1 – **Following At A Distance**

Matthew 26:31-35; Luke 22:54-62

2 - **Peter’s Claim… Peter’s Actions**

* Jesus told His apostles, ***“You will all fall away…”.* (Matt. 26:31)**
* **Peter replied; *“I will never fall away…even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You”*** - (Matthew 26:33-35)
* He was ready to go… ***“right now”***. (John 13:36-37)
* In reality… *“And having arrested Him, they led Him away… but* ***Peter followed at a distance****.”* (Luke 22:54)
* Note Peter is now **associating with unbelievers**. (Matt. 26:58; cf., 1 Corinthians 15:33)

3 - **Others Who Kept Their Distance**

* **Adam & Eve -** (Genesis 3:8)
* **Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus** – (John 19:38-39)
* **Jonah** – (Jonah 1:3)
* **David** – (2 Samuel 6:8-10)
* **The “older brother”** – (Luke 15:25-28)
* **All the disciples** – (Matthew 26:56)

4 - **Our Responsibility**

* **Not through words but actions -** (Isaiah 29:13)
* If there’s a distance between us and God… **who moved?**
* **Beware of drifting** – (Hebrews 2:1)
* **Examine our self** – (2 Corinthians 13:5)
* God wants us nearer. (James 4:8;
* **What else are we distancing ourselves from that may be impacting how close we are to God**?

5 - **Distancing Ourselves From God’s Word**

* **Are we as close as we should be?**
* **How full are we?** (Colossians 3:16; 1:9)
* **How nourished are we**? (1 Timothy 4:6; 1 Peter 2:2)
* **What’s separating us from His word?** (Hebrews 12:1)
* **Worried and bothered** about so many things? (Luke 10:41-42)
* **It’s a time thing**… (Ephesians 5:15)
* **Application**?

6 - **Distancing Ourselves From God’s Word**

**Application**?

* Do you set aside the time and do you know what you’re going to study?
* Do you take advantage of public bible studies? (Acts 20:20)
* Do you understand the need to be be “*constantly nourished on the words of the faith*”? (1 Tim. 4:6)
* Are we “*searching the scriptures daily*” (Acts 17:11)

7 - **Distancing Ourselves From Prayer**

* **Communication is critical in relationships**
* **No elaboration needed** – (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
* **It’s a matter of devotion** … (Colossians 4:2)
* **Do we make the time**? (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16)
* What a shame when we need God’s help the most. (Matthew 26:41; 2 Kings 20:3)

8 - **Distancing Ourselves From Our Brethren**

* **Keeping from our brethren is to distance ourselves from God**
* **Our relationships with each other matter**. (Eccles. 4:9-12)
* We’re to be **dependent on one another** – (Ephesians 2:20-21; Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 2:2)
* We’re here to help encourage/”***provoke***” one another to draw near – (Hebrews 10:24)
* To those who’ve **sinned and repented**. (2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

9 - **Distancing ourselves from those we need to serve**

* Do we **steer clear of opportunities to serve others**? (Luke 10:30-37; Matthew 20:28)
* **When did we have the opportunity**? (Matthew 25:37)
* **What about those who aren’t like us**? (James 2:1-5; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9)

10 - **Distancing Ourselves From The Lost**

* Granted, **our closest relationships are not to be with those who walk in darkness**… (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)
* But are we distancing ourselves from **those who so desperately need the light of the gospel**? (Luke 19:10; 18:13)
* Jesus was criticized for **not keeping enough distance**. (Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 7:36-39)
* Are there **some we deem unworthy**? (Acts 10:34-35;   
  James 2:1-5; Jonah)

11 - **The Need To Draw Near**

**How do we draw near?**

* **Seek God with all our heart**. **(2 Chron. 15:2; Jer. 29:13;   
  Isaiah 29:13)**
* **God must come first, and our brethren next… how so?**(Luke 10:27; Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:10; Colossians 4:6)
* **Must have a humble heart**. (James 4:6-10; Matt. 11:28-30)
* **Deny Self** (Matthew 16:24; Titus 2:12)
* **Resist the Devil** (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8)

12 - **The Need To Draw Near**

**How do we draw near? By drawing near to….**

1. **God’s word**
2. **Prayer**
3. **Our brethren**
4. **Those we need to serve**
5. **The lost who need to be taught**

**By seeking God’s forgiveness. (Isaiah 59:1-2; Hebrews 10:19-22; James 4:8-9; Revelation 3:20)**