



Anchored: Hope for the Soul

Featuring
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Session 1: All Aboard

→ ***Session 2: Clear the Deck***

Session 3: Man Overboard

Session 4: Hoist the Mainsail

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Do you remember the pirate, Captain Kidd? Upon crashing into another seagoing vessel he'd call out to his crew, "Clear the deck. Prepare for an encounter." They would scurry about and throw objects overboard that weighed them down. Likewise, we have excess baggage that keeps us from finding the treasure of God's best. In this lesson, we'll glean from one of the Father's richest underwater secrets to living an anchored life. You'll be surprised by its worth in gold.

1. Consider all the activities, tasks, and commitments in your day. What distractions keep you from pursuing quiet time with God?

2. Examine your list above. To what degree do those captivate your attention and anchor your thoughts to chaos, worry, or fear?

I can easily avoid distractions that threaten to anchor me to something other than God's best.



Daily distractions often cause me to drop my emotional anchor in a sea of chaos and uncertainty, where I neglect time in God's Word.

We face many distractions. Between the demands of managing children, a household, and the responsibilities that come with our jobs, it seems there is little time margin for anything extra. If we don't guard our boundaries well, the "urgent" threatens to overtake the "important," which leaves us chasing diversions rather than focusing on our priorities.

Our spiritual life is sure to be shipwrecked when we take our eyes off of God's best. Only time spent in His presence anchors us to what is important. Read the passage of two sisters in the Bible. The familiar story illustrates our need to drop our anchor at the feet of Jesus and leave other distractions behind.

3. Read **Luke 10:38-42**. Identify how each woman behaved as Jesus visited their home.

Mary:

Martha:

Luke 10:38-42 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,⁴² but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

4. How did Jesus respond to Martha in **verse 41-42**?

5. What are the "many things" Martha may have been anxious about?

It's likely you've read that passage or heard the story several times. Mary sat with Jesus, while her sister was distracted about preparations that had to be made. Jesus calls her out by saying she is anxious and troubled about many things. Are we any different?

Long before we plan to meet with Jesus in the quiet of our morning, we're worried, anxious, and distracted by many circumstances. Breakfast, getting kids ready for school, starting the laundry, completing the last-minute finishes on a project for work, and the list goes on. Those things are not bad. They're necessary tasks and responsibilities. The problem arises when we allow these to contaminate our spiritual health by eroding the time we've planned to spend with Jesus.

We've heard teachings about how we need to have a "Mary attitude in a Martha world." If you're created with a task-oriented personality, this story can make you quite uncomfortable and maybe even produce some guilt. The point of this passage isn't to shame women who are wired to serve or give attention to hospitable details. It serves to gently remind us to protect our priorities and be present in His presence.

6. Read **1 John 4:10** and **John 3:16**. How do these verses and the passage from **Luke 10:38-42** above confirm that God desires a relationship with us?

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We know He desires a relationship with us because He sacrificed everything to make it possible. Jesus gave everything so you and I might have an eternal relationship with Him.

Psalm 46:10 calls to us, "Be still and know that I am God." Being still is difficult for moms, isn't it? Even if we've managed to break free from the distractions around us, it's nearly impossible to find a moment to be quiet and still before the Lord. When we're alone in our boat, tossed about by life's storms, or caught in the squall line of parenting, we struggle to find a quiet place to throw out our anchor.

God desires to be in relationship with us. He reveals Himself in the stillness of our alone time with Him. If you've wrestled with a consistent quiet time with God, you're not alone. Perhaps we need a new perspective on His invitation to be in community.

7. Return to the analogy of our life as a ship on the ocean as we discussed in Session 1. When we encounter challenges and face potential danger, we must "clear the deck," removing any distractions that may prevent us from experiencing Jesus, our anchor. Read the following scriptures and consider what the Bible says about our need to clear the deck as we prepare for an encounter with Him. What are we instructed to do?

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

James 4:8,10 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

8. How do those scriptures encourage and challenge you to drop your anchor at the feet of Jesus and lay aside distractions of this world?
9. Read **Hebrews 10:19-22**. What does **verse 22** say is required of our heart in order to prepare for an encounter with Jesus? What does this mean to you?

Hebrews 10:19-22 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² **let us draw near to God with a sincere heart** and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

The author John Piper comments on this passage about drawing near to God. He writes: "So the one command, the one exhortation, that we are given in Hebrews 10:19-22 is to draw near to God. The great aim of this writer is that we get near God, that we have fellowship with Him, that we not settle for a Christian life at a distance from God, that God not be a distant thought, but a near and present reality, that we experience what the old Puritans called communion with God."

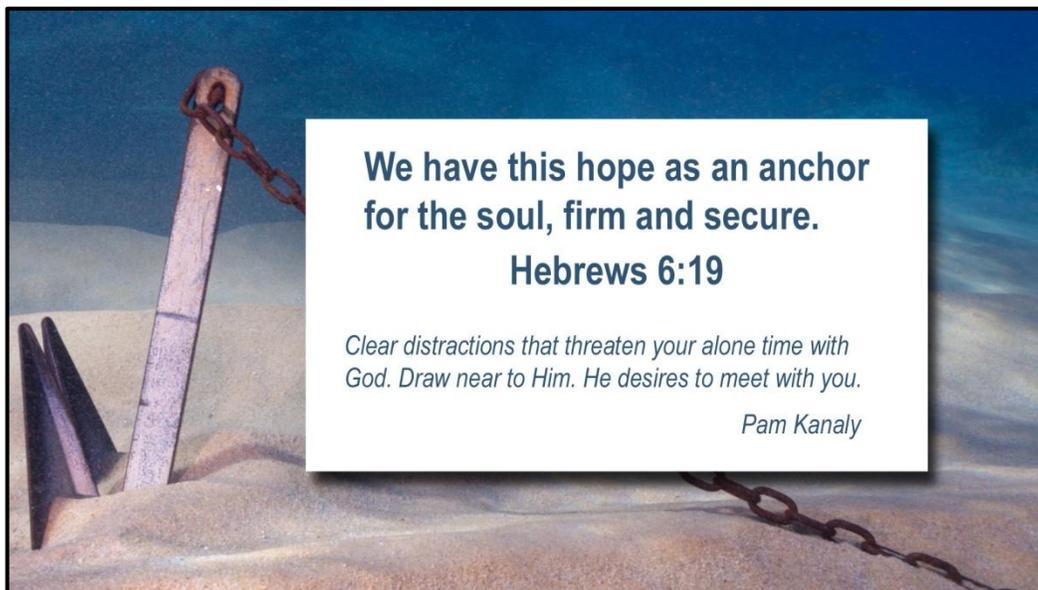
This drawing near is not a physical act. It's not building a tower of Babel, by your achievements, to get to heaven. It's not necessarily going to a church building. Or walking to an altar at the front. It is an invisible act of the heart. You can do it while standing absolutely still, or while lying in a hospital bed, or while sitting in a pew listening to a sermon.

Drawing near is not moving from one place to another. It is a directing of the heart into the presence of God who is as distant as the holy of holies in heaven, and yet as near as the door of faith. He is commanding us to come. To approach him. To draw near to Him.”¹

10. Read **Hebrews 6:19** again this week. What new thoughts do you have about Jesus being our anchor when you consider His desire to be in relationship with you?

Hebrews 6:19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

11. Conclude this lesson with a prayer asking Christ to show you the distractions that need to be cleared in order to prepare for an intimate friendship with Him.



¹ Piper, John. (1997, March 23). Let us draw near to God [Web log post]. Retrieved May 16, 2019, from <http://desiringgod.org>.

Notes for Small Group Discussion:

1. Briefly share your thoughts on the video.
2. Briefly talk about spiritual concepts you learned.
3. Share with your group a choice you need to make that will honor God.
4. Consider practical ways to find accountability with these truths.

To share your thoughts regarding this study, contact us at info@ariseministries.net.

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