



“YOU NEED TO BE IN CHURCH”

By Pastor Samuel A.J. Williams M.TH.

Day 1: The Torn Curtain: Your Access Pass

Devotional

When Jesus breathed His last breath on the cross, something extraordinary happened in the temple. The massive curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from everyone else was torn from top to bottom. This wasn't just fabric ripping - it was God declaring that the barrier between Him and you was gone forever. Before this moment, only one person could approach God's presence once a year, and even then with fear and trembling. But Jesus' sacrifice changed everything. His blood didn't just save you; it gave you unlimited access to the throne room of heaven. You don't need an appointment. You don't need to wait for the right season. You don't need someone else to go for you. Every single hour that you want to come to Jesus, you have access. When you're overwhelmed at 3 AM, access is yours. When you're celebrating a victory, access is yours. When you're confused and need direction, access is yours. This isn't about earning your way in or proving you're worthy enough. Jesus already made the way, and the door is wide open.

Bible Verse

***'Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 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.'* - Hebrews 10:19-22**

Reflection Question



How does knowing you have unlimited access to God change the way you approach Him in prayer and worship?

Quote

When he died, blood came trickling down. And that same blood that came trickling down did something that you don't even know it, bust wide open the curtain inside of the temple. And gave me access. And gave you access.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for tearing down every barrier between me and the Father. Help me to boldly approach Your throne with confidence, knowing that Your blood has made the way.

Day 2: The Quiet Drift Away

Devotional

It rarely happens overnight. The drift away from God and community usually begins quietly, almost imperceptibly. Maybe it starts with disappointment - a prayer that seemed unanswered, a relationship that fell apart, or a dream that didn't come true. Perhaps it's exhaustion from life's demands or hurt from people who were supposed to love you better. First, you stop answering the calls. Then you find reasons to skip gatherings. Before long, what once felt essential now feels optional. The pandemic made this drift even easier, normalizing isolation and making private spirituality seem perfectly acceptable. We got comfortable watching worship instead of participating, consuming sermons instead of living in community. But here's the truth: most people don't walk away from God all at once. The drift is quiet before it becomes visible. What feels like protecting yourself might actually be putting you in spiritual danger. Isolation doesn't just separate you from others; it distorts your perspective and weakens your spiritual defenses. If you



**recognize yourself in this drift, know that it's not too late to change course.
The first step back isn't a giant leap - it's simply acknowledging where you are
and deciding that isolation isn't serving your soul.**

Bible Verse

'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.' - Hebrews 10:23

Reflection Question

**What small step could you take today to reconnect with God or community if
you've been drifting?**

Quote

*Most people do not walk away from God all at once. Drift usually is quit is quiet
before it becomes visible.*

Prayer

**Lord, help me recognize when I'm drifting away from You and give me the
courage to take steps back toward community and connection.**

Day 3: You Were Never Meant to Fight Alone

Devotional

Life has a way of throwing battles at you that feel too big to handle. Financial struggles, health crises, relationship conflicts, career setbacks - these challenges can make you feel like you're fighting a war with no backup. But here's what isolation doesn't want you to remember: you were never meant to face these battles by yourself. When you disconnect from community during the fight, you lose access to encouragement, testimonies, and the strength that comes from others who've walked similar paths. You stop hearing about victories that could fuel your faith and miss the prayers that could sustain you through dark moments. Community isn't just about having people around;



it's about having the right people around. There are some Sundays you only survive because you're surrounded by folks who understand your struggle. There are some battles that require the collective faith of believers who can stand with you when your own faith feels weak. The closer we move toward difficult times, the more we need each other. This isn't about weakness; it's about wisdom. Even the strongest warriors need their battalion. Don't disconnect during the fight - this isn't the time to give up or go it alone.

Bible Verse

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' -

Hebrews 10:24-25

Reflection Question

What battle are you currently facing that you've been trying to fight alone, and who could you reach out to for support?

Quote

In church, there are some battles you were never meant to fight, but by yourself.

Prayer

God, remind me that I don't have to face life's battles alone. Connect me with people who can encourage and strengthen me in the fight.

Day 4: Your Spiritual Survival Kit

Devotional

Think about what you pack in an emergency kit - water, food, first aid supplies, flashlight. These aren't luxuries; they're necessities for survival. In the same way, church community isn't just a nice addition to your spiritual life; it's your survival kit for navigating this world. When you gather with



other believers, you're not just attending an event or watching a performance. You're accessing essential spiritual resources: worship that lifts your spirit when life tries to crush it, truth that guides your decisions when confusion clouds your judgment, fellowship that combats loneliness, and community that strengthens you for whatever lies ahead. Historically, the church has always been more than a worship gathering - it's been a communal survival kit. People have come carrying grief, oppression, trauma, and fear, finding strength through shared worship and mutual support. They weren't singing because life was easy; they were singing because life tried to crush them, and somehow Jesus kept holding things together. You cannot survive this life by yourself because isolation distorts your perspective. When you're alone with your thoughts and struggles, problems seem bigger and hope seems smaller. But when you're surrounded by people who've walked through similar valleys and emerged with testimonies, your perspective shifts.

Bible Verse

'Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 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.' - Hebrews 10:19-22

Reflection Question

How has being part of a faith community served as a 'survival kit' during difficult seasons in your life?

Quote



The black church was not merely a worship gathering. It was a communal survival kit. People came to church carrying grief, carrying oppression, carrying segregation, dealing with poverty, dealing with fear, dealing with trauma.

Prayer

Father, help me see community not as optional but as essential for my spiritual survival and growth.

Day 5: Press Your Way Through

Devotional

There will be Sundays when getting to church feels like climbing a mountain.

Your body is tired, your heart is heavy, and your faith feels fragile. The enemy whispers that you should stay home, that you don't need anyone else, that you can handle things on your own. But these are exactly the moments when you need to press your way through. Some Sundays, you survive only because you got around the right people. You walk in carrying burdens and walk out with hope. You arrive feeling isolated and leave feeling connected. You enter with questions and depart with peace, even if you don't have all the answers. This isn't about perfect attendance or looking spiritual. This is about recognizing that gathering with other believers is a lifeline, not a luxury. When the world feels chaotic and your personal battles feel overwhelming, community becomes even more critical. You better learn to keep your foot inside the fire - to stay connected even when it's hard, to show up even when you don't feel like it, to press through the resistance that tries to keep you isolated. The closer we move toward difficult times, the more believers need each other. Don't let temporary feelings rob you of permanent community. Press your way through, because on the other side of that resistance is exactly what your soul needs.



Bible Verse

'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.' - Hebrews 10:23-25

Reflection Question

What resistance or obstacles are currently making it difficult for you to stay connected to your faith community, and how can you press through them?

Quote

You better learn to press your way through. You better learn to keep your foot inside of the fire.

Prayer

Lord, give me strength to press through resistance and stay connected to the community You've placed in my life. Help me recognize the value of gathering even when it's difficult.