

Pay Attention
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Hebrews 2:1-4

This week's lesson is a warning to followers of Christ that can be summarized with two words: DRIFTING and NEGLECT. Help me brainstorm for a minute: **When you think of drifting away or slipping away, what are some examples in life that come to mind? What about the word neglect? What examples come to mind? (i.e. float on the beach)**

Last week in chapter one the writer of Hebrews told us seven truths about who Jesus is. **Anyone remember some of the things we learned about Jesus?**

Seven Truths About Jesus from Hebrews 1

1. Jesus is heir of all things
2. Jesus was the agent of creation
3. Jesus radiates God's glory
4. Jesus is the exact imprint of God's nature
5. Jesus upholds the universe with the word of His power
6. Jesus made purification for our sins
7. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father in honor and as our advocate

To sum it up: Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King

In chapter two the writer refers back to everything he told us about Jesus. Because Jesus is PREEMINENT, surpassing the prophets and angels, the writer gives a very practical warning.

Hebrews 2:1-4 (ESV)

1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The BIG IDEA of this lesson is verse one: We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, or we might drift away from it.

- Let's do some observation and interpretation. Verse one says: Pay attention lest we drift away from what we've heard. Verse three says: How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation. **Question: Was this warning written to believers or unbelievers?**
- Verse two: The "reliable...message declared by angels" refers back to the law given to Moses.
- **What does verse two say happens if you fall short or disobey the law?**
- These former Jews, now Christians, knew there were consequences if you broke God's law.
- **Sidebar: Anyone know the difference between a transgression and disobedience?**
- Wiersbe: *"transgression" refers to sins of commission, "disobedience" suggests sins of omission.*
- **So, when verse three says "...how shall we escape," escape what?**

- Verse three: Note the word is “neglect” not “reject” such a great salvation. This refers to neglecting something you have already been given. If you believe the gift is GREAT you’d likely NOT neglect it.
- Let’s apply this to our lives. Before I ask this next question let me state my personal doctrinal position. I believe once we are saved, truly saved, we are always saved. Some believe you can lose your salvation by sin. I believe Jesus’ sacrifice is greater than my sin. That said, a question: **What are some ways we might “neglect” or “drift away” from the salvation we’ve been given?**
- Wiersbe: *I have discovered that neglect of the Word of God and prayer, publicly and privately, is the cause of most “spiritual drifting.”*
- **How can we keep ourselves from “drifting,” “slipping away,” or “neglecting” this wonderful salvation?**

So, What’s the Takeaway?

Two ideas: DRIFTING AWAY and NEGLECT

If you pulled up the anchor of a boat and shut down the engine what are the chances it will make it to the destination? If you planted seeds then walked away and left it on its own what are the chances you’ll have the beautiful garden you envisioned?

Bible scholar Don Carson writes:

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. (For the Love of God, Volume 2,)

When a sinner is saved, we are enthused about living for Jesus because of what He’s done for us. But life gets in the way. We get distracted, lazy, we slip. The key to getting to any destination is staying on course. If we don’t want to DRIFT we can’t NEGLECT this GREAT salvation we’ve been given. Verse one sums it up:

Hebrews 2:1 (ESV) Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

This week, let’s don’t drift, slip, or neglect. Let’s PAY ATTENTION to what we’ve heard!

Additional Commentary:

Warren Wiersbe:

God does not sit idly by and permit His children to rebel against Him. He will continue to speak and, when necessary, He chastens His own. (Bible Exposition Commentary)

Ligon Duncan:

When we live and grow up in churches where we are accustomed to hearing the gospel message, all of us get to the point where we tend from time to time to slip into a mode where amazing grace is not amazing any more. In fact, it’s down right boring and routine. It’s expected. And that is a danger for everyone, especially those who grow up and are blessed in

churches where the gospel is preached regularly. You become complacent about the gospel message.

Kent Hughes:

*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. — R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, vol. 1, *Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 48.*

Charles Stanley:

The author addresses his audience as a teacher would address a class of students. The term drift literally refers to something carried away by a current of water or air. But here the author uses it the way a teacher would use the term when referring to a student whose attention had drifted away from the subject matter or an athlete whose dedication to his sport was waning because his attention was drifting toward another pursuit.

*The term drifting implies a slow, gradual process. The author realized that something was competing for his audience's attention. They had the potential of losing interest in the things pertaining to salvation through Christ. Like a teacher who notices a student staring out the window, the author firmly says, "Pay attention!" — Charles F. Stanley, *Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure?* (Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1990).*