

Weary of Wandering From My God  
Psalm 51  
Charles Wesley

Intro:

Have you ever been lost and were too stubborn to ask for directions??

Have you ever been to a big mall or amusement park, pre-cell phone days and got separated from friends? You just walked and wondered around for hours hoping to run into them or find them somewhere.

Have you ever just been lost in a big city? EX: Brian and I in Paris – Getting lost in Paris with a friend is not a bad deal.

EX: Age 13, helping my brother Bo move and we got in what seemed like an endless loop on I-285. Again, not a bad deal when you're 13 and you get to be with your older brother, having a good time.

HOWEVER if you're in a dangerous part of a big city at night, or in the woods, in a cave, or out on a big lake, THEN being lost and wandering around can be scary.

But the scariest and most tiring of all is when we are wandering from God.

One author described spiritual wandering as being like holding on to two horses going in two directions.

It's like living two lives – remember Mrs. Doubtfire. It was tiring just watching Robin Williams switch from one persona to another. How many live that way in their spiritual lives?

The hymn for today speaks of this weariness from wandering from God.

This story is told about that hymn...

The Chaplain of Glasgow prison once found a young woman eighteen or nineteen standing in her cell with her hymn-book in her hand.

'She looked up, and, holding it out, said to me, "This is a hymn which I'm much ta'en up wi'."

I read the first two lines, and found my eyes filling with tears as I looked at her and said, "Are you weary of wandering from your God?"

The answer was "Yes, indeed I am." Thereupon I had the great privilege of dealing with an anxious soul.

If anyone here is weary of wandering from God, then give ear to the words of this hymn and Psalm 51 which also reflects a wandering soul who is returning to God – King David.

READ PSALM 51:10-17 – no slides

This is not the only Psalm that speaks to this, and spiritual wandering is quite common for believers, at various points and in varying degrees, in their lives.

It may happen as a result of spiritual laziness or following difficult trials and temptations. It may even happen after times of spiritual "victory".

Without using the phrase "weary of wandering" the WCF describes the reality of it in chapter 17.

**WCF 17 of the Perseverance of the Saints**

**Nevertheless they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their perseverance, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit; come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts**

hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.

While a true believer may be wandering “for a time”, it is a serious matter for his or her soul. It is in such a time that one is most likely to bring hurt and scandal to oneself or to others. Here’s the tricky thing: One can be wandering spiritually on the inside while keeping up appearances on the outside.

Whether we’ve been there, are there, or know people who are there it’s not always obvious when it is happening. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn’t.

#### INDICATORS OF SPIRITUAL WANDERING

EX: DRIFTING IN THE OCEAN - it happens without noticing it.

SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL DRIFTING

#### 1. Spiritually laziness 2 Timothy 2:3-5

WE overestimate our own spiritual vitality and capacity to handle things on our own, and we underestimate the reality of the spiritual decline in the soul when we ignore the means of grace. Remember, there is no spiritual cruise control.

I’m a preacher/ pastor so I’ll just go ahead and say it...

When you forsake the assembling together with other believers you’ve started wandering from God’s design.

That is not a popular idea is the age of “I love God and Jesus, I just don’t really dig the church. “ The church was God’s idea and it is front and center to His plan and purpose in the world. So, it’s hard to love and pursue God when we dismiss what is central to His heart.

You and I can get along pretty well, unless you tell me you don’t like my wife – my bride.

Don’t think that you’re all good with Jesus if you reject his bride- the church.

#### 2. Lack of goals or vision of what the Christian life should be

There is no pursuit of a life lived before the face of God and for His glory.

#### 3. The result of #1 and 2 is Spiritual restlessness

4. Self pity - navel gazing and being absorbed with Self

5. Pride- in various forms

6. Murmuring & grumbling- This is to attack God and His sovereign control.

This is the opposite of a life of gratitude and praise. We tend to believe that the world revolves around us.

#### 7. Impurity / Greed

Both are indications that we are thinking of self and are willing to do harm to others.

8. Can’t tolerate criticism and correction - Prov. 9:7-10; 12:1 28:23;

What is your attitude towards authority, towards rules in general?

9. Bitter, angry, negative attitude. Prov 29:11, 20-23

reflects a heart that is NOT softened by the love and grace of Christ.

When we see these signs and symptoms we are probably heading toward spiritual wandering, whether we know it or not. When we become Weary of Wandering, there is Good News...

Author: Charles Wesley [https://hymnary.org/text/weary\\_of\\_wandering\\_from\\_my\\_god](https://hymnary.org/text/weary_of_wandering_from_my_god)

Charles Wesley, M.A. was the great hymn-writer of the Wesley family, perhaps, taking quantity (600+) and quality into consideration, the great hymn-writer of all ages. Charles Wesley was the youngest son and 18th child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, and was born at Epworth Rectory, Dec. 18, 1707.

READ TOGETHER

Weary of wandering from my God, And now made willing to return

I hear and bow me to the rod For thee, not without hope, I mourn:  
I have an Advocate above, A Friend before the throne of love.

The first step is to be weary of wandering and now made willing to return.

#### HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN?

God gives us enough room to hit bottom so that we'll see our need for Him. Until we are weary of wandering, we'll continue to wander. Often, God's rescue mission includes letting us get tired of wandering, and then He is there to sustain us.

The cure to wandering is bowing to "the rod" – the loving discipline of God – it may be put in the hands of the church. That is counter cultural.

EX: Pastor who left wife, married woman he had an affair with; ignored the presbytery and wandered for a season. He became miserable and the thought came to him, "I'll never be happy again until I embrace the discipline of the church." He knew that thought was from God because it is so counter-intuitive to our normal inclination.

Restoration came in his life when he engaged with a church body and they brought the gospel to his heart.

REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE AN ADVOCATE 1 Jn 2– Jesus Himself is your friend before the throne of Love. It is not a throne of condemnation for the believer. When we're wandering, we need others in our lives to remind us of the advocate.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*.

Have you ever needed a lawyer? You want the best one you can afford. How about Jesus as your lawyer? He's better than Perry Mason or Matlock or the lawyers from Suits, The Good Wife, The Practice, Better Call Saul or Johnny Cochran.

When he pleads our case, we know that we'll be free from condemnation because He paid the penalty for us.

Rather than accuse us, Jesus died for us and now intercedes for us.

#### READ TOGETHER

O Jesus, full of truth and grace More full of grace than I of sin  
Yet once again I seek Thy face: Open Thine arms and take me in  
And freely my backslidings heal and love the faithless sinner still.

No matter how deep in the power of sin we have sunk in the rebelliousness of our lives, in Christ grace abounded all the more in order that righteousness, rather than sin (and life, rather than death) might have the final word (Romans 5:20-21). Luther writes,

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/where-sin-increased-grace-overflowed> Ryan Griffith

*The Law is a mirror to show a person what he is like, a sinner who is guilty of death, and worthy of everlasting punishment. What is this bruising and beating by the hand of the Law to accomplish? This - that we may find the way to grace. The Law is an usher to lead the way to grace. God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the afflicted. . . . When the Law drives you to the point of despair, let it drive you a little farther, let it drive you straight into the arms of Jesus who says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Luther's commentary on the parallel passage, Galatians 3:19, pages 129-130)*

God LOVES THE FAITHLESS SINNER STILL. We have trouble believing that. We'll proclaim it to the lost, but as wandering believers, we forget it.  
Stop and let Rom 8:31ff sink in

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

#### READ TOGETHER

The stone to flesh again convert, The veil of sin again remove;  
Sprinkle Thy blood upon my heart, And melt it by Thy dying love;  
This rebel heart by love subdue, And make it soft, and make it new.

This echoes the words of the OT prophet Ezekiel (ch 11; 36) where God speaks about turning the hearts of stone to hearts of flesh, after a time in which they wandered from God and experienced the painful consequences of their sin.

It is the love of God that melts our hearts. HOW DO YOU BEND STEEL??? You must melt it. So too our hearts must be heated and melted by God's love. Where do we find His love?

We tend to look in the wrong places for the evidence of it – circumstances – we need to look at the cross – Stott – “The cross is the blazing fire at which the flame of our love is kindled, but we have to get near enough for its sparks to fall on us. “

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1:17-18

The heart is subdued by love, not by scolding. You can't nag a child or a spouse into real change, nor can you or anyone else nag your own heart into change. Change happens overtime and there are various influences, but one of them involves cultivating our appetite for God through the Word.

Thomas Brooks- Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Remember, it is not hasty reading—but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths, that make them prove sweet and profitable to the soul.

Take time to memorize and meditate on God's word, asking the Holy Spirit to “sprinkle the blood of Christ on your heart” and melt it by His dying love.

Dickens' – Tale of Two Cities – Sidney Carton and Charles Darney love the same woman – she marries Charles who is later arrested and is to die. Carton offers to take his place ( they look alike) but Darney refuses and Carton knocks him out cold and takes his clothes and his place. Carton takes the death; a young woman also condemned in prison comes and sees it is not Darney; she says,

“Are you dying for him?”

“Yes, and for his wife and children. “

“Stranger, can I hold your hand, because if someone as brave and as loving as you holds my hand I can face death.”

He wasn't even dying for her but his act gave her strength; how much more will the death of Christ change you if you let it. To the degree you understand the holiness and love of God it will create a restructuring of your heart and draw you to God.

#### READ TOGETHER

**My fallen spirit to restore Forgive, and bid me sin no more:  
The ruins of my soul repair And make my heart a house of prayer.**

The evidence that a soul is Weary of Wandering is that it seeks to become a house of prayer.  
Ps 51:10-13 – Restore to me the joy of my salvation.

You can have the appearance of being on the right path with God, yet be wandering.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW? There is a lack of prayer. There may be external obedience, or at least avoiding the obvious “neon sign” kinds of sin; there may be participation in church, small group, service activities, VBS, etc BUT IF THERE IS A LACK OF PRAYER, then it is quite likely that your heart is wandering.

Calvin- "Prayer is the chief exercise of faith by which we daily receive God's benefits."

"We dig up by prayer the treasures that were pointed out by the Lord's gospel, and which our faith has gazed upon."

Imagine walking over a field where vast treasure lies buried. To make these riches your own, you need two things: a map and a shovel. Scripture is your map, and prayer is your shovel.

I find this picture helpful because it delivers prayers from the cold world of law and discipline and brings it into the realm of the gospel and promise, where it belongs. **Prayer is more than a duty to be fulfilled; it is a gift to be enjoyed.** There is a world of difference between 'having your quiet time' as a spiritual discipline and drawing near to God to possess what He promises to you in Christ.

Remember the Chaplain in the Glasgow prison?...The story continues...

'Next Sunday we not only sang the hymn Weary of Wandering, but I preached specially to weary wanderers. The following day an old man grasped my hand as I entered his cell, and in an earnest and solemn voice said, "When the great day comes there will be found a soul among the redeemed, brought there through that hymn we sang yesterday, for, "when you read out, 'Weary of wandering from my God,' I said, 'That's me. I'm weary, and I'm ready to return,' and," he added, "come back to my God I have."'

Are there any weary wanderers here today?

**Seek God's face, and He will open His arms and take you in.**

**The ABC's of coming to faith –**

**A - Admit that you're weak and need grace and strength – That means there is GOOD NEWS FOR YOU**

**B- Believe that Jesus is the only savior who can heal your heart.**

**C- confess to God that you want to trust Jesus as your savior and Lord.**

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