a silent death.

I still believed, I still confessed,
But something vital ceased to be.
I drifted, heart by heartless choice,
Far from the One who died for me.

The shore of grace grew faint and dim,
The light I loved, now far behind.
I passed by harbors of His peace,
With hardened heart and clouded mind.

But then—a Voice! So soft, so near,
It pierced the fog and stirred my heart:
“My child, return. The tide can turn.
I've loved you still, though far you are.”

And there, adrift on mercy's sea,
I dropped my pride and raised my eyes.
He rowed across my shame and doubt,
And met me where repentance lies.

Warren Wiersbe - many quotes on drifting from one of the great expositors of our time...

Drifting from the Word—Heb 2:1–4 (neglect) Doubting the Word—Heb 3:7–4:13 (hard heart) Dullness toward the Word—Heb 5:11–6:20 (sluggishness) Despising the Word—Heb 10:26–39 (willfulness) Defying the Word—Heb 12:14–29 (refusing to hear) If we do not listen to God's Word and really hear it, we will start to drift. Neglect always leads to **drifting**, in things material and physical as well as spiritual. As we drift from the Word, we start to doubt the Word, because faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). We start to get hard hearts, and this leads to spiritual sluggishness, which produces dullness toward the Word. We become “dull of hearing”—lazy listeners! This leads to a spiteful attitude toward the Word to the extent that we willfully disobey God, and this gradually develops into a defiant attitude—we almost “dare” God to do anything! ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 804](#))

*Nobody automatically drifts into spiritual growth and stability,
but anybody can drift out of dedication and growth.*

...Ephesians 5:14–15 are related to these verses. Paul appeared to be saying, “Don't walk in your sleep! Wake up! Open your eyes! Make the most of the day!” It is sad to see many professed Christians drift through

life like sleepwalkers, never really making the most of opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 615](#))

*Unless the believer stays close to the truth,
he will start to drift away.*

....Only a fool drifts with the wind and tide. A wise man marks out his course, sets his sails, and guides the rudder until he reaches his destination. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 615](#))

*Just as the boat needs the anchor,
so the Christian needs the Word of God.*

....“Full assurance in the will of God” (Col 2:2) is a tremendous blessing! It is not necessary for the believer to drift in life. He can know God’s will and enjoy it. As he learns God’s will and lives it, he matures in the faith and experiences God’s fullness. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 699](#))

*It is easy to drift with the current,
but it is difficult to return against the stream.*

....Too many Christians today take the Word of God for granted and neglect it. In my pastoral ministry, I have discovered that neglect of the Word of God and prayer, publicly and privately, is the cause of most “spiritual drifting.” I need not multiply examples because every believer knows that this is true. He has either experienced this “drifting” or has seen it in the lives of others. The next time you sing “[Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#),” recall that the composer, Robert Robinson, was converted under the mighty preaching of George Whitefield, but that later he drifted from the Lord. He had been greatly used as a pastor, but neglect of spiritual things led him astray. In an attempt to find peace, he began to travel. During one of his journeys, he met a young woman who was evidently very spiritually minded. “What do you think of this hymn I have been reading?” she asked Robinson, handing him the book. It was his own hymn! He tried to avoid her question but it was hopeless, for the Lord was speaking to him. Finally, he broke down and confessed who he was and how he had been living away from the Lord. “But these ‘streams of mercy’ are still flowing,” the woman assured him, and through her encouragement, Robinson was restored to fellowship with the Lord. It is easy to drift with the current, but it is difficult to return against the stream. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 808](#))

*Nobody ever matured in the Christian life
by being careless or lazy.*

....More spiritual problems are caused by neglect than perhaps by any other failure on our part. We neglect God’s Word, prayer, worship with God’s people (see Heb. 10:25), and other opportunities for spiritual growth, and as a result, we start to drift. The anchor does not move; we do. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 808](#))

....If we start to **drift** from the Word (Heb. 2:1–4), then we will also start to doubt the Word (Heb. 3:7—4:13). Before long, we will get dull toward the Word (Heb. 5:11—6:20) and become lazy believers. The best way to keep from drifting is— to lay hold of the anchor! Anchored heavenward! How much more secure can you be? ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 821](#))

....What should a believer do who has **drifted away** into spiritual doubt and dullness and is deliberately despising God’s Word? He should turn to God for mercy and forgiveness. There is no other sacrifice for sin, but the sacrifice Christ made is sufficient for all our sins. It is a fearful thing to fall into the Lord’s hands for chastening, but it is a wonderful thing to fall into His hands for cleansing and restoration. David said, “Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies” (1 Chron. 21:13).

..... As a Christian **drifts** from the Word and backslides, the Father chastens him to bring him back to the place of submission and obedience. (If God does not chasten, that person is not truly born again.) If a believer persists in resisting God’s will, God may permit his life to be taken. Rather than allow His child to ruin his life further and disgrace the Father’s name, God might permit him to die.

....While ministering in Canada, I met a woman who told me she had been converted early in life but had drifted into a “society life” that was exciting and satisfied her ego. One day, she was driving to a card party and happened to tune in a Christian radio broadcast. At that very moment, the speaker said, “Some of you women know more about cards than you do your Bible!” Those words arrested her. God spoke to her heart, she went back home, and from that hour her life was dedicated fully to God. She saw the futility and vanity of a life spent out of the will of God. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 901](#))

....God reminded Israel many times that He had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt that they might

glorify and serve Him, but the nation soon forgot and the people drifted back into their sinful ways. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 904](#))

....The opposite of “be sober-minded” is “frenzy, madness.” It is the Greek word mania, which has come into our English vocabulary via psychology. If we are sober minded, we will be intellectually sound and not off on a tangent because of some “new” interpretation of the Scriptures. We will also face things realistically and be free from delusions. The sober-minded saint will have a purposeful life and not be drifting, and he will exercise restraint and not be impulsive. He will have “sound judgment” not only about doctrinal matters, but also about the practical affairs of life. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 919](#))

*It's much easier to drift with the current
and go along with the crowd*

....Christians live in a real world and are beset with formidable obstacles. It is not easy to obey God. It is much easier to drift with the world, disobey Him, and “do your own thing.” ([Bible Exposition Commentary - page 1001](#))

....Unless parents remind their children of what the Lord has done, it won't be long before the next generation will drift from the faith (Deut. 6:1–9; see 2 Tim. 2:2 ([Bible Exposition Commentary OT - page 255](#)))

....When the Jews started taking their blessings for granted, they began drifting away from sincere worship of the Lord. A grateful heart is a strong defense against the devil's temptations. ([Bible Exposition Commentary OT - page 423](#))

....The leader who drifts with the tide and changes direction with every new wind isn't a leader at all. A Roman proverb says, “When the pilot doesn't know what port he's heading for, no wind is the right wind.” If you know where you're going, you can adjust your sails when the storm starts to blow and still arrive at the right port. ([Bible Exposition Commentary OT - page 426](#))

....God promised to lengthen Solomon's life if he obeyed the Word (Prov. 3:2, 16), for he would be honoring God and his father David and could claim the promise of Exodus 20:12 (see Eph. 6:1–3). It's unfortunate that Solomon with all his wisdom forgot this part of the agreement and gradually drifted into sin and disobedience, and God had to chasten him. ([Bible Exposition Commentary OT - page 621](#))

....At one time, [Gilgal was a sacred place](#) where the Word of God was taught (2 Kings 2:1; 4:38). How quickly religious institutions can drift from their mooring and abandon the faith! ([Bible Exposition Commentary OT - page 426](#))

F B Meyer - Men ruined by drifting

Life's ocean is full of currents, any one of which will sweep us past the harbour mouth even when we seem nearest to it, and carry us far out to sea. It is the drift that ruins men: the drift of the religious world; the drift of old habits and associations; the drift of one's own evil nature; the drift of the pressure of temptation. The young man coming from a pious home does not distinctly and deliberately say, “I renounce my father's God.” But he finds himself in a set of business associates who have no care for religion; and, after a brief struggle, he relaxes his efforts and begins to drift, until the coastline of heaven recedes so far into the dim distance that he is doubtful if he ever really saw it. The business man, who now shamelessly follows the lowest maxims of his trade, was once upright and high-minded. But he began by yielding in very trivial points to the strong pressure of competition; and when once he had allowed himself to be caught by the tide, it bore him far beyond his first intention. The professing Christian, who now scarcely pretends to open the Bible or pray, came to so terrible a position, not at a single leap, but by yielding to the pressure of the constant waywardness of the old nature, and thus drifted into an Arctic region, where he is likely to perish, benumbed and frozen, unless rescued, and launched on the warm Gulf Stream of the love of God. It is so easy, and so much pleasanter to drift. Just to lie back, and renounce effort, and let yourself go whither the waters will, as they break musically on the sides of the rocking boat. But, ah, how ineffable the remorse, how disastrous the result! Are you drifting? You can easily tell. Are you conscious of effort, of daily, hourly resistance to the stream around you, and within? Do the things of God and heaven loom more clearly on your vision? Do the waters foam angrily at your prow as you force your way through them? If so, rejoice; but remember that only Divine strength can suffice to maintain the conflict, and keep the boat's head against the stream. If not, you are drifting. Hail the strong Son of God. Ask Him to come on board, and stay you, and bring you into port. (F. B. Meyer, B. A.)

YOUNG MEN, DON'T DRIFT! - F B Meyer

Yes, it is the drifting that is most to be feared. Men don't become atheists and swindlers at a leap. For every one who resolutely sets

his face against God, there are hundreds who drift from Him.

An illustration occurred once in my own holiday experiences which taught me to estimate fully the power of the tide to drift. We were staying on the coast of North Wales, and were desirous of visiting an island famous for its ruins and traditions. Nothing seemed easier than to cross the narrow straits which lay between it and the beach on which we stood. But as soon as we had got beyond the jutting headland we found ourselves caught by a strong current, which persistently carried us out of our course, and would have drifted us, had we yielded to it, far down the coast. It took four of us four hours and a half of hard rowing to cross the straits which, with a flowing tide, we retraversed at night in about half an hour.

Never since have I ignored the power of the current, so gentle, so imperceptible, so pleasant to yield to, so difficult to resist. And often have I been reminded of the episode when I have seen young men drifting before the currents of moral influence on the great ocean of life.

Young men come up to our great centers of population from holy and blessed homes, where they have been born and bred. They are nice, amiable, well-meaning fellows, with no intention of going wrong, though perhaps with no very strong resolution to go right. The last words of advice from father or mother ring in their ears, urging them to keep up the good habits in which they have been trained since childhood, and they intend to conform to them.

If they fall in with a strong religious influence, it is not at all unlikely that they will turn out well. But if they go into some establishment or house where there is a fast, gay set, where the Lord's day is unkept, where filthy allusions pollute the talk and gambling fills the leisure hours, after the first momentary shock is over they give themselves up to the strong prevailing current, and begin insensibly, but swiftly, to drift. It is not necessary at first that they should commit some flagrant sin; it is enough that they cease to resist the insidious influences around.

Young men, is this a true picture of your condition? If so, heed the advice of an elder brother, who has himself passed through city life, and who gathers up all the advice which he has to give in the words, Don't drift.

DON'T DRIFT INTO A LOOSE WAY OF KEEPING SUNDAY

When you are away from home, you do not know where to go, what church to attend, what minister to hear. If you enter a place of worship, no one knows and perhaps no one welcomes you. You miss the familiar faces and voices of your childhood's earliest memories. You feel that your absence from that congregation, and indeed from any other, for the rest of the day would not be noticed, and so you stay away. Your pursuits may be quite innocent, and yet your absence from God's house, according to your olden practice, and without sufficient reason, is the first symptom of yielding to the swift current which urges you to drift.

My advice is to go to the several places of worship in the near neighborhood of your residence. Go once or twice to ascertain the character of the ministry and of the work carried on, and then attach yourselves to the one you find most helpful. Make for the minister direct, tell him who you are, whence you have come, and your intention of settling down in his congregation; and if he be a true man, he will be only too glad to welcome you. If he doesn't, I would advise you to betake yourself to some one who will.

When you settle in a new place, be sure also to find out the nearest Young Men's Christian Association. Ask for the secretary, and he will introduce you to friends, and home, and many things young men want.

DON'T DRIFT INTO LOOSE COMPANIONSHIPS.

A man is made or marred by his friends. As fish take on the mottling of the ground on which they lie, and as the butterflies resemble the flowers over which they hover, so do we become like those whom we choose for our companions. Don't drift into familiarity with any man till you are pretty sure of him, and have asked for God to show you his true character.

Beware of the man who goes in for a lot of showy jewelry, and professes to be able to show you a thing or two about life. He perhaps knows a little too much, and wants to see life at your expense. And when you have spent your last shilling, and he is tired of you, he will cast you off without mercy.

Beware of the man who talks slightly of mother, father, home, or of women generally. Many men ridicule any allusion to the purity and tenderness of the home circle, and apparently have no belief that woman can be other than the toy or victim of man, never his equal and confidante and friend. Beware of such men. The probability is that they have only lived to tempt the weaker sex whom they now traduce, and that their vices have necessarily excluded them from the society of the pure and virtuous.

Beware of the man who professes himself too deeply versed in the science of the day to believe in the Bible, and who ridicules those who do. It is an easy thing to ask a question which might take days of teaching and investigation to answer. Destructive criticism is child's play. Any fool can fire a cathedral which would take centuries in building; and any street-arab may smash a window which neither modern wealth nor art can reconstruct. True wisdom is not destructive but constructive. A man has no more right to steal away or spoil your faith than he has to deprive you of your eyesight or rob you of your purse. And if he attempt it, he betrays a dangerous character, of which you do well to beware.

DON'T DRIFT INTO EXTRAVAGANT EXPENDITURE.

Better live on oatmeal porridge and brown bread than spend more than you can afford or drift into debt. The pleasure of a day's outing or of an evening's gaiety has a nasty after-taste, when for weeks or months you have to avoid certain people because you owe them money which you can not repay.

It is a temptation for us all to imitate the people above us in the social scale, but it is a miserable life to live, and very unsatisfactory, because we generally imitate their weaknesses and vices rather than their virtues. And yet it appears to afford much passing pleasure for the poor clerk to dress and speak with the airs of a young lord. One evening's conquest of the barmaids and bar-loafers must be a rare luxury! But this kind of thing can not be done without money. You can not throw much money away out of ten dollars per week. The result is that a young man sometimes spends in a single evening money enough to fill his heart with anxiety for many a weary day, and is perhaps tempted to take money which does not belong to him, in order to stay pressing demands, and in hope of the opportunity of repayment, which never comes.

DON'T DRIFT INTO HABITS OF GAMBLING.

There is plenty of it all around us, and a man feels rather lonely when he refuses to join in. I felt so some time ago on board an ocean steamer, when I seemed to be nearly the only one that refused to join in a sweepstakes. The workshops and establishments are comparatively rare which are not filled with the buzz of excitement on the eve of some great race. And there are places in most large towns, clubs and such like, where men have the opportunity of losing fortunes, if they only are fools enough.

It is not chiefly the love of money that urges men to bet, but the excitement of the chance, which relieves the monotony of their otherwise aimless existence. We can form no concept on of the fascinations of this kind of life as we look on them from without; just as we can not realize the irresistible force of the whirlpool till we are being sucked into its gurgling vortex. But it is surely needless to fling ourselves into them to see what they are like. Once in, we shall probably find it impossible to get out. And we may get in almost imperceptibly. To deposit the first coin in a raffle or sweepstakes, to stake the first shilling on a horse, to lay a bet of a pair of gloves, these things may seem trifles, but they are a yielding to the outer rim of the whirlpool. Of course it is easy to break from them. But they may lead to other things, only removed from them by a single hair's-breadth, which will lead to others, and still others beyond. How much better to put the foot down and refuse the first! You mean to refuse the second; but if you are going to refuse at all, it will be unspeakably easier to refuse at first than afterward.

Betting is a bad thing. It undoes society as the white ant the wooden houses of the tropics. Men who bet care for little else. Love and home are sacrificed to the companions of the betting ring. Business is neglected because they live in the feverish hope of coming in for a windfall, and of getting money without giving an equivalent of any sort.

DON'T DRIFT INTO HABITS OF DRINKING.

Nothing is easier than to do this. The tides of strong drink are running swiftly through our streets, and every corner saloon is a jetty from which men may enter the boats and launch out upon the current. A few may enter it and yet escape; but for an enormous number there is little hope of escape, when once fairly afloat on the fascinating but perilous waters.

They say that smoking leads to drinking. If so, it would be well to avoid the first cigarette. Some of us have so many natural appetites to keep in order that we are thankful never to have awakened the habit of smoking, which seems a very masterful one, and terribly apt to become a tyrant. It would be foreign from my purpose to call smoking a sin. What right have I to add another to the ten commandments? But it certainly is to most people " a weight." In many cases it is the innocent little boy who, when once in the house, opens the door to a gang of thieves.

You are not specially a sinner, dear young fellow, because you smoke. But is it wise to begin a habit for which you can not plead

any good reason except that others do it, and which may lead you into drinking, bad companionships, and other things?

But other things drift a man into drinking habits. Loafing about the streets in the evenings; standing treat to companions, because you want to look large in their esteem, and with the certainty that you will have to drink what they provide in return; doing business over a wine bar; spending your evenings in places like music-halls, where drink passes round, and where the proprietor looks shyly on those who don't patronize the buffet, all these are easy methods of drifting into drink.

No man means to be a drunkard when he starts drinking. Those who are now in the agony of delirium were once as pure and true as you; but they were carried down an almost insensible gradient. Beware of their fate, and don't follow their earlier steps, lest you acquire a momentum you can not arrest, and go down to hell. There is no better safeguard to a young man in life than to take the pledge of total abstinence. He perhaps may not sign a pledge at a meeting, but he can write one in his own chamber, and resolve, by God's help, never to touch this accursed foe of human hearts and happiness and homes.

DON'T DRIFT INTO HABITS OF IMPURITY.

In all of us there are appetites and desires which are beautiful and innocent enough when kept in their right place; but they are very reluctant to be kept there, and are ever chafing to ascend the throne of the being, and assume the mastership of the life. It is pleasant to allow them thus to ascend; but who shall depict the horrors of the wreckage of all that is bright and beautiful and happy in the life of the miserable victim who has yielded to their first suggestions?

Beware of drifting into secret sins, witnessed by no eye but God's. Beware of the society of those who are familiar with the ways of darkness and impurity. Beware of spectacles and pictures, of amusements and books, that excite the lower passions. Never go to a place to which you could not take your mother or sister. Never get familiar with a girl whom you could not introduce to the purest woman you know. Never treat a girl in another way than you would like a man to treat your own sister.

It is not necessary to yield to temptation. Abstinence from strong drink and excessive animal food; plenty of gymnastics, cycling, and muscular exercise; hard mattresses, cold bathing, early rising, will answer many of the questions which so often perplex young men. And there is better than all, the power and purity of Jesus, which you may claim and use in all moments of need. One earnest, believing cry for help will bring Him near. And when He enters the soul, impurity can no more stand against His indwelling than straw before fire, or darkness before day.

DON'T DRIFT INTO AN IMPRUDENT MARRIAGE.

It is well when a young man meets a good girl. I never object to an early engagement when the couple are well mated, though I would urge a deferred marriage, until the comforts of a home can be provided either by the love of friends or by the results of united savings. And no home is so sweet as that which has been chosen and furnished by the taste and self-denial of those who are to enter it.

You ought not to choose your life-partner only from seeing her in evening dress or in company. All sweet faces do not tell a perfectly true story of the inner temper. You need a wife who knows something more than how to play one or two set pieces on the piano, or sing half a dozen songs. The girl who understands all the details of household management, who knows how all should be done though she may never have to do it, who has been good to her parents and younger brothers and sisters, who dresses simply and neatly, who knows how to make a dollar do a dollar's work, who is deeply religious, that is the kind of woman who will make a good wife; and till God sends her to you, don't flirt or play with a girl's affections, or lead any to think you care for them when you don't.

DON'T DRIFT INTO A MERE MONEY MAKING MACHINE.

Some seem to live for nothing else than to add a few more coins to their rising pile; and to do this, they sacrifice all that makes life sweet and noble and honorable. Have a lofty aim. Spend your life for the best results. Be more eager to get up than to get on,. There is no harm in ambition, when it is directed to doing the best you can to make the world better and those around you happier; but it is a detestable passion to seek money for money's sake. Your aim must be to seek first the things that make for righteousness and peace, for God's glory and man's good. Be faithful in these, in your small sphere, and it will be almost certain that you will be put in a position where you will have the chance of being faithful also in much.

You tell me that you can not resist the strong current on which you are already launched, and that you have already commenced to drift. But it is not too late. Send up a cry of distress to the Lord Jesus, asking Him to come on board your boat. He is stronger than the mightiest current. And then if you like to put it so, give Him the towing-line, that He may take it in His hand, and tow you up the strong stream to His own bright Home.

There is no better policy, dear young brother, than to give your heart to Jesus. Take Him as your Saviour, Master, and Friend. Ask Him to live in your soul, making you pure and sweet and strong. Follow Him in His footsteps of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Go to no place where you can not take Him also. Let His friends be yours, and see that yours are His. Ask Him to put you into that position where you can please and glorify Him best. Remember that prayer and waiting will untie the stoutest knots and unravel the greatest difficulties.

The best defense against slipping away is to flee for refuge and lay hold of the hope (Biblical hope is not "hope so" but a confidence that God will do good to us in the future) set before us a hope which is like "an anchor of the soul... both sure and steadfast". (Hebrews 6:19+) (see topic The Blessed Hope)

Ponder the following thoughts regarding some issues that predispose one to "drifting" through life:

1). **The passing of time.** A slow drift, given enough time, will carry you to another continent and its dark uncharted waters. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians

Behold **now** is the acceptable time. Behold **now** is the day of salvation. (2Co 6:2+)

2). **Familiarity with truths about God and Jesus** (a common trap in "Christian" America). We all have a tendency to begin to regard the things we become familiar with as commonplace. The initial venture into the mysteries of Christ may be exhilarating, but repeated exposure to the truth may eventually result in "vaccination" which then even prevents one from getting the real "disease"!

3). **Busyness.** Busy people can soon be weighed down by all the cares of life (Mk 4:19+). A snowflake is a tiny thing, but when the air is full of them, they can bury us. Even so, the cares of each day can insulate us from the excellency of Christ, and result in our continuing to drift toward destruction.

Too many of us expect to sin and excite sin. The remedy for such dangerous action is found in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Whenever we play with temptation, it is easy to drift into great danger. A woman was bathing in the Gulf of Mexico. She was enjoying the comfort of relaxing on an inflated cushion that kept her afloat. When she realized that she had been swept about a half mile out from the beach, she began to scream, but no one heard her. A coast guard craft found her five miles from the place where she first entered the water. She did not see her danger until she was beyond her own strength and ability.

No Drifting

We must pay the most careful attention . . . so that we do not drift away. Hebrews 2:1

Today's Scripture & Insight: Hebrews 2:1–4

Drifting in our relationship with God is hardly noticeable at first; it happens gradually.

At the end of one school semester, my wife and I picked up our daughter from her school 100 kilometers (60 miles) away. On our way back home we detoured to a nearby beach resort for snacks. While enjoying our time there, we watched the boats at the seashore. Usually they are anchored to prevent them from drifting away, but I noticed one boat drifting unhindered among the others—slowly and steadily making its way out to sea.

As we drove home, I reflected on the timely caution given to believers in the book of Hebrews: "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away" (Heb. 2:1). We have good reason to stay close. The author of Hebrews says that while the Mosaic law was reliable and needed to be obeyed, the message of the Son of God is far superior. Our salvation is "so great" in Jesus that He shouldn't be ignored (v. 3).

Drifting in our relationship with God is hardly noticeable at first; it happens gradually. However, spending time talking with Him in prayer and reading His Word, confessing our wrongs to Him, and interacting with other followers of Jesus can help us stay anchored in Him. As we connect with the Lord regularly, He will be faithful to sustain us, and we can avoid drifting away. By: Lawrence Darmani ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What do you know about Jesus that keeps you wanting to be near Him?

*To avoid drifting away from God,
stay anchored to the Rock.*

THE SEAMAN'S PSALM --Capt. J. Rogers, taken from NOW magazine, 8/1/53

The Lord is my Pilot; I shall not drift. He lighteth me across the dark waters;
He steereth me in the deep channels; He keepeth my log.
He guideth me by the star of holiness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I sail 'mid the thunders and the tempests of life,
I shall dread no danger; for Thou art near me;
Thy love and Thy care, they shelter me.
Thou preparest a harbor before me in the homeland of eternity;
Thou anointest the waters with oil; my ship rideth calmly;
Surely sunlight and starlight shall favor me on the voyage I take,
and I will rest in the port of my God forever.

ILLUSTRATION - Mike Yaconelli tells a cow story that illustrates the subtle nature of drifting...

"I live in a small, rural community. There are lots of cattle ranches around here, and, every once in a while, a cow wanders off and gets lost... Ask a rancher how a cow gets lost, and chances are he will reply, 'Well, the cow starts nibbling on a tuft of green grass, and when it finishes, it looks ahead to the next tuft of green grass and starts nibbling on that one, and then it nibbles on a tuft of grass right next to a hole in the fence. It then sees another tuft of green grass on the other side of the fence, so it nibbles on that one and then goes on to the next tuft. The next thing you know, the cow has nibbled itself into being lost.' (Morgan, R. J. BORROW [Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes. Page 41](#). -- THERE ARE ALSO SOME GREAT QUOTES ABOUT DRIFTING ON THAT PAGE)

DRIFTING FROM HOLINESS - D. A. Carson, For the Love of God

People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.

Ray Pritchard - Judges 16:20 "he did not know that the LORD had departed from him." - Samson didn't realize what had happened. I wish I had power to speak what this really means to me. Too many Christians drift away from God through stupidity and folly, and they don't realize what they have lost until they've lost it. They don't appreciate what they had until it's gone. They don't see where they were until they slide down into the pit. Why is it that Christians don't appreciate what they have until they lose it and go into sin? ([Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places](#))

DRIFTING

TEXT: "Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1).

INTRODUCTION: A Christian is either pressing on toward the goal or drifting in many directions, if we drift, we drift away from Him! And we do drift unless we give earnest attention to the direction of our lives. Our text makes us think of a great ship steaming foot by foot to the wharf to be tied up in safety. But no one ties it up. The engines stop running and the great ship is adrift, making it a peril to all other ships and exposing itself to great harm.

I. Discern the drift.

- A. Mental laziness. Too lazy:
 - 1. To pray.
 - 2. To read the Bible.
 - 3. To be faithful to the church.

- B. Busy-ness.
- C. The “love of money.”
- D. Sex perversion.
- E. Worldliness, as the Bible understands worldliness.

II. Stop the drift.

- A. Pray.
 - 1. For eyes to see.
 - 2. For ears to hear.
 - 3. For a heart to respond.
- B. Read your Bible.
- C. Yield unceasingly to the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION: Give earnest heed to what you hear and have heard. “Forgetting the things that are behind,” press on! (Phil. 3:13).

Rod Mattoon - Drifting From God

In Texas, I have floated down rivers on inner-tubes in the summer time. It is very relaxing. The gentle current carries you downstream through regions of absolute, beautiful scenery of majestic trees and hills. Watching the variety of birds in action and listening to their elegant songs inspire praise for God’s creation.

The cool water of the river is very soothing on a sunny day. Drifting is so easy. You sit back, relax, and float along as the river is your pilot. Drifting however, can be terrifying, especially when you have drifted too far from your raft while swimming, or when your boat has lost its anchor and you drift at sea.

Even more terrifying is when you spiritually drift away from the Lord in your life. Realize that nobody drifts upstream, only downstream. If you drift from the Lord, you are heading down in the wrong direction. In fact, the writer of Hebrews addressed the issue of drifting.

* Hebrews 2:1—Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

This word “slip” is from the Greek word *pararrhūeo* {par-ar-hroo-eh'-o}. This word means “to slip, to drift, to erode or wash away, to leak or run out; to forget.” It was used to describe a ring that slipped off a finger, snow slipping off a person, or a vessel that was leaking water. This word was also used to describe the waves of the sea washing away the contents of a beach or something that had drifted away out to sea.

As I read the definition of the word *pararrhūeo*, several thoughts come to mind. First of all, I think of all the Christians who have drifted away from God and are no longer in church anymore. Like water leaking from a vessel, they have leaked out of church. This world has also swept them out of church like ocean waves that hug the shore and pull whatever is in their path out to sea to aimlessly drift or sink to the bottom.

I think of preachers who have spiritually eroded like the sands of a beach, washed away by the waves of the world. They are no longer preaching. Some are not even in church. I also am reminded of the battle that all believers face to not forget the truths they have learned from God’s Word. Beware of the danger of drifting.

Mark Twain was the pen name of Samuel Clemens. As a young man, he fell in love with a beautiful Christian woman named Livy, and he married her. Being devoted to the Lord, Livy wanted the Lord to be first in their home after she and Sam were married. They prayed and read the Bible together for a time and then one day Sam said, “Livy, you can go on with this by yourself if you want to, but leave me out. I don’t believe in your God and you’re only making a hypocrite out of me.”

Fame and fortune came to the Clemens family. There were royal court appearances in Europe. Sam and Livy were on top of the mountain, but Livy drifted further and further away from the Lord. She eventually dried up spiritually.

In an hour of bitter need, Sam said, “Livy, if your Christian faith can help you now, turn to it.” Livy replied, “I can’t Sam, I haven’t any faith. It was destroyed a long time ago!” She lost her confidence and trust in the Lord.

What a tragedy that this happened in Livy’s life. What is more tragic are multitudes of Christians that are right now making the same mistakes as Livy. They are becoming spiritual popsicles. If they go to church, it is the Church of the Deep Freeze pastored by Jack Frost. They are spiritually frozen. They have become spiritually washed up and have drifted away from God. Their joy is gone. Dedication is gone. Faithfulness is gone. Enthusiasm for the Lord is gone. Am I describing you?

Beloved, if we do not practice truth, we tend to eventually forget it or let it slip from our minds and our lives because we are not anchored to God's Word. If our relationship and fellowship with Christ is weak, we will have a tendency to drift and be pushed around by any wave that comes our way. If our walk with God is not vital and valuable to us, we will drift from Him.

The slipping or drifting that is mentioned here is NOT speaking about Christ and His Word. Christ and His Word are stable, secure, and solid as a rock. The danger of drifting is in the life of the careless, neglectful, double-minded Christian. James said, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).

One of the discouraging elements of being a Christian is to see someone who once was living for Christ, get sidetracked and spiritually slide into a condition of coldness, callousness, carnality, criticalness, and corruption. We are all capable of doing this if we are not careful. Paul was scared to death that this would happen to him.

1 Corinthians 9:27—But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Let me ask, "Are you drifting away from the Lord? Are you closer to the Lord today than what you were a year ago or have you drifted away from Him?"

Steven Cole - True believers may drift and may get entangled in sin. But when they are confronted with the truth, they will turn from their sin and pursue holiness. If they do not turn from it, they have no basis for assurance of salvation. The longer they continue in sin, the more reason they have to question whether their profession of faith was genuine. But no one has the option of saying, "I'm just a carnal Christian. I'm living for this world now, but when I die I'll go to heaven." That option does not exist.....Usually drifting is inadvertent. If you've ever steered a boat, you know that if you do not deliberately keep it on course, you will drift with the currents. The stronger the current, the more you have to give constant attention to keep the boat on course. Since we live in the strong current of this evil world, we all are prone to drift with the culture.

BEWARE OF DRIFTING

Leonardo da Vinci, when painting "The Last Supper," went looking for models to sit for the various disciples and for Jesus. He found a handsome and innocent looking man in a choir in one of the churches in Italy. He painted him as Jesus in the great painting. The man's name was Pietro Bandinelli.

Years passed as da Vinci continued to work on the painting. He left the face of Judas Iscariot till the last. Leonardo went out into the streets of Rome and looked for the most forlorn person he could find.

At last he saw the man whom he wanted for the disciple that betrayed Christ. His face was drawn and villainous. He hired the man and brought him in to sit for the face of Judas. When he had completed the work, he was about to dismiss the man when he asked, "By the way, sir, what is your name?" The poor gentleman said, "Don't you know me? I am Pietro Bandinelli. I also sat as your model for the face of Jesus."

The poor man had drifted so far that his face had gone from that of Christ to that befitting the scandalous Judas Iscariot. Dear friend, beware of drifting from God. And be busy sharing for God.

Predisposition to "drifting" backward -

- (1). Time: A slow drift, given enough time, will carry you to another continent and its dark uncharted waters.
- (2). Familiarity with the truth. It is natural for us to come to regard the familiar as commonplace. The initial venture into the mysteries of Christ will leave us exhilarated. But with the repeated journeys, some become bored tourists.
- (3) Danger of busyness: We who live at the end of the twentieth century are busy people, and the multiplicity of our cares and duties can overwhelm us. A snowflake is a tiny thing, but when the air is full of them, they can bury us. Even so, the thousand cares of each day can insulate us from the stupendous excellencies of Christ, causing us to begin a deadly drift. The drifting that comes through the combination of years, familiarity, and busyness often bares its existence when the storm of opposition comes. The anchor has long been loosed, and when the winds come, an eternal soul is suddenly on the rocks and shipwrecked.

Jerry White observes a truth many believers have experienced at one time or another "No one is so empty as the man who has stopped walking with God and doesn't know it."

F W Boreham alludes to the Christian's journey through the tempestuous, tempting seas of life noting that "The captain gives earnest heed to the charts lest he drift unconsciously shoreward!"

The peril of the **drifting life** - For most of us the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin. There are few people who deliberately and in a moment turn their backs on God; there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from him. There are not many who in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin; there are many who almost imperceptibly involve themselves in some situation and suddenly awake to find that they have ruined life for themselves and broken someone else's heart. We must be continually on the alert against the peril of the drifting life. The Word will never drift from us. The danger is our drifting from it. The harbor of salvation is absolutely secure. It is Jesus Christ, who never moves, never changes, and is always available to anyone who wants the protection and security of His righteousness.

*Drifting is always more away from something
than it is towards something*

Sin Saps Us ARE YOU DRIFTING FROM GOD?

Return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously." —Hosea 14:2

Sin saps us of our God-given strength. We become spiritually weak and decrepit, but often we imagine that we're just as hardy as ever.

That's the deceitfulness of sin. Gradually we drift away from God. We lose our desire to spend time in His Word and in prayer. The current of this world carries us away from friends and godly influences. We drift deeper into sin—our pathetic, feeble state evident to all eyes but our own.

I think of Samson, that man of towering strength who pillowed his head in the lap of sin, then rose from his sleep and said, "I will go out as before ... and shake myself free!" (Judges 16:20). But he didn't know that the Lord had taken away his strength.

Many years later, the prophet Hosea confronted the people of Israel and said that they too had lost their strength because of sin, and they didn't realize it (Hosea 7:8-16). So Hosea commanded them to "return to the Lord. Say to Him, 'Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously'" (Jdg 14:2).

Sin can sap us too. That's why we must deliberately take time to ask the Lord to expose our sin (Psalm 139:23-24). When we turn in repentance to Him, He will receive us graciously, set us free from sin's domination, and arm us again with strength. —David Roper

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.
—Psalm 139:23-24

Sin adds to your trouble, subtracts from your energy, and multiplies your difficulties.

[**Slow Fade – Listen to this Song that Pictures Backsliding**](#)

R C Sproul applies the truths in this story to believers today noting that "Samson drifted into sin one inch at a time, but finally there was a point when God withdrew his favor and denied him access to the gift of strength. Pride, presumption, and neglecting your spiritual gifts may result in the same end. What task has God set before you at this point in life? Are you aware of your privilege and, as Paul encouraged Timothy ([2Ti 1:6+](#)), are you stirring up your gift into a righteous flame? (Before the Face of God: Book Three: A Daily Guide for Living from the Old Testament)

Warren Wiersbe - A DOWNWARD CYCLE

If we do not listen to God's Word and really hear it, we will start to drift. Neglect always leads to drifting, in things material and physical as well as spiritual. As we drift from the Word, we start to doubt the Word; because faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). We start to get hard hearts, and this leads to spiritual sluggishness which produces dullness toward the Word. We become "dull of hearing"—lazy listeners! This leads to a spiteful attitude toward the Word to the extent that we willfully disobey God; and this gradually develops into a defiant attitude—we almost "dare" God to do anything!

Now what does God do while this spiritual regression is going on? He keeps speaking to us, encouraging us to get back to the Word. If we fail to listen and obey, then He begins to chasten us. This chastening process is the theme of Hebrews 12, the climactic chapter in the epistle. "The Lord will judge His people" (Heb. 10:30, italics mine). God does not allow His children to become "spoiled brats" by permitting them willfully to defy His word. He always chastens in love.

Spiritual drifting may begin with small, seemingly insignificant ideas and events.

- Spiritual drifting may lead to situations or consequences we never once thought possible.
 - Spiritual drifting produces lukewarm Christians who are of little or no value to the church.
 - Spiritual drifting occurs within a group as well as within the hearts of individual believers.
-

1Ti 6:21 Some have strayed concerning the faith.

In the early part of this century, an American ship was wrecked off the Scilly Isles near the coast of England. The sea had been calm and the weather clear, but the vessel was caught in a treacherous current that slowly lured it off its course. Before the captain and the crew realized what had happened, the ship had crashed into the rocks.

In life, too, powerful currents of compromise can catch the soul and carry it to shipwreck. Spiritual drifting is usually a slow and imperceptible process. We know it has occurred when we have lost the strong resistance to evil and the passionate desire for truth that we once knew.

For every professing believer who is lost to the Christian cause by savage assault of evil, a hundred more slowly drift away from God's truth, regular worship, and a life of faith. We must give careful attention to what we know about Christ so that we don't get caught in a drift.—H. W. R.

Yes, Christ the Lord is risen,
Has come forth from the grave;
He breaks the chains of death for you
And now has power to save.
-- Woodruff

THE COMPASS OF GOD'S WORD
WILL KEEP YOU FROM SPIRITUAL SHIPWRECK.

Vance Havner - THE DRIFTERS

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Revelation 3:16.

We are familiar with the poem about the High Road and the Low. There is a third thoroughfare, the misty flats where the rest drift to and fro. They know neither height nor depth, they are neither cold nor hot. They are proud of their moderatism, which does not mean moderation; they know neither victory nor defeat. Life's greatest experiences do not come on the misty flats but on the heights, where we mount up as eagles, or the depths of adversity, where we walk and faint not, where stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage.

TODAY IN THE WORD- Hebrews 2:1

According to the Campus Journal, a major university recently removed a popular line of study notes from its bookstore. These notes summarize the plots, themes, and characters of well-known books so students can pass an exam without having to read the required book. The university wants its students to wrestle with the message of great books rather than to opt for the easy way out.

The writer of Hebrews did not want his "students" to take the easy way out and turn away from their commitment to Christ. Because he wanted them to wrestle with the great truths of their faith, he wrote them a letter that has become one of the great books of history.

The Hebrews were not simply students trying to make the Dean's List. Defection from Christ would result in more serious consequences than a failing grade. Today's verses offer the first of five warnings in the book. Here, the recipients of the letter are pictured as being in danger of "drifting away" from Christ--much like an inattentive child in a crowded mall who refuses to heed his parents' warning to stay close and who consequently gets lost.

The author reminded his readers that just as violators of the Mosaic Law received punishment, they also could not expect to drift away from the new covenant in Christ without receiving discipline.

The text does not spell out the discipline the Hebrews could expect if they pulled away from Christ. Perhaps the writer did not define it because he was ""confident of better things"" from them (Heb. 6:9).

One of the blessings the Hebrews might have forfeited is suggested in the first chapter of Hebrews. In verses 1, 5, and 13, the picture is of God enthroning His king and giving Him absolute triumph over His enemies. The king would then share His joy with ""His companions"" (Heb. 1:9).

This is a picture of Christ on His millennial throne, a reign in which His followers will share. The writer was looking at the ""world to come"" (Heb. 2:5), showing that even though humankind had lost dominion through sin, the Son regained it through His sacrificial death.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Obviously, the Hebrews weren't the only believers in danger of drifting spiritually. We've all known times of lethargy and lack of attention to our ""great salvation"" (v. 3). One way you can guard against drifting is to promise the Lord you'll be faithful in prayer and Bible study this month. It may help to write out your commitment, sign and date it, and put it in a prominent place in your kitchen, bedroom, or office.

THE DEADLY DANGER OF DRIFTING - George Truett - And now to the morning message. If you were asked the chief danger to us all, what would your answer be? It would be interesting to know your answer. What is the chief danger to us all? The Bible tells us. It is the danger of drifting away from the path of duty and of right and of safety. That is the chief danger for us all, and there is a Scripture which points that for us, which I quote you:

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest haply we drift away from them."

There is your revealing word, that word "drift." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest haply we drift away from them." The chief danger for us every one is indicated there in that little word "drift." It is the danger of drifting away from the path of duty and of right and of safety—simply the danger of drifting. That is the chief danger of us all. There are many expressive figures in the Bible touching human life. In one place we are asked the question : "What is your life?" and the answer is given us in the very next sentence: "It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is like a morning cloud dissolved in the sun. In another place the Bible compares life to the swift ships of the sea. In another place human life is represented as the grass that groweth up in the morning, but on the evening of that same day the grass is cut down and withereth. Again, it compares life to the eagle that hasteth to its prey. There is no more impressive and expressive figure for us, for human life, than this figure here of drifting. You can see it. The life boat goes down the stream. The current bears it on, and that is the faithful picture of human life. And because of the ease and the danger of drifting, therefore we are warned here by the Word of God to take heed to the things we have heard, lest haply we drift away from them.

This warning is for us all. Not one of us may be absolved from it. Not one of us but that urgently needs this warning concerning the peril of drifting. It is a warning for Christian people, I should say, first of all. Every Christian needs to heed this warning here given against the awful peril of drifting. The Bible is filled with admonitions to us right at that point. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." How often the Bible rings with that bugle call ! "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." How that truth is emphasized in the Bible! How we are warned against the snare of pride, and how the fearful consequences of pride are set out before us in the Bible! What foes we are reminded of in the Bible that lie in wait to entrap us, and to deceive us, and to sidetrack us from the right path ! There is our own flesh, and we are never to lose sight of the fact that though the spirit is born again, when we believe on Christ as our Savior, yet the flesh is unregenerated and will be unregenerated until it shall be raised from the dead. These redeemed spirits live in houses that are not yet regenerated, and we are never to lose sight of the fact that we must reckon with our flesh as we go along in the Christian life. And then there is the world about us, with its amusements and its spirit against God. And then in addition to that there is a great evil personality in the world, whose name is Satan, bedarkening and deceiving and misleading, and seeking in every way he can to seduce us from the right path. Here is this great triple alliance, the flesh and the world and Satan, and we are to watch all the time, or we shall, by these influences which this triple alliance shall suggest, drift away from the right path. We are exhorted to war a good warfare. We are exhorted in the Bible to fight the good fight of faith. We are exhorted in the Bible to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand, and, having done all, to stand.

Now, we are not to lose sight of the fact, my fellow Christians, that the Christian life can be lived shabbily or it can be lived gloriously. We are not to lose sight of that fact. We can follow Christ afar off, or we can walk beside Him, and be His conscious friends and comrades and fellow-workers. We are not to lose sight of that solemn truth—the Christian life can be lived shabbily or it can be lived gloriously. Oh, the supremest tragedy, I think, in all the world is that so often saved people, people born again, people who shall at last reach heaven—the tragedy is untellable and incomparable, I think, that even saved people live the Christian life shabbily. All about us, what revelations there would be if men's hearts were uncovered, and we were to trace the stories of their declensions,

their departures from Christ, even after He saves them! All about us there are pictures of men and women who began the Christian life well—oh, how hopeful was their promise! —and yet they were bewitched away from that blessed course, and they have gone drifting and floating. They have floated with the tide, and have neglected to stem it. And the great apostle here summons us, challenges us, to watch, that we do not go down the currents with that easy flowing tide.

Why do Christians go away from Christ? The reasons are all about us. If a Christian neglects the vital duties and habits that go along with the Christian life, then he will go drifting down that stream. Let a Christian neglect church attendance, and he will soon be into trouble. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," is an injunction ringing in the Bible like some mighty trumpet. Let any Christian be careless on that point of constant, habitual, high-principled church attendance, and he will soon be in trouble. Let any Christian neglect the vital matter of secret prayer, and he will soon be in trouble. There can be no substitutes for secret prayer. Let a Christian neglect the vital habit of daily turning to the Word of God to get therefrom God's counsel and comfort, and such Christian will soon be in trouble. The Christian life has its reasonable and vital habits, just as the physical life. Let the physical life be ignored and maltreated, and the physical life shall be preyed upon, and shall be victimized with declining health. And the Christian life in just the same fashion shall be beaten upon and undermined, if the habits that go with it are ignored and forgotten.

How do Christians get away from the right path and go drifting down the stream? Sometimes it is because of business reverses. I have lived long enough in a modern city—twenty years in one pastorate—to see how men are often crippled and thrown into the deep currents because of business reverses. Full many a time men's hands hang down and their hearts faint when business reverses come, and they seem shattered and broken and oftentimes fearfully crippled in their faith, when business reverses come. Business men need God's wisdom and help, every day and hour, in their daily business.

And then sometimes it is a sorrow that comes into life, a blinding, bedarkening sorrow, a crushing sorrow, that causes people to drift away from Christ. Sorrow has one of two effects in a life. Sorrow embitters, sorrow sours, sorrow takes life's sweetness out; or sorrow makes the beaten one draw nearer to the Lord and cling the more closely to Him. Full many a time when a sorrow comes—this or that or the other sorrow—the soul turns away from the source of healing and comfort, and goes drifting down the stream, missing God's proffered help for any soul that will wait upon Him.

And then full many a time drifting away from God comes on because the soul is wrong in its relations toward some other human being. I have lived long enough to find out that the wounds and the hurts and the frictions that come to the human heart, out of wrong relations between man and man, make up one of the saddest chapters in human life. Let a man be wrong in his heart toward another human being, and such man is crippled dreadfully in the sight of God. There is no place in the human heart for hate, if a man is going to get on well with God. A man loses the sense of perspective, a man's vision is blurred, a man's life is all poisoned, if he gives place in his heart for hate toward any human being. I have lived long enough to see that life's frictions and rivalries and competitions and contacts and collisions often turn human beings away from God. I know two brothers who have not spoken to each other in years and years. Both of them are nominally church members. I asked each of them, at separate times, just a little while ago: "How are you getting along in the Christian life?" and each one answered in effect: "Oh, sir, bad enough. It has been years since I have had any peace or power as I have tried to pray and tried to serve God." It could not be otherwise. The brothers quarreled over their father's will, and they parted asunder, with anger each toward the other, and they have gone on in such fearful course through the passing years. Oh, my brother men, human life is too big for that, too worthful for that, too important for that. God's favor is too valuable for that. Our holy religion is too precious for that. We are to come like old Abraham came and spoke to his nephew, Lot, when the herdmen of Lot and the herdmen of Abraham were quarreling and were divided, and Abraham said to his nephew: "Lot, my boy, there must be none of this. Let there be no strife between your herdmen and mine, between you and me. We be brethren. You go your Way and I will go mine. You take your pastures and I will take mine. We will not have any strife." The human heart that would serve God must come to the place where it will not be sidetracked from the path of happiness and duty in the Christian life by collision with or animosities toward some other human life. Full many a time drifting comes just at that point. There come some experiences into the human life which shatter confidence, and which make the soul stand back aghast, and which raise a score of questions about religion, and down the stream the life goes, and church attendance is given up, and church habits are broken, and on and on and on with the tide such poor life goes floating down. Oh, it is pitiable and it is terrible!

And sometimes the Christian life gets all wrong with God and goes drifting down the stream because of admission into it of some wrong thing—of some secret sin. I am thinking now of a well known man whose case puzzled numbers of us, and when we looked into it at last we found he had accustomed himself in the secret place, without even the knowledge of his wife, to an ill-fated drug, that bedarkened and deadened and turned him away from the right path. Let a man admit into his life any evil thing, and coddle it, and pamper it, and keep it there, and he is all sidetracked from the right course, and down that stream he will go drifting. Some secret sin will shrivel and wither his peace in the sight of God. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Oh, how pitiable and how terrible it all is! At last such Christian, all broken and drifting, and to the largest degree useless, shall come up empty-handed in the sight of God. It is an awful thing to be saved just by the skin of one's teeth. It is an awful thing to think of meeting Christ empty-handed, with the works of our life all burned up, but they shall be, if they are not in harmony with the will of God.

Do I speak today to drifting Christians? I pass my eye and hand down every pew before me, and would pause at the door of every heart. Do I speak to drifting Christians? Turn your boat up-stream, whatever it costs, whatever the price. Oh, my drifting fellow Christians, turn your boat up-stream! You have too much at stake to go on like that. Whatever the price, whatever the cost, turn that boat up-stream. Set yourself with a resolution deathless: "I am going to recover my feet. I am going to retrace my wrong steps. I am coming home. I am coming back to my Father's house. I will burn the bridges." Turn your boat up-stream, oh, drifting Christian!

But I have a word more for the one who is not a Christian. There, is to be sure, a great peril to the Christian that he shall drift, but I have a serious word to the one not a Christian. There are currents to make you drift, and they are terrible. There are currents in this stream on which your boat floats to beat you down and to keep you away from heaven and away from God. What are those currents?

There is the daily atmosphere that is about you, the atmosphere impregnated with worldliness and with materialism, with all their down-dragging pressure and tendency. There is the subtle atmosphere about you to keep you away from God. How difficult in some atmospheres it is to pray! How difficult in some atmospheres to think seriously. All about us is the down-dragging atmosphere, to make us forget sin and death and the judgment and the world to come, and our personal accountability to God. The atmosphere about you may easily cause you to drift. Such atmosphere tells us: "When in Rome do as the Roman does." The very atmosphere about you constantly inclines your boat to go down the stream.

What other current is there to cause your boat to go down the stream? There is the daily task. We are preoccupied. We have our hands full, our heads full, our hearts full, our lives full. There is the daily task. Over there in Luke's gospel Jesus gives a faithful picture of human life. He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits and my goods? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods, and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease. Eat, drink and be merry." Wasn't it fine? Oh, no, it was not fine. This man forgot that his soul could not be fed on corn. This man forgot that he was doomed to die. This man forgot that he must answer God. This man said: "I will say to my soul, Thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease. Eat, drink and be merry. No matter if the drouth comes, no matter if no crops are made, I have enough for years. I will not worry. Take thine ease. Eat, drink and be merry." But God, who is the unseen but real factor in every human life, said to him: "Thou fool, thou fool, this night shall thy life be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." A man's daily business, profitable and proper business, a man's daily tasks, profitable and proper, if he does not watch, shall make him lock God and light and heaven out of his life and miss all that is highest and best, and bring him to doom and death.

What other current is there to make you drift? There is the deadening that comes from familiarity with religious things, to make men drift. I said to a sexton in one of our cemeteries: "Doesn't this daily digging of graves depress you?" And he said: "Not now, sir, not now. When I first began to dig these graves out here, I was blue from night until morning and from morning till night. I went to my bed at the end of the day's work, to dream through the night about digging graves, and I dreamed about seeing the big caskets, and the tiny caskets, and all, but now, sir, I have got past all that. I could lie down in the midst of these graves now and sleep without any disturbance. I have been in it so long, I have touched it so much, I have become so familiar with it, it makes no impression upon me at all."

Oh, that deadening power, if we resist light from God! That is a fearful Scripture which says that the gospel is the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. A man hears the gospel and resists it. He is weaker and worse off than ever before. The gospel is the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. There is the undoing power, the deadening power, the corroding power, the wasting power of familiarity with religious things.

And along with that is the deadening power that comes with time. A business man, who has made good in the world's big affairs, a splendid man in many ways, said to me a little while back, when I talked to him about religion and the higher call, after we had talked perhaps two hours: "Sir, you think I have won in life." I said: "Yes, in a way, you have." "Well," he said, "the world would say I have won in life, with all this business success," and then he turned, upon me with his care-worn face and said: "I would give every dollar I have if I could cry about personal religion like I used to when I was a sixteen year old boy. But," he said, "I have given myself, I have given my life, I have given my hands, I have given my brain, I have given my blood, I have given my manhood, I have neglected my family, I have given my all, to win, and I do not seem to have any feeling any more at all." And he is not yet quite fifty years of age. Yes, yes, the currents are all about you to beat you down.

There is another serious word to be said, and that is that we can go drifting down the stream and not know it. Many a Christian is terribly backslidden in his heart and does not realize it. You remember the story about Samson. Samson wist not that his strength had departed from him, and when he went out to grapple with his task he was utterly paralyzed. His strength was gone, and he wist it not. You remember that description of Israel of old—gray hairs were upon his head, but he did not know that he had gray hairs. A

man can drift and be far down the stream, almost to the rapids, almost to the frightful plunge over the precipice, and not know it at all.

Oh, soul, wrong with God, I am coming in this last moment to beg you to turn your boat up-stream. Is there anything in your life wrong in the sight of God? Do you wince when you think of bringing your life to the gaze of Heaven—to the inspection of God? Do you wince? Then I pray you, be candid, and I pray you, be serious, and I pray you, be purposeful, and I pray you, be determined, and I pray you, be highly resolved. I pray you, turn that boat up-stream. You have too much at stake to go longer and further down the stream. Act up to the light you have. A. noted woman, in the darkness, terrible darkness religious, said to one: "What on earth shall I do? Everything about religion is dark as night to me? What shall I do?" And that one whom she questioned gave her back this wise answer : "Oh, lady, act as if God were, and you shall come to know that He is." And in just a few hours she came back, His surrendered, trusting child. My fellow-men, my gentle women, act up to the light you have.

Have you drifted? Are you drifting? Is there something in your life wrong in the sight of God. Is your boat going down the stream? I pray you, I challenge you, I beseech you, I summon you, I call to you—turn your boat upstream and turn it without delay, and turn it before it is too late.

W. young fellow heard a preacher in the other days, and was greatly moved, and the preacher said: "When you have a religious impression, the time to act upon it is right then. The time when you hear God's call, in the which you ought to respond is right then." And the young fellow walked down the aisle and publicly made his surrender to Christ, saying: "It shall be right now that I take Christ as my Savior," and he went back to the saw-mill in the mountains where he worked, and the boys said that next morning he sang all the morning. Religion in the heart makes men sing. The boys said that he sang all the morning, as they moved the great logs to the saw-mill, and as he went singing all that morning—the first morning that he had ever known what it was to be Christ's trusting disciple and follower—about noon his body was caught somehow in the machinery and crushed and mangled, so that a little while thereafter he went away into dusty death. When they got him out he faintly said: "Send for the preacher, that preacher in the church house at the foot of the mountains last night." The preacher fortunately was soon found and hurried up the mountain to the mill, and he bent down by the side of the dying fellow, and took his hand and said: "Charley, I have come. What would you like to say?" And with a smile on his face that was never on land or sea, he faintly pressed the minister's hand and said: "Wasn't it a glorious thing that I settled it in time?" Oh, my men and women, my men and women, I beseech you, in the great Savior's name, turn your boat up-stream before it is too late ! "Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." Let it be your time—your day. Lord, save thou the people and they shall be saved

THE CLOSING PRAYER.

And now, Holy Father, as the people go out from this midday service, may they go to practice the truth they have heard. May they go to put into life the summons, the challenge, the exhortation, the entreaty of God's Book, which has been brought us this hour. May the drifting Christian say: "As for me, whatever others may or may not do, God help me, I am going to turn my steps in the right way to-day." May such one say with Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." O, we pray that the drifting Christian, no matter what caused the drifting, nor how and where it began, may such Christian this day come back and walk humbly with Christ, and be saved from those burning memories, and those accusations of conscience, which ever follow waste and drifting in the Christian life. And still more do we pray, Lord Jesus, that the soul in this place that is going down life's stream, without hope and without God, not saved, not ready to live, not ready to die, not ready for any world, all wrong with God, wrong with the moral universe, wrong with time, wrong with eternity, wrong with earth, wrong with heaven, wrong in every right respect, because wrong in the chiefest way—may such man or woman now be helped of God's grace to say: "As for me, this day, God help me, my life is going to be linked with the will of Christ." May every soul in this presence wrong with God, now say: "As for me, this day I will seek the Lord, and I will follow Him wherever His light and leading shall point the way." Deepen this work of grace profoundly in the hearts of this multitude this midday hour, O thou life-giving Lord, and all through this fair city, may God, by His Divine Spirit, make many a visit to-day, summoning the people in the upward way.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all and each as now you go, to abide with you forever. Amen.

Drifting Away

Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity? —Job 2:10

Imagine relaxing on a rubber raft along the shore, eyes closed, soaking up the sun and listening to the gentle crash of waves. You don't have a care in the world—until you open your eyes! Suddenly the shore is alarmingly distant.

We tend to drift like that spiritually. It's subtle yet shocking when we suddenly realize how far we've drifted from God. The point of departure begins when Satan steals our affection for our loving Creator by putting a deceitful twist on our experiences and causing us to suspect God instead of trust Him.

Consider Job and his wife. Both had plenty of reasons to be mad at God. Their children were dead, their fortune lost, and Job's

health destroyed. His wife told him, "Curse God and die!" But Job replied, "Shall we indeed accept good from God, and . . . not accept adversity?" (Job 2:9-10).

There are many attitudes that can set us adrift: believing that we need more than God to be happy; placing meaningful relationships above loyalty to God; thinking God should live up to our expectations; resisting His reproofs; turning a deaf ear when His Word is uncomfortable.

If you're beginning to drift, remember to stay close to the One who is the sole source of satisfaction.

Lord, help me to stay close to You
And trust You more each day,
So when the storms of life appear
I will not drift away.
—Sper

To avoid drifting away from God,
stay anchored to the Rock.

*The life of this world is not a lake.
It is a river.*

John Piper - Hebrews says that if we do not vigilantly pay closer attention to the Word of God, we will float by—we will drift away from God's Word. We all know people that this has happened to. Some are in this room. Some are reading this sermon. There is no urgency. No vigilance. No focused listening or considering or fixing the eyes on Jesus. And the result has not been a standing still, but a drifting away.

That is the point here: there is no standing still. The life of this world is not a lake. It is a river. And it is flowing downward to destruction. If you do not listen earnestly to Jesus and consider him daily and fix your eyes on him hourly, then you will not stand still, you will go backward. You will float by.

*Drifting is a deadly thing
in the Christian life.*

Drifting is a deadly thing in the Christian life (**ED: SO CLEARLY PIPER SEES THIS AS A WARNING TO PROFESSORS AND POSSESSORS OF CHRIST A PREMISE WITH WHICH I WOULD AGREE**). And the remedy to it, according to Hebrews 2:1, is, "Pay close attention to what you have heard." That is, consider what God is saying in his Son Jesus. Fix your eyes on what God is saying and doing in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. This is not a hard *stroke* to learn so that we can *swim* against the stream of sin and indifference. The only thing that keeps us from swimming like this is our [sinful desire](#) to float with other interests. But let us not complain that God has given us a hard job. Listen, consider, fix the eyes—this is not what you would call a hard job description. It is not a job description. It is a solemn invitation to be satisfied in Jesus so that we do not get lured downstream by deceitful desires. ("lusts of deceit" Eph 4:22+) (Full sermon - [The Danger of Drifting from the Word](#))

The Peril of Drifting By Dr. Melvin Worthington

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 2:1–4

INTRODUCTION: The writer of Hebrews reminds his readers of the danger of neglecting the Word of God.

1. The Reality: Possibility of Drifting. Lot (Gen. 13; 19), Samson (Judg. 13–16), Jonah (Jon. 1), David (2 Sam. 11), and Solomon (1 Kin. 1; 11) serve as examples of individuals who ignored the Word of God.

2. The Ruin: Penalty for Drifting. Drifting results in losing one's values (Gen. 19), vision (Judg. 16), virtues (2 Sam. 11) and vitality (1 Kin. 1; 11).

3. The Road: Process of Drifting. The components that contribute to drifting include ingratitude, inattention, indifference, insensitivity, indulgence, inconsistency, and the influence of one's family, friends, and foes (Matt. 13:1–33).

4. The Remedy—Preventive from Drifting. The remedy includes diligence, discipline, and discernment. We **need** to heed the Word of God, **hold** the Word of God, **honor** the Word of God, and **herald** the Word of God.

CONCLUSION: Today, you must make a decision to be a hearer or a doer of God's Word.

Page, in his book Bringing Many Sons into Glory, says: The danger of drifting is ever present and the spiritual loss involved is very

great. Men do not usually jump off a precipice. They go down a toboggan slide. Suicide may be a slow process as well as a sudden act. The fall of a tree in time of storm is usually preceded by a process of decay covering many years. In spiritual matters indifference, inattention and neglect of scriptures and prayer create a perilous condition. A sudden crisis finds us unprepared and down we go. There is such a thing in legal parlance as criminal negligence. And it entails loss. Loss of liberty, of privilege and of respect. This is also true in the things of the spirit. How shall we escape loss? The loss of spiritual privilege and power, of present blessings and future reward if we neglect so great salvation. How easy it is in life to get off schedule, to have botched-up priorities, to become tired and bored of the mundane sameness of everything. The picture here is a picture of Christians being carried downstream past a landing place, thus missing the goal or destination. It is used in secular literature to mean "slipping away," like a ring slipping off the finger or food going down the wrong pipe. Since the author was obviously familiar with the Old Testament, it is possible that the idea reflected in Proverbs 3:21 might be the concept presented here: My son, don't slip away but keep my counsel and intent.

Illustration on the danger of drifting ...The danger and deceitfulness of slowly drifting is illustrated by the story of the English explorer, William Edward Parry, who took a crew to the Arctic Ocean. They wanted to go farther north to continue their chartings, so they calculated their location by the stars and started a very difficult and treacherous march north. They walked hour upon hour, and finally, totally exhausted, they stopped. Taking their bearings again from the stars, they discovered that they were farther south than they had been when they started. They had been walking on an ice floe that was moving south faster than they were walking north. How many people think their good deeds, their merits, and their religiousness are taking them step by step to God, when in fact they are moving away from Him faster than they are supposedly walking toward Him. That is the tragedy of drifting from what we have heard. They awake one day to find, like Parry's crew, that all the time they have been moving in the wrong direction. A person should never be satisfied with religious feelings, with coming to church, with being married to a Christian spouse, or with church activities. He will be drifting into a hell unless he has made a personal commitment to the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The job of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable.

ILLUSTRATION - In the early part of this century, an American ship was wrecked off the Scilly Isles near the coast of England. The sea had been calm and the weather clear, but the vessel was caught in a treacherous current that slowly lured it off its course. Before the captain and the crew realized what had happened, the ship had crashed into the rocks.

*The compass of God's Word
will keep you from spiritual shipwreck.*

ILLUSTRATION - The picture is a picture of drifting down the NIAGARA RIVER past a point of no return and plunging over the falls to one's demise.

A gentleman standing by Niagara saw an eagle swoop down upon a frozen lamb encased in a floating piece of ice. The eagle stood upon it as it was "drifting" on toward the rapids. Every now and again the eagle would proudly lift his head into the air to look around him, as much as to say: "I am 'drifting' on toward danger, but I know what I am doing; I will fly away and make good my escape before it is too late."

When he neared the falls he stopped and spread his powerful wings and leaped for his flight; but, alas! alas! while he was feasting on that dead carcass his feet had frozen to its fleece. He leaped and shrieked and beat upon the ice with his wing until the ice, frozen lamb and eagle went over the falls and down into the chasm and darkness below.

This is a real picture of every sinner who has begun to do evil, intending to stop before he goes too far. But he is too busy feasting on the carcass of sin until it is too late to repent and turn to Jesus for salvation. And with a fearful cry "TOO LATE" he falls into hell where he will be tormented forever and ever. Read Revelation 14:11, Revelation 20: 10 and Matthew 25:46.

A DRIFT THAT TURNED INTO A RIP - Captain Joseph Hazelwood was not unlike most sea captains of old in his love of brew. It had cost him his driver's license when he was found guilty of driving while intoxicated. But he still retained his license to command a ship--a big ship. On March 24, 1989, under Capt. Hazelwood's command, the Exxon oil tanker Valdez impaled itself on a reef in Prince William Sound, Alaska, ripping a hole in the ship fifteen feet wide. Ten million gallons of Alaskan crude oil gushed out and covered some 2,500 square miles of the ocean. That infamous oil spill exhausted over a billion dollars and thousands of men and women--scrubbing and swabbing rocks and birds on oil-drenched beaches--in a massive cleanup effort. The environment and wildlife in the area are still recovering. It has been impossible to contain the deadly effects of that man-made disaster

DRIFTING - E F Hallock

TEXT: “Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Heb. 2:1).

INTRODUCTION: A Christian is either pressing on toward the goal or drifting in many directions, if we drift, we drift away from Him! And we do drift unless we give earnest attention to the direction of our lives. Our text makes us think of a great ship steaming foot by foot to the wharf to be tied up in safety. But no one ties it up. The engines stop running and the great ship is adrift, making it a peril to all other ships and exposing itself to great harm.

I. Discern the drift.

- A. Mental laziness. Too lazy:
 - 1. To pray.
 - 2. To read the Bible.
 - 3. To be faithful to the church.
- B. Busy-ness.
- C. The “love of money.”
- D. Sex perversion.
- E. Worldliness, as the Bible understands worldliness.

II. Stop the drift.

- A. Pray.
 - 1. For eyes to see.
 - 2. For ears to hear.
 - 3. For a heart to respond.
- B. Read your Bible.
- C. Yield unceasingly to the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION: Give earnest heed to what you hear and have heard. “Forgetting the things that are behind,” press on! (Phil. 3:13).

Drifting Into Danger Hebrews 2:1. - Burris Butler

Introduction

- A. The word drift implies to “let slip.”
- B. Drifting is dangerous.
 - 1. Drifting is always downward.
 - 2. Drifter’s end is destruction.

I. Drifting in Individual Life.

- A. There is the danger of overconfidence.
 - 1. Apostle Paul: “Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.”
 - 2. Peter: Drifting into denial, boasting, drawing sword, following afar off, warming hands at wrong fire, wrong crowd, wrong conversation, cursing.
- B. Tragedy is not arrived at suddenly.
 - 1. Physical—minor symptoms neglected prove to be tuberculosis or cancer.
 - 2. Financial—small losses add up to bankruptcy.
 - 3. Moral—Judas.
- C. There is a danger of drifting in youth.
- D. The farther you drift, the harder it is to come back.
(Not only is the distance greater but the resistance is lower.)

II. Drifting in Home Life.

- A. There is a serious aspect of broken homes.
 - 1. Laws of God broken.
 - 2. Juvenile delinquency.
- B. No home is broken by one big explosion.
 - 1. One little thing leads to another.
 - 2. Problems accumulate.
- C. We need to pull upstream.

III. Drifting in Church Life.

- A. Church history shows 1900 years of drifting with few attempts to pull the oars.
- B. We drift away from the authority of the Word of God and the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- C. Local church is strong or weak according to whether members are content to drift or bend to the oars.

IV. Drifting in National Life.

- A. Our democracy can be carried upstream by the twin oars of religion and morality.
- B. We have neglected the oars.
- C. We are drifting in spite of voices from the past—Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, Rome.
- D. We are drifting in spite of national tragedies within the life time of our own nation.
- E. Our ship of state drifts on.
 - 1. There is plenty of food and liquor aboard; there are smooth decks for dancing feet, plush seats and electrical conveniences.
 - 2. Some prophet says, "We are drifting toward destruction!" We answer, "So what! Throw that old fool overboard!"
- F. We must rise above complacency and smugness.

Conclusion

- A. Nation or church no stronger than individual citizen or member.
- B. Are you content to drift?
- C. This is an hour of decision, a time of high resolve.

Drift - In the 1923 silent movie *Our Hospitality*, comedian and acrobat Buster Keaton performed a daring stunt near a waterfall. A retaining line, called a "holdback" cable, hidden in the water and attached to him, kept him from being carried over the falls.

During filming, the cable broke, and Keaton was swept toward the falls. He managed to grab an overhanging branch, which he clung to until the crew could rescue him. The dramatic scene appears in the finished film.

Drifting into unintended hazards can make for exciting film footage. In real life, however, dangers of this kind are usually marked with warning signs to prevent people from venturing into harm's way.

Similarly, the Bible has provided us with warning signs about drifting from the safety of God's Word. "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away" (Heb. 2:1).

When we don't cling to God's Word through study and reflection, it's easy to drift. Like a swift stream, the attractions of this fallen world draw us toward sin. But as we meditate on Scripture and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance, we learn the reality of our spiritual anchor and are kept secure—even in the dangers of the world's current. --Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Bible stands like a rock undaunted
'Mid the raging storms of time;
Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
And they glow with a light sublime.
--© Renewal 1945 Haldor Lillenas.

*The compass of God's Word
will keep you from spiritual shipwreck.*

Riddle: How can a man drift too far and still be saved?

Read the testimony of a man who drifted too far and yet was saved...

Seven-year-old Roger Woodward along with his seventeen-year-old sister was enjoying a boat ride on the Niagara River. They were guests of a man from Niagara Falls, New York, and were boating above the falls. But when the boat developed motor trouble and capsized, all three were thrown into the river. The man went over the falls and was killed. Roger's sister was plucked from the river about twenty feet from the edge of the falls by two tourists. But Roger went over the falls wearing nothing but his swimming trunks and an orange life preserver.

The "Maid of the Mist" tourist boat was just turning away from the falls when the crew spotted him, floating in the basin. Pulling him from the water, they rushed him to the hospital where he remained three days with a slight concussion and was released.

Thirty years passed and Roger Woodward returned to Niagara Falls to give his testimony at the Glengate Alliance Church. The audience was hushed as he told his miraculous story, the panic he felt as he drifted helpless toward the precipice, the anger he felt because no one on the shoreline could help him, the flashbacks he experienced as he inwardly said goodbye to his parents and his dog and his toys.

He said, "It wasn't the hand of fate [that saved me]. It wasn't the hand of luck. It was the Spirit of the Living God that saved my life that day and saved my sister and gave us hope that one day we could come to know Him." (Morgan, R. J. BORROW [Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes. Page 654](#))

In 1989, Michelle Hamilton, a teacher from Australia, planned a getaway trip for herself and her mother on the small Philippine island of Boracay. The island was a tiny tropical paradise only four miles long and a mile wide. After getting acclimated to her surroundings Michelle rented a small canoe. The little boat, called a bunca, was only about seven feet long (2.13 m.) with outriggers attached to its sides. Michelle, only 22 years old and full vigor and daring, decided to paddle the little canoe to the end of the island. She was having a wonderful day enjoying the lush tropical scenery and listening to her favorite music on headphones.

However, as Michelle began rowing back toward the harbor she realized that she was caught in a very strong ocean current. With a sick feeling in her stomach she began rowing with all her might only to see the harbor and at last the whole island slipping away from her and finally disappearing from sight. Michelle, clad only in a bikini and with almost no provision found herself a captive of the vast Pacific Ocean.

To make bad matters worse, on her first night at sea the bunca was overturned in a terrifying storm and Michelle was left helplessly clinging to the wreckage of her little boat. For three days she drifted some 100 miles (160 km.) as she was battered by the waves, blistered by the sun, parched by thirst and threatened by sharks. At last, through several direct miracles from God, she was rescued by Philippine fishermen. Michelle, who became a believer in Jesus on that harrowing trip, later began a ministry telling others of her Jonah-like experience and of the God who can rescue those who drift away.(F1)

They do not in the least realize how strong are the currents of this present evil age or how swiftly they are being swept away from safety into certain destruction.

Hebrews seems to be a book for our day when people in droves are drifting away from the harbor of true faith into false prophecy, the worship of angels, idols, numerous other spiritual entities and into just plain old sin. They have forgotten the uniqueness of the Son of God. They do not in the least realize how strong are the currents of this present evil age or how swiftly they are being swept away from safety into certain destruction.

In light of this present danger the author of Hebrews gives us the first of five distinct warnings about the way we live our Christian lives and about our inherent tendency to drift. The warnings are found in Hebrews 2:1-4; 3:7 – 4:13; 5:11 – 6:12; 10:19-39 and in 12:14-29. This first warning, said to be the mildest, is still a stern rebuke for us all.

We are challenged to "pay attention" or "give heed" to the things we have heard lest we drift or slip away. The late New Testament Greek scholar, William Barclay, notes that both words used here have a nautical sense dealing with current and tide. The words "to pay attention" (Gk. prosechein) means "to moor a ship," while "drift away" (Gk. pararrein) speaks of a ship allowed to drift due to wind or current.(F2)

In the case of Michelle Hamilton there were many points along the island where she could have easily returned. There were other points after she realized her dangerous position that she could have swallowed her pride and signaled for help from the islanders. She did neither but tried vainly to save herself after it was already too late. (From [Light of Israel](#))

Adrian Rogers - ([Sermon Sail in a New Year](#)) - Now, what I just read to you, whether you realize it or not is a scene from the sea. The writer of Hebrews is using a nautical term. He must have been a mariner because what he is talking about here in this passage of scripture is bringing a ship into the harbor. Notice the word there "giving more earnest heed", do you see it? WE ought to give more earnest heed, do you see that in verse 1? Actually, scholars tell us that he's talking about bringing a ship into a harbor which is a very difficult and sometimes a very dangerous thing. A a a ship never just drifts into the harbor. The most skillful part of being a sea pilot is bringing the ship into the harbor. And, then look if you will, the last part of verse 1, lest at any time we should let them slip. The word "let them slip" literally means drift away, that is, you have to be careful that you enter in the harbor, you don't end up on the rocks and you have to be very very careful as a good sailor that you don't just drift on past the harbor.

Now, what he's talking about here is the danger of drifting, the danger of an aimless life. The worst thing that could happen to us this coming year is that we just drift through it, that we let this year happen to us rather than finding a course and charting a course and getting into God's appointed harbor.

Young people hear me, I want to say to you very clearly as your pastor, you need some goals in life, so the very first thing I want to say to you is you need to determine a fixed direction. Do you have it? Write it down. Say I will determine a fixed direction. Now, it's very important that you do that because drifting is one of the easiest things in the world to do.

Now, what what causes drifting? Well winds cause drifting and current causes drifting and tides cause you to drift and they're the winds of worldliness. They're the tides of circumstance and they're the currents of the old nature and you put these within and you're going to find out that there is a very determined thing in you that causes you to drift. You don't have to decide to drift. You will drift unless you decide not to drift. Unless you have an anchor.

There is in my life and in your life a constant pull away from God. Isn't that true? A constant pull. What's that song we sing brother Jim. Prone to wonder, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. And, just like the pull of gravity is on you right now, causing every muscle in your body to sag, there is the pull of the old nature. There are the winds of circumstance, the currents of carnality that will cause you to drift. Drifting is a determined fact and drifting is a deceptive fact.

If you've ever been in a boat drifting, you'll find out that you can be deceived by drifting very easily. In my home state of Florida, West Palm Beach is three and a half miles from the Gulf Stream. The Gulf stream is a river that runs through the ocean and I fished many a day in the gulf stream. You can go out by boat and get in the Gulf Stream and catch dolphin and mackerel, and if you're fortunate, a sailfish, but many times we have gone out and the fish were biting and no longer were we off the coast of Palm Beach, we were off the coast of Stuart, forty miles north, because we were drifting. No alarms would go off. No bells would sound, no warning is given, drifting is so slow, so silent, and so sure, and I believe that I am speaking today, if this congregation is like most congregations, to a congregation of drifters and many are drifting and the drift in your life is so subtle you don't even know it's happening, but you're getting in perceptibly further and further from God's appointed harbor to you. That's the reason the writer of Hebrews said, we ought to give earnest heed lest we simply drift on by God's appointed harbor. William Perry was an explorer, he explored the Arctic. He made his way to the North Pole. Now, he took his measurements by the stars to see what progress he was making. Day after day after day they journeyed and measured. They were heading north when they took their measurements, they were further south than the day before.

They're moving north and yet they're further south and what was happening was this, they were on an ice flow going north, but the ice flow was drifting south and it was drifting south further or quicker than they were traveling north.

You may be in a society that's traveling south so fast, you think you're traveling north and you're just going with it. We don't realize what is happening to us. The things that we allow in our lives, the entertainment that we may watch, the society that we're in has a pull away and drifting is a very determined thing, drifting is a very deceptive thing, and drifting is always a dangerous thing. You let us shift drift, it's just a matter of time, it's going to end up in trouble. I mean matter of time your going to be on the rocks or on the reefs or on the shoals, or you're going to be lost at sea or you're going to find yourself in a storm or at the very best you're going to fail to reach God's appointed harbor for you. Your soul never drifts toward God. Your soul always drifts away from God and the longer the delay before you correct it, the further the drift.

So the very first thing I want to say to you is this, that you need to determine a direction for your life at the threshold of a new year. Decide on a fixed direction and don't be a spiritual drifter. Do you have any goals? On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, I reviewed the goals for my life. These are things I've written out years ago. I have them, I took them out, I looked at them, I have goals for this church, I have goals for my own life, I have goals for myself physically, I have goals for my self intellectually, I have goals for myself spiritually, I have goals for every member of our family. I have financial goals. I have physical goals. I have spiritual goals. I have them written out. I don't want to be a drifter through life. I look at these. These things help guide me and in my prayer life to help.

Have you ever taken time to write down some spiritual goals, some God given goals to keep you from being a drifter? Now, folks. You need to be a meaningful specific, not a wondering drifting generality. Without goals, you're like a ship without a rudder, a ship without compass, a ship without a sail and a ship without an anchor.

Most people do not plan to fail. They simply do not plan anything. You say, well yes, you ought to have some goals because you're a pastor. Mothers ought to have goals, students ought to have goals, doctors ought to have goals, teachers ought to have goals. Athletes ought to have goals.

How can you tell whether or not your goal is a God-given goal, a worthy goal? May I give you several tests? What I'm trying to say is this, that you must determine a fixed direction.

Number one, is your goal God-given and God-approved? One of the best ways I can tell you that you can find out whether it is God-given and God-approved is this, can you pray over it? Can you ask God to bless it? And, is there joy in your heart as you ask God to bless it?

Number two, does it create in you enough spiritual enthusiasm and excitement necessary to see it fulfilled. Number three, does it demand the very best in you? If it doesn't, it is not a God-given goal. God demands and deserves the very best.

Next, does it touch every area of your life? There is no area of your life that is out-of-bounds that God is not concerned with. And so, you you you just have to have goals. People who have studied, sociologists have found that ninety-five percent of people never have any written goals, but of the five percent that do have written goals, ninety-five percent of that five percent have reached their goals. I think, if there's been any blessing on my life, and there has been a blessing on my life. It was very early in my life in high school that God gave me a direction, that I felt that God had called me into His service and though there have been winds and circumstances that have blown me this way or that way, there has been a determining factor that has overshadowed the rest of it. I don't hold myself up as a paragon of excellence, but I do say this, that I have determined the power of a goal that has kept me from being a drifter.

As a matter of fact, in nineteen fifty three, in Yale University, they found out that three percent of the students at Yale University had written specific goals down. That was in nineteen fifty three. In nineteen seventy-five, they determined that that three percent had achieved more than the other ninety seven percent of the students at Yale put together. They were not drifters. They had goals in their life. Do you have a goal? do you have a vision?

Helen Keller became blind after an early childhood illness. They asked Helen Keller, is there anything worse than being blind? She said, yes, it is to have sight and no vision. Now, the Bible says that that you must be careful that you don't become a drifter that you simply drift through life. I don't want to drift through ninety-four. Decide a fixed direction. That's the first thing. The second thing. Determine a focused discipline.

QUOTES RELATED TO DRIFTING -

Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience withdraws from grace. --Thomas à Kempis

If thou wilt fly from God, the devil will lend thee both spurs and a horse. -Thomas Adams

Withering is a slow process, barely perceptible at first either to one who is being withered or to those who look on. -Donald Grey Barnhouse

It is possible to be diligent in our religion, yet distant in our relationship. -John Blanchard

A declining Christian must needs be a doubting Christian. - William Gurnall

If you find yourself loving any pleasure more than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of the Lord, any table better than the Lord's table, any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven—be alarmed. - Thomas Guthrie

Taking it easy is often the prelude to backsliding. Comfort precedes collapse. -Vance Havner

Collapse in the Christian life is seldom a blowout. It is usually a slow leak. - Paul E. Little

We are all constantly backsliding but for the grace of God. - Dick Lucas

Backsliding is caused by slack abiding. - Ernest Plant

If we know anything of true, saving religion, let us ever beware of the beginnings of backsliding. - J. C. Ryle

It is a miserable thing to be a backslider. Of all unhappy things that can befall a man, I suppose it is the worst. A stranded ship, an eagle with a broken wing, a garden covered with weeds, a harp without strings, a church in ruins—all these are sad sights, but a backslider is a sadder sight still. - J. C. Ryle

It is dangerous to backslide in any degree, for we know not to what may lead. - C. H. Spurgeon

It may be hard going forward, but it is worse going back. - C. H. Spurgeon

