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CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Looking Ahead - The Drift

January 18, 2026

Listening can be tough. Especially when the subject touches something sensitive or stirs an emotional response in us. It's often easier to tune out what feels uncomfortable, even when we know it's true.

But if we aren't careful, turning down the volume on truth can slowly pull us into a life we - and God - never intended for us to live.

## Hebrews 2:1

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

When we drift, it doesn't usually happen because we stop believing what's true. It happens when we stop listening closely, rush past conviction, dismiss gentle correction, or ignore the quiet nudges meant to realign our hearts.

That's why this verse is our memory verse for *The Drift*. When truth is memorized, it stays with us - ready to surface in moments when we're tempted to tune out or move on too quickly.

This week, begin working this verse into your heart. Read it often. Say it out loud. Let it interrupt your thoughts when you feel defensive, distracted, or resistant.

When we invite God to point out what we might be missing and then choose to truly listen, we can trust that his direction will never be harsh or condemning. His truth is offered with loving, careful attention by a God who only wants to heal our hearts and lead us toward life.

So, listen carefully, friends. Not just once - but again and again.

## Discussion Questions:

**Ice Breaker:** Have you ever started a project or task thinking it would be quick or easy, only to find it took way longer than expected? How did you respond?

How can being part of a church community help us notice when we are drifting before it gets out of hand?

**Read Mark 7:21-23 & Proverbs 4:23-27:** Knowing our hearts are naturally harboring sin, what practical ways can we "guard" our hearts from their tendency to drift from God?

When you think about your own life, what's one area where a drift has been subtle, maybe even invisible at first?

**Reflect and Respond:** How can learning to recognize warning signs in your heart help prevent a drift before it becomes a bigger issue? What is one intentional step you can take this week to notice any drifting in your heart and align it with God's truth?

## 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 14

**Today's Prayer Focus:** To Worship Him

### Prayer:

*Dear Father, I worship you with all my heart and soul. I want to sing your praises from early in the morning, when the sun rises, until late at night, when the day has passed. I am so grateful to be allowed to be your child as your love fills my heart again today. Amen.*

### Series Theme Verse:

#### Hebrews 2:1

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.*

## Warning Signs - The Drift

January 19, 2026

### Bible in a Year: Genesis 40-43 | Mark 11

One of the things I love about writing for the LivingItOut is that God uses it as an opportunity to show me things about myself I'd rather not see.

In last weekend's message, we learned there are five warning signs we need to watch for to avoid drifting from God's path for our lives: *guilt, greed, jealousy, pride* - and the one character defect God revealed to me last year - *anger*.

No one in my relational world was surprised when I confessed to having an anger issue. I am not loud when I'm angry; I am very cold. I realized that I often tried to convince myself that someone owed me. And my response to that conviction resulted in people walking away from me with freezer burn!

I was following my morning quiet time routine of prayer and Bible reading, and I was still serving and participating in group life. Never once did I realize the drift I was experiencing, or how it had hardened my heart. I wasn't paying attention to what God was trying to tell me - until I was writing a devotion and it hit me right between the eyes!

My drift was not a discipline problem. What I was experiencing was a discernment problem.

As **Jeremiah 17:9** says:

*"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"*

We go to great lengths to convince ourselves of things that are not true. Even if there is some truth in them, it's still not our job to act in place of the Holy Spirit. This awareness can open the door to something deeper in our hearts. And the truth that God reveals is not meant to shame us, but to help us pay attention to what is happening beneath the surface.

Whether the enemy of your heart is anger, guilt, greed, jealousy, pride, or a combination, they are all players in the debt/debtor scenario upon which no relationship can flourish.

God wants us to be free to love and be loved. That freedom can only be had when we acknowledge that which prevents us from having it, and do whatever it takes to rid ourselves of these things that cause our hearts to harden.

We'll all have to come back for Week 3 of *The Drift* to learn more about the solutions. I can't wait!

### **Questions:**

Are you willing to pray Psalm 139:23-24?

What is God saying to you?

### **Next Steps:**

Pray **Psalm 139:23-24**:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;*

*test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*Point out anything in me that offends you,*

*and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

Sometimes journaling helps you listen. Consider writing these verses out in a journal, and then see what you write next. Share it with a trusted friend, and see what they think.

## **21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 15**

**Today's Prayer Focus:** To Declare my Dependence on Him

### **Prayer:**

*Dear Lord, when things become difficult, I know you walk beside me. You will cross the desert and weather any storm with me. When things become unbearable, I know you will carry me to the other side. Today, I declare my dependence on you. You give me my strength and are the only one who can truly replenish my weary soul. Amen.*

### **Series Theme Verse:**

#### **Hebrews 2:1**

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by Lauri White, an Oregon attendee, and a regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

# **A Heart That Stays Close - The Drift**

**January 20, 2026**

## **Bible in a Year: Genesis 44-47 | Mark 12**

Our hearts have the tendency to drift. It doesn't begin with a big decision. It starts with something we hold onto a little too long. Maybe it is guilt we haven't brought to God, or anger we've tucked away and tried to manage ourselves. Slowly, almost silently, those things begin nudging us off course.

We start to drift because guilt and anger whisper louder than grace and truth.

Guilt keeps replaying what we did. Grace quiets the noise.

Anger replays what was done to us. Truth reminds us that the battle is not ours.

These emotions try to convince us that staying stuck is safer than surrender. Both drain our hearts more than we realize.

But God's grace and truth always rise above, guiding us away from the drift and back into the secure, healing presence of Jesus.

I've walked through seasons like that, carrying what I thought I could handle, only to find myself exhausted and spiritually disconnected. Guilt made me hide. Anger made me guarded. Neither pulled me toward hope, healing, or deeper faith. They only clouded my view of God.

### **Ephesians 4:31-32**

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

Scripture doesn't shame us for these emotions, it simply shines a light on what happens when they take root. Ephesians reminds us that anger, harshness, and bitterness are signs that something tender in us needs God's touch. They're not proof that we're failing; they're signals that our hearts need care.

And God never exposes what he's not willing to heal.

He invites us to let go, not because we earned forgiveness, but because Jesus already covered us with his.

He invites us to release, not because what happened was okay, but because freedom is part of his promise.

He invites us to return, not because we've drifted too far, but because he never stopped drawing us back.

When guilt rises, God is not pointing a finger. He's offering his grace.

When anger flares, he's not stepping away. He's asking to carry the weight with you, as he reminds you of his truth.

The life God has for you is steady, anchored, and rooted in his forgiveness.

He keeps your heart close, waiting for you to turn toward him.

### **Questions:**

Where have guilt or anger tried to shape your responses or your relationships this week?

What might God be gently inviting you to release into his hands today?

### **Next Steps:**

Name one thing you've been carrying and give it to God in prayer or writing as an act of surrender.

## **21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 16**

**Today's Prayer Focus:** To Come Close to God

### **Prayer:**

*Dear God, you have promised if I draw near to you, you will draw near to me. I need more of your strength and presence today. I am drawing near to you through prayer, worship, and your Word. I open my heart to you and ask you to be near to me, growing me to be more like you. Amen.*

### **Series Theme Verse:**

#### **Hebrews 2:1**

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by Monique Myers, a Perrysburg attendee and regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

# **All About Me**

**January 21, 2026**

## **Bible in a Year: Genesis 48-50 | Mark 13**

*It's all about me.*

This was a popular social catch phrase about 25 years ago. On the surface, it seems harmless, maybe even wise on some level. The idea resonates with many of us who naturally want good things for ourselves and our families.

### **Mark 7:21-23**

*For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.*

Greed is listed among many abominations, and it's one of the warning signs that suggest our spiritual hearts could be drifting.

Does wanting good things make me greedy? For most of us the answer to that question is "no." But, that's how the drift works. It starts out small and harmless ... then evolves into us realizing that we've drifted for so long that an area of our life has derailed.

If we're honest with ourselves, we know we allowed many "small things" to grow out of control. Now we never seem to have enough. Or we think we will be fulfilled as soon as we get that promotion, that car, that house. Or maybe, we begin to find our deepest sense of security in our bank account.

At its core, greed says, "I owe me." This notion may have started after a difficult relationship, or followed a bad decision that left us broken, hurt, and maybe, regretful.

Greed in our heart is something most of us wouldn't want to admit outwardly. We tend to assume our heart is just fine and the bad stuff is "out there." This, friends, is a false assumption.

However, this is not the time to be hard on ourselves, but honest, as written in [Psalm 139:23-24](#). From here, we reconcile with God and begin our journey back to the healing power of Jesus. He meets us where we are and guides us back to the foundation of peace and joy.

Managing the drift is easier if we catch the warning signs early. Greed is tricky - it can disguise itself as loyalty to self or even conviction. When you first notice "greedy" behavior, ask yourself *why*, then ask a few more times. If you're honest, your heart will tell you the real reason. Then you can take it to the cross.

Isn't that what we really owe ourselves?

### **Questions:**

Are you only happy when things go your way?

What promise did you make to yourself to prevent repeating a mistake?

### **Next Steps:**

Pray this prayer from [Psalm 139:23-24](#), then be still and listen:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;*

*test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*Point out anything in me that offends you,*

*and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*



## 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 17

**Today's Prayer Focus:** To Express my Faith in God's Ability

**Prayer:**

*Lord and Heavenly Father, you are all powerful, all knowing and yet all loving. Thank you for always being ready to meet me where I am, even after I have drifted from you. Help me to look honestly at my own heart and see where I need to let go of the greed that has a hold on me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit so I am never separated from you. In Jesus name, amen*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Hebrews 2:1**

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by Nick Thomas, a Findlay attendee, and a regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

## Jealousy Meets Grace - The Drift

January 22, 2026

**Bible in a Year: Joshua 1-5 | Mark 14**

Where does jealousy show up in your heart?

If you are unsure, just take a scroll through social media and keep track of the thoughts that pop up in your mind. Maybe it's the vacations everyone seems to be taking, the party you were left out of, or the sport that you or your team just aren't quite good enough at.

In a world that broadcasts the happy highlight reels of life, it's so easy to drift into discontentment and jealousy.

**James 3:16**

*For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.*

But take heart, because Jesus came to show us a new way to live free from the trap of jealousy.

The ["Parable of the Lost Son"](#) rolls out a perfect picture of how God the Father lavishly loves all his children and offers a challenge for us to lay down our opinions and do the same for our brothers and sisters in Christ. In the parable, the youngest son shamed his father into giving him his inheritance and then used it for wild living.

When the son ran out of money and came to his senses, he went back home. Instead of turning his youngest son away, the loving father ran out to meet him, embracing and kissing him. The father showered him with gifts and threw a party in his honor.

The eldest son, whom the father also loved, was jealous and angry and refused to celebrate his brother's return. You see, he had always done everything right and honorable in his father's eyes.

### **Luke 15:31-32**

*His father said to him, "Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!"*

Are you the younger son who wasted his blessings and feels lost and disconnected from his father?

Or are you the older son who thinks he's worked hard enough to earn his father's love?

Whichever son you relate to, God is asking you to release the jealousy, receive his unearned grace, and extend it to others. When you know who you belong to and how valuable you are in Christ, there is no need to be jealous anymore. Everything of value already belongs to you.

### **Questions:**

Where does jealousy show up in your life?

Who do you relate to in the story - the prodigal son or the elder brother? Why?

### **Next Steps:**

Do something kind for someone you are having a hard time being happy for.

List three things you do or places you go that stir up jealousy in you. Consider fasting from them, if possible, and ask God for a new perspective.

## 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 18

**Today's Prayer Focus:** To Receive Power

### Prayer:

*Heavenly Father, thank you for working within me. I am in awe of the changes you make possible in my heart, growing me to love you and others more. I praise you for saving me - for making salvation possible through your Son. Help me to share this gift with others. Teach me to desire what you desire. I trust you to give me the power to do all you ask of me. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### Series Theme Verse:

#### Hebrews 2:1

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by April Willer, a Perrysburg attendee and regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

# Take Another Little Piece of My Heart - The Drift

January 23, 2026

## Bible in a Year: Joshua 6-10 | Mark 15

Have you ever said something so blunt that your own words shocked you?

Oof ... words have come out of my mouth that surely weren't pleasant for the person on the other end of the conversation. I'm not an argumentative person, but I have an uncanny ability to bring harsh sarcasm into disagreements, especially when standing firmly on what I think is "right."

This kind of sarcasm is a form of *pride* that can creep in (and right out of my mouth) when I least expect it.

Pride may start as an internal posture, like how we see ourselves, but it eventually expresses itself through our attitudes, words, and behaviors. In other words, *pride reveals itself*.

Some expressions of pride are obvious, such as boastfulness, a sense of superiority, or entitlement. These are easier to spot, both in ourselves and in others.

However, pride also has a way of minimizing itself and hiding beneath the surface of our hearts. It disguises itself in a way that feels reasonable, even responsible. Things like self-sufficiency that refuses help, defensiveness that resists correction, sarcasm that masks insecurity, or an assumption that you already "know" what you need to know, so feedback is dismissed before it's ever truly heard.

Understanding pride's disguises matters because pride isn't just a personality trait. Pride slowly shifts us from dependence to independence, from humility to self-trust. And that shift is often subtle enough to go unnoticed until we've already begun to drift away from God.

**Proverbs 21:4** gives us a clear warning sign to watch for:

*Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin.*

Pride manifests itself, working from the inside out. The posture of the heart eventually becomes a pattern of life. And when pride is left unexamined, it doesn't just affect how we treat others - it creates space between God and us.

But even if we find ourselves in a drift, it's never the end of our story. So, pay attention to what surfaces when you're challenged, corrected, or uncomfortable. Those moments often reveal more than we realize.

Pride shows itself - but *humility* does too. And humility keeps us open, teachable, and close to the life God is patiently leading us toward.

### **Questions:**

Do you listen carefully when someone is offering you feedback? Or do you explain it away?

Do you invite God to search you, or do you assume you are good "as is"?

### **Next Steps:**

*Slow down before responding.* Notice moments when you feel defensive, dismissive, or quick to explain yourself. These can be early signs of pride at work.

*Write it down.* Journal where you see these reactions showing up. Share what you notice with a trusted friend and invite their honest perspective.

*Practice humility.* Choose one moment this week to listen, receive feedback, or ask for help instead of going it alone.

## 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 19

**Today's Prayer Focus:** To be Broken Before Him

### Prayer:

*Dear God, I have missed the mark of righteousness many times. Yet while I was still separated from you, you loved me and sent your Son to die for me. Thank you, Lord. Today, I offer my broken spirit to you, for you alone can make it whole. I come to you asking for forgiveness from (insert areas of sin here), knowing I need you. Heal me, God. Teach my heart to break for what breaks yours. In your Son's name I pray, amen.*

### Series Theme Verse:

#### Hebrews 2:1

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.*

## Reflections - The Drift

January 24, 2026

There's something brave about the words from this scripture:

### Psalm 139:23-24

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;*

*test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*Point out anything in me that offends you,*

*and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

The author, David, isn't asking God to change his circumstances - he's inviting God to search him and look beneath the surface.

Then David takes it a step further and asks God to "point out" what he might be avoiding, and to gently reveal what's out of alignment.

Why would David record this brave prayer? I think it's because he knows our hearts are a source of sin, and sin separates us and allows our hearts extra space to drift from God.

As we step back to reflect on what we've discovered about the drift this week, remember that the warning signs don't always announce themselves loudly. Sometimes they hide in anxious thoughts, habits we excuse, or attitudes we protect.

By calling on God to search our hearts, we allow him space to work through the human nature that weighs us down, and we can trust that this will ultimately lead us back to life.

Prayer is one way we can work to close the space that sin creates and open it up for God to work. A simple but effective way to pray is *breath prayer*.

Breath prayer slows us down enough to notice what's happening on the inside and surrender it to God in real time.

Using some words from Psalm 139:23-24 as an example, try out this breath prayer right now:

**As you inhale, pray:**

*"Search me, O God."*

**As you exhale, pray:**

*"Lead me to everlasting life."*

Repeat as needed.

Reflect on this prayer, and allow it to become a resource for your day. Use it when you feel guilt, anger, greed, jealousy, or pride creep in, or when you sense resistance in your heart.

God is faithful to reveal what needs adjusting and gentle enough to walk you toward the path of everlasting life.

## **21 Days of Prayer and Fasting - Day 20**

**Today's Prayer Focus:** For Growth

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, I am not who I was before I met you—and it's all because of you. Thank you for the growth I have been through, and I'm grateful that you're not finished with me yet! Teach me to be more and more like your Son every day. Help me to submit humbly to the situations you use to change my heart, even when I wouldn't choose them for myself. Above all else, may I grow in love for you and for others. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Hebrews 2:1**

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.*