Are You Drifting Away?  
Hebrews 2:1-3 (New King James)

1 Therefore we must give more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Hebrews 2:1-3 (NKJV)

PRAYER
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Introduction

Illustration: Two men were fishing one day in a river above the dam near their hometown. The two men were so busy catching fish were unaware their boat had been drifting downstream dangerously close to where the river spilled over the dam.

By the time the men realized the danger they were in, it was too late. The pull of the current was too powerful for them to reverse directions and soon the men went over the dam to their deaths.

What makes this such a terrible tragedy is that it could have been easily avoided had the two men given more earnest heed to their surroundings.

The scriptures teach us that one of the greatest dangers we face in the Christian life is not the danger of persecution but rather the danger of drifting away from the Lord. This is why it is critically important that you and I take a daily, not weekly, not monthly, not yearly, but DAILY assessment of our personal relationship with the LORD JESUS CHRIST!
Many of today’s most popular preachers preach the “Once saved, always saved” doctrine. This doctrine teaches that once one has accepted Jesus Christ, he or she can never become lost no matter how far they drift away from the LORD. If that is true, why is the BIBLE filled with warning after warning about “falling away” from the LORD and admonition after admonition to “remain faithful to the Lord unto death?”

Here are just a few of those scriptures:

Matthew 7:21 ‘Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

Hebrews 6:4-6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

James 2:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

Galatians 5:4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Can anyone please tell me why the LORD would warn us time after time about falling away and remaining faithful unto death if it is NOT possible for one to “fall away?” I know my stand is not a popular one. But I don’t seek the approval of man, but of God. Because one day I will stand before the LORD and give an account of my life and my preaching.

Not only do we find numerous warnings in the scriptures about “drifting or falling away from the LORD”, we also find many examples of people who did. Some drifted away from the LORD for a “season” in their life and repented and came back to the LORD. Others drifted away and never returned.
EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament, we read about..........

**SAMSON**  Being born under a Nazerite vow, God had great things in store for Samson. But Samson had an “Achilles heel” and that was his weakness for the godless Philistine women. The more time Samson spent with the Philistine women, the farther he drifted away from the Lord.

And what a sad scene we see in Judges chapter 16 when Samson pushes down the main support pillars in the Temple of Dagon, killing himself along with over a thousand Philistines.

**KING SOLOMON**  Then there’s King Solomon, the wisest man on earth in his day. Like Samson, the Lord had great things in store for King Solomon. But Solomon, like Samson, had an Achilles heel in that he loved godless women, marrying 700 wives and having 300 concubines. which were basically “second class wives” who worked as servants.

But in Ecclesiastes, we discover that women weren’t Solomon’s only weakness. He was also attracted to money and material things and pleasure. And the more Solomon chased after the things of this world the farther and farther he drifted away from God.

It was not until the very twilight days of his earthly life that he came to his senses and realized that life without God has NO MEANING.

EXAMPLES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, we read about..........

**JUDAS ISCARIOT**  Who outwardly appeared to be such a close follower of Jesus it actually shocked everyone in the Upper Room that night when Jesus revealed Judas as His betrayer. While Judas may have been following Jesus physically, spiritually speaking, his mind, his heart and his spirit had been drifting away from the Lord long before he ever betrayed Jesus.

**In II TIMOTHY 4:10 we read about a man named DEMAS**, who at one time had been one of Paul’s faithful co-laborers in the gospel. But eventually **DEMAS drifted away from the Lord** and went back to worldly living.
In II TIMOTHY 1:18-20 Paul tells us about two men named Hymanaeus and Alexander whose faith was “shipwrecked” to the point they actually blasphemed the Lord they once loved.

In the Gospel of John chapter 6, we read where “many of Jesus’ disciples abandoned him” as his teachings demanded more commitment and sacrifice from them than they were willing to give.

As we consider this serious issue of DRIFTING AWAY from the Lord, there are three things you and I need to know.

First of all,

I. We Need To Know That Any One Of Us Is Capable of Drifting Away

Verse 1  Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

And remember the words of the Apostle Paul in.....

I Corinthians 10:12  Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

1. One of the most deceiving things about “drifting away” from the Lord is the false notion that “It can never happen to me.”

2. Of the twelve apostles, the Apostle Peter was the one who stood out as the leader. Although all the apostles appeared to be loyal to Christ, none seemed more loyal and committed to Jesus than Peter.

Remember Peter’s bold promise to Jesus in Matthew 26? “Even if all are made to stumble (or even if all of these men fall away from you) I will never be made to stumble.” But just as Jesus warned, Before the rooster crowed the very next morning, Peter had denied Jesus three times.
3. Christians, none of us should ever be so presumptuous or self-righteous as to believe we are incapable of ever falling away from the Lord.

    If it happened to Samson or Solomon or David or the Apostle Peter, how could we ever be so over-confident as to believe it could never happen to anyone of us.

    Even the Apostle Paul realized he was not immune from “drifting away” when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:27 ........

        “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.
        (some translations say, “lest I myself should become a castaway.”)

4. Perhaps one of the greatest deterrents to every falling away from the Lord is to constantly be aware that it could happen to any one of us.

5. Jesus warns us in Matthew 24 that before He returns, MANY WILL FALL AWAY FROM THE FAITH.

    That is a warning everyone of us better take seriously!

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Secondly,

II. We Need To Know Some of The Warning Signs of Drifting

1. If it is possible for any one of us to start “drifting away” from the Lord, we certainly need to know the WARNING SIGNS to look for don’t we?

2. You see when one starts to “drift away” from the Lord, there are NO BELLS.....NO WHISTLES and NOALARMS. There is no sudden jolt to let us know we are drifting.

3. As a matter-of-fact, one of the biggest reasons why “spiritual drifting” poses such a danger to us is because it is so EASY! It requires no effort or energy! All one has to do to start drifting away from the LORD is simply relax and stop putting forth any kind of effort to grow and mature in one’s walk with the LORD.
4. Here are a few “warning signs” to watch for

1. The loss of desire to read and study your Bible
2. The loss of desire to spend time in prayer.
3. Growing lax in one’s Church attendance.
4. The presence of secret or habitual sin in one’s life.
5. The loss of spiritual joy and enthusiasm
6. An increase in one’s appetite for money and material things.
7. The presence of bitterness, resentment, hatred or un-forgiveness in one’s heart.
8. Doubts about one’s salvation.
9. A loss of love and passion for the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

These are some critical areas of our spiritual lives that require each and every one of us to do some serious soul-searching.

Which brings us to the third thing we need to know and that is......

III. We Need To Know How To Stop Drifting Away

1. In our text the Hebrew writer tells us in verse 1 what we need to do to PREVENT spiritual drifting or how to stop it if we have started.

   Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.
Illustration: Luther’s 95 Theses

On October 31, 1517, MARTIN LUTHER nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the Church door at Wittenburg, Germany. In those 95 Theses, Luther pointed out the many ways the Catholic Church had “drifted away” from the word of God.

Luther wrote the original copy of those 95 Theses in Latin, meaning only the Church officers could read it. But shortly afterward, several printers translated Luther’s document into the German language and began widely circulating it among the common German people.

This bold action on the part of Martin Luther ignited what became known as The Protestant Reformation, which saw multitudes of people who had drifted away from the LORD, repent and come back to him.

2. This is exactly what the Hebrew writer is admonishing us to do to keep us from “drifting away” from the LORD! We must “give more earnest heed to the things we have heard.”

3. The best way to prevent “drifting away” is to STAY in the WORD. The best way to stop “drifting away” is to GET BACK INTO THE WORD!

David wrote in Psalm 119:11…….

Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

JESUS said in Matthew 7:24,25…….

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”

4. To put it simply: WHEN YOU SENSE YOU ARE STARTING TO DRIFT IN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE…….GO BACK AND READ THE INSTRUCTIONS! GET BACK INTO THE WORD OF GOD!
CONCLUSION

When I was growing up there was a man in my home church in Indiana by the name of O.D. Scott. O.D. and his wife, Irene and daughter, Rhonda, were faithful every time the church doors were open. Even though O.D. was a dairy farmer and had to get up at 4:30 every morning to milk his cows, he never let that keep him out of Church.

After a number of years, O.D. decided to sell his cows and get out of the dairy business. He opened up a SUZUKI MOTORCYCLE SHOP in nearby Lebanon, IN. O.D. put in some long hours every Monday through Saturday, but always closed up on Sundays.

After a year, O.D.’s business was booming! As time went on he started opening his motorcycle business on Sundays and O.D. started missing church more and more.

Before long, the motorcycle business completely took over O.D.’s life and he stopped going to church altogether. He had “drifted away” from the Lord.

Back in November of 2006, I was back at my home church to hold a revival meeting. And I was pleasantly surprised when I saw O.D. and Irene Scott walk in on Sunday morning. As a matter-of-fact, they were there every single service during the revival meeting.

I am grateful to God that O.D. came to realize that he had drifted away from the Lord and realized he needed to turn his life around and go back to his loving, forgiving heavenly Father.

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I believe with all my heart we must be ready for THE LORD’S RETURN at any moment. And I also believe with all my heart that a lot of people who claim to be Christians are NOT READY for the LORD’S RETURN!

Brothers and sisters, if you are just “drifting along” in your spiritual life, its time to look up and realize your redemption is drawing near!