

Beware of Spiritual Drifting

(Sabbath During Unleavened Bread)

Norbert Bohnert—April 8, 2023

Greetings, brethren, and a happy Sabbath to all of you from the great white north: Canada!

As we are now past the observance of another Passover and are in the middle of the days of Unleavened Bread.

I want to relate something that these days play in our continuing journey and walk with God. We've had the opportunity to put out sin for another year. The Passover made us look introspectively and refocus and rededicate our lives toward God.

Jesus Christ and His way of life during the days of Unleavened Bread we eat unleavened bread to symbolize the removal of sin in our lives, which we do for seven days.

When Israel left Egypt, they too had an opportunity to remove themselves from sin. Israel saw God perform many miracles right before their very eyes. There were quite a few:

- the river turning into blood
- the frogs
- the boils
- the darkness for three days
- the death of the firstborn
- the parting of the Red Sea

There are many others that could be mentioned. It must have been an awe-inspiring event to see God perform all these miracles to get Israel out of Egypt and to begin the process of bringing them into the 'promised land.'

In some ways God is performing a similar type of miracle with us, to get us out of spiritual Egypt! Despite all the miracles that God had performed for Israel in a matter of days, Israel unfortunately had lost its focus. They started drifting and walking astray. They wandered around for the next 40 years.

Just imagine if Moses had had a GPS. He's looking down at his GPS and it's saying: *arriving in 40 years!* That can't be right! And every time Moses took a wrong turn, the GPS would say: *re-calculating, re-calculating!*

Spiritual drifting is not a laughing matter! It is a very serious matter that we must be careful of in our spiritual walk with God. It's like a person on a big body of water in an inflatable, and they fall asleep on that inflatable. Before they know it, they wake up and find they need to be rescued as they

have drifted away off track, not aware of where they actually are.

Israel also had a long and arduous journey to the 'promised land.' Israel's struggles give us many, many lessons to learn from. What about us? Each one of us, the called out ones by God the Father:

- Are we walking around aimlessly in this virtual desert?
- Are we astray?
- Are we lost?
- Are we drifting?

Beware of the spiritual drifting!

These are all questions we must ask ourselves, and be very carefully assessing especially just after going over and through the Passover ceremony and the days of Unleavened Bread.

Hebrew 2:1: "For this reason, it is imperative that we **give much greater attention to the things, which we have heard**, lest at any time we should slip away. For if the word spoken by angels was *enforced* without fail, and every transgression and disobedience received just recompense, how shall we escape, *if we* have neglected so great a salvation; which was first received when it was spoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*" (vs 1-3).

Paul—who is writing in this book of Hebrews—was a very well-traveled man. He had been in many places, traveling west as far as Rome, and some historians even claim that he possibly even reached Spain.

Paul was also very familiar with ships, in fact he was involved in a shipwreck (Acts 27). It's interesting to know that Paul used the word 'drift,' *which is a nautical term to make a point about losing focus and pulling away from God!* Just like a ship breaking away from its moorings.

Let us cover some very interesting things about spiritual drifting.

- no one drifts to where it's Holy
- no one tends to drift toward God

Just like no one drifts upstream! It's usually the other way around!

The reason for this, of course, is that human nature is naturally opposed to the Laws of God.

People tend to drift away from God by their own very human nature.

If you add all the pulls of the society and the influence of Satan, we are almost guaranteed to drift away from God. If we don't realize and really make an effort and being willing to be alert to any signs of beginning to spiritually drift away!

In addition, spiritual drifting is a slow and subtle process. It's a long drawn out process. Most people don't wake up and say:

- today I'll turn my back on God
- I will quit going to Church
- I will start doing anything I want

Even if it violates the Laws of God!

That is not something that we naturally do, so we must be aware and not let our mind drift. Rather, be stirred up by the Holy Spirit that's working within us to bring us out of such tendencies! People generally don't quit on God overnight. Spiritual drifting is a slow, subtle process that can take weeks, months and even years to develop. Drifting is something that has been brewing over a very long time in our lives; that is our *spiritual lives!*

The word *sin* in the Greek is 'hamartia,' which literally means *missing the mark!* Similar to throwing a spear or javelin and missing the mark, missing the target.

What's interesting to know is that missing the mark doesn't mean deliberately aiming in the wrong direction. The assumption here is that people are aiming in a general direction and we're simply missing the target.

Sin can also be translated as a *slip* or a *fall*, or a *wandering away from the path*, which is drifting! Nobody wanders off and becomes lost in the wilderness on purpose. Or you would hope not.

What are the things that can cause us to drift spiritually? I would like to cover seven things that may cause and most likely are the cause of one drifting spiritually.

1. Work

- Is our job the main focus in our lives?
- Is our work distracting us from establishing a relationship between God and ourselves?
- Is that happening?
- Does that get in the way of our lives?

We must assess all these things and ask these important questions of ourselves. Many times we don't see that as a cause of us drifting. But more often than not it is a good cause of us drifting away.

We put a wedge between ourselves and God. There are many times that we make reference to 'workaholics' and they are chasing the wrong type of success.

What people forget sometimes is that careers basically are temporary. We should be striving for something much greater and much more permanent in our lives, that occurs in our lifetime as our work is only temporary.

2. Relationships

- Are we choosing our friends wisely?
- Are you involved in a relationship, including romantic ones at times that cause you to possibly drift away spiritually?

Divorce is a main culprit and results in a non-existent relationship. The rates of divorce are forever increasing. You see it in the world, and unfortunately it has also occurred in the Church.

Most people do not like to gamble, but when it comes to relationships, people often take lots of risks. So, you must ask the question:

- Can two people walk together if they disagree?
- Can two people walk together if they spiritually disagree?

Questions that each one of us must ask ourselves!
That is what you must determine prior to getting involved in a relationship that may cause you to:

- lose sight of your main objectives and goals in life
- lose sight of the journey that you're on
- lose sight of the mission that we have been called to do

Bad relationships, or misunderstanding can easily lead to distracting factors and get us into the drifting mode. Taking our eyes and focus off the purpose and the mission that we are all striving to complete.

3. Money

Money is the source of many evil things. It is so easy to drift spiritually when you're chasing money and material possessions.

One thing we know is that we cannot serve God and mammon at the same time. The opposite can also be true. Having a lack of wealth or money

and the stress of not having enough money can also make us drift spiritually.

Money or the lack of money can become a constant force that we lose faith in God and overlook the gifts and blessings that God has actually provided for us.

4. Fear and Discouragement

Many people are chronically fearful and are easily discouraged. Disillusionment that follows a set back leads, of course to frustration and ultimately defeat and failure. What people sometimes forget is that everyone faces trials to different degrees at different times and circumstances.

Everyone is flawed in some way or another. We are far from perfect, and we all know that. We sometimes forget that God is always there to help us, even if we don't think He is.

5. The "I" Complex

- Are you too focused on yourself? *Valid question!*
- Are we focused on ourselves more than God and His Plan?

We live in a very egotistical and narcissistic world. It's time that some of us have struggled to let go of our egos! We need to let go! This is not all about us, ourselves personally. Instead, we should be focusing all our attention on God, His Plan, and His purpose for calling us out of this world for a job to do.

6. Addiction

When you are disconnected from God, it is easy to be enslaved in many addictions. The world is full of addictions. You can be addicted to practically anything! It's not all about gambling, which comes first to mind; alcohol or drugs. There are also many other destructive behaviors that a person can become addicted to: social media, internet, hobbies, material possessions, sports and politics.

All these addictions can lead us to a path of totally disconnecting ourselves from God and the purpose that we are all here for.

7. Underestimating our Real Enemy

This is the ultimate most destructive one that we have to consider. I know that you know whom I'm referencing. We sometimes forget that our main and real enemy out in this world today is Satan the devil.

We are always battling him as he is present all around us. Wherever we are in the world today, he's there! ***Satan is the #1 force that causes us to drift spiritually!***

It closes us apart from our relationship with God, and will go to extremes to do that without us even being aware of what's happening.

- we must be careful
- we must be alert
- we must be contentious toward this happening to us

We cannot let this happen; we cannot let Satan overtake us in the various devious ways that he can! He is a sneaky being, and works in mischievous and bad ways. We cannot give him an inch!

Instead, of course, we know what the answer is: ***We have to stay close to God!*** With Satan all around us as being our enemy, that can really affect us in drifting away from God.

Hebrew 2:3: "How shall we escape, *if we* have neglected so great a salvation; which was first received when it was spoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*"

Spiritual drifting is usually a result neglecting our personal priorities and principles in life. Whether it is

- a diminishing desire to study God's Word
- a diminishing desire to fellowship
- a diminishing desire to pray, fast, meditate

Those are all causes to cause spiritual drifting!

Now that we have covered the seven major points that can cause us to drift spiritually, let us focus our attention on how to prevent spiritual drifting from occurring. How do we personally, each one of us, prevent us from drifting spiritually?

What we need to do is get a spiritual reference point in our lives. That's the #1 thing we should do.

1) Get a spiritual reference point in our lives

When we enter the sea, as an example, we're no longer secured to the ground; we're subject to the tide, the currents and the ebb and flow of the ocean.

It's like life when we enter this world, we are easily swayed and influenced by the currents of life. The influences of this world are strong and often can be destructive. Without a solid reference point in our lives we are basically spiritually lost.

When we are not paying attention, it will be nearly impossible for us to tell if we are actually drifting away from God. The only way we can tell if we are drifting is to have some kind of reference point established.

If we are close enough to the shore, of course, we can use a landmark as a reference point of knowing where we are. Whether it be a house, tree or particular rock or landmark of some type. That reference point can tell us exactly where we are and where we need to be, and how to get to our ultimate destination.

Just as ships use lighthouses for directions, and ancient mariners used the stars for navigation. We, too, need a reference point in our lives.

Psalm 23:1: “The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (vs 1-6).

Here we find the answer as to what our reference point should be. That, of course, is very simply God and His Word! That is the reference point that we should use to establish and go back to in everything we do, think and say.

2) How do we deal with spiritual drifting? We need a spiritual anchor in our life!

1-Peter 5:6: “Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time; casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you. Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world. Now, may the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after *you* have suffered a little while, **Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**” (vs 6-10).

That is the fundamental, spiritual anchor of our life!

Hebrews 6:19: “Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil.”

In conclusion, when Israel left Egypt, they were given an opportunity to reach the ‘promised land.’ As God’s people we have been promised something much greater. We were promised something that is much more permanent.

- let’s not lose our focus
- let’s not drift!

Let’s direct our lives toward obedience! Toward that anchor in our life! Let’s follow Christ and He will be there to direct our path!

Let’s stay grounded in our belief and remain solid, totally wanting always to go back to that reference point. That Anchor; that of Jesus Christ being there always for us.

- let us stay faithful, not faltering or doubting
- let’s stay firm and let us not drift away
- let’s live a purposeful life, because God is counting on each one of us

We are promised a great salvation! What a blessing! Even after this most important reflective time that we have observed, the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread.

- stay vigilant
- stay diligent
- remain on track
- serve God and follow His ways

As having been honored and blessed with by His calling!

Let’s us stay on course spiritually and avoid the possibility of drifting from occurring. Let us reach out to God for:

- His guidance
- His direction
- His instruction

in seeking a straight and narrow path toward our eternal reward that is awaiting all of us!

That is what we should be striving for in our lives! We cannot let ourselves drift away spiritually! Rather, stay on the course and navigate our way on this journey using God’s Word as our navigation instrument in life, ***leading us always on the straight and narrow to the ultimate destination waiting for us!***

Have a wonderful Sabbath Day and may God bless you all!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 2:1-3
- 2) Psalm 23:1-6
- 3) 1 Peter 5:6-10
- 4) Hebrews 6:19

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Acts 27

NB:bo
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