

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## A New and Living Way

Author Unknown

Throughout the book of Hebrews, a comparison is made between the new covenant and the old covenant. In every way, the new covenant in Christ is far superior to the old covenant. Because the new way is better, we should respond to it in a certain way. Notice what the author of Hebrews wrote:

*“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us...”* (Heb. 10:19-22).

Following that statement, the Hebrew writer said, *“Let us”* do certain things. In the subsequent verses, we find three things we are to do now that we are a part of the *“new and living way”* in Christ. In this article, we will consider each of these.

### Let Us Draw Near with a Sincere Heart

*“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water”* (Heb. 10:22).

This statement is worded in such a way that makes it clear that we are responsible for drawing near to God. Yes, Jesus opened up the way for us to do this. He said, *“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself”* (Jn. 12:32). However, we must make the choice to come to Him.

How do we draw near to God? There are a few necessary factors mentioned in this verse:

With a sincere heart – In other words, our service to God must not merely be external or done for show. The Pharisees failed in this regard, as Jesus described them as being *“like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness”* (Matt. 23:27-28). We must have the right motivation for serving the Lord.

In full assurance of faith – A little bit later in this letter, the Hebrew writer defined faith as *“the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”* (Heb. 11:1). We must draw near to God with the full assurance that *“He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him”* (Heb. 11:6).

Having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience – This is referring to forgiveness. Through the blood of Christ, our conscience can be cleansed (Heb. 9:14) as we receive *“the forgiveness of our trespasses”* (Eph. 1:7).

Having our bodies washed in pure water – This is connected with the cleansing of our hearts as we are forgiven of our sins. This *“washing”* is done in baptism. Paul was told, *“Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name”* (Acts 22:16). Peter explained that *“baptism now saves you”* because it is in this act we make *“an appeal to God for a good conscience”* (1 Pet. 3:21). Therefore, as we submit to the Lord’s will in baptism, He cleanses us of our sins.

As we follow this *“new and living way,”* let us continue to draw closer to the Lord.

### Let Us Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope

*“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful”* (Heb. 10:23).

What is the *“confession of our hope”*? It begins with a belief in God’s promises, knowing that He is faithful. The Hebrew writer explained earlier that *“it is impossible for God to lie, [so] we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us”* (Hebrews 6:18). Having this faith, we must be willing to confess our faith regardless of how others might react. Jesus said He would *“confess”* or *“deny”* us before the Father based upon whether we confess or deny Him before men (Matt. 10:32-33). We must be like the brethren in Pergamum who *“did not deny”* the Lord even when one of their own was persecuted to the point of death (Rev. 2:13).

We are to hold fast to the hope that we have in Christ. Why was this admonition necessary? They would be persecuted. They had **“not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood”** (Heb. 12:4), but that was coming. They had already faced a degree of persecution (Heb. 10:32-34), yet it was going to get worse. They were warned that if they **“shrink back”** in the face of such persecution, they do so **“to destruction”** (Heb. 10:39). Therefore, they were to **“hold fast...without wavering.”**

Yet they were able to hold fast – just as we are – because **“He who promised is faithful.”** Earlier the Hebrew writer described our hope as being **“an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast”** (Heb. 6:19). It was able to provide this solid foundation for them (and for us) because it is based upon the fact that **“it is impossible for God to lie”** and that Jesus is our **“high priest forever”** (Heb. 6:18, 20). Therefore, no matter what we face, we can have an unshakable faith in Christ.

As we follow this **“new and living way,”** let us always hold fast to our hope in Christ.

## Let Us Consider How to Stimulate One Another

**“And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near”** (Heb. 10:24).

There were two things to which the brethren were to **“stimulate one another”**:

**Love** – This is to be a defining characteristic of God’s people. John wrote, **“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love”** (1 Jn. 4:7-8). Paul told the brethren in Corinth, **“Let all that you do be done in love”** (1 Cor. 16:14). We are to encourage one another to grow in love.

**Good deeds** – God’s purpose for us is to be engaged in good deeds: **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them”** (Eph. 2:10). Paul told Titus that we are to be **“careful to engage in good deeds”** (Titus 3:8). Because this is so important, we need to be encouraging one another to be active in doing what the Lord wants us to do.

They were told to **“consider”** how to do this. This word means to consider attentively and fix one’s eyes or mind upon (*Thayer*). This requires us to give attention to our brethren and how we can help them. Paul wrote, **“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another”** (Rom. 12:10). How can we do this?

Through assembling together – The Hebrew writer said in the next verse, **“Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near”** (Heb. 10:25). While we may come together in our assemblies to worship God, we also have the benefit of giving and receiving encouragement.

Through daily interactions – Earlier, the Hebrew writer said, **“But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin”** (Heb. 3:13). We need regular, daily encouragement from our brethren and they need the same from us.

Through written words – The brethren in Jerusalem sent a letter to the church in Antioch. After they **“read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement”** (Acts 15:30-31). Sometimes, when a face-to-face interaction is not possible, a note can be sent to a brother or sister in Christ to encourage them in their Christian walk.

Through awareness of brethren in other locations – In writing to the church in Philippi, Paul said, **“But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition”** (Phil. 2:19). It can be encouraging simply to hear of brethren in other places standing for the truth and remaining faithful to the Lord.

The Hebrew writer emphasized the need for encouraging one another **“all the more as [they] see the day drawing near”** (Heb. 10:25). He was looking ahead to a time of great difficulty in which they would need one another more than ever. At the time this letter was written to these Hebrew brethren, this **“day”** likely referred to the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet there would be other challenging times of intense difficulty that brethren from generation to generation would have to endure (our world has certainly seen its share of this in the last couple of years). These difficult times require each one of us to make an even greater effort to encourage our brethren in order to help keep them from falling away.

As we follow this **“new and living way,”** let us take advantage of opportunities to encourage (and be encouraged by) our brethren.

## Conclusion

Since Christ has come, the way under the Law of Moses had become old and dead (Heb. 8:13; 9:14). We can now serve the Lord through a **“new and living way.”** So let us draw near to Christ, hold fast our confession, and encourage others to do the same. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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