



## **WOW: Word Of the Week**

### **Access**

**July 17, 2024**

Access granted! What comes to your mind? Restricted areas? Computer passwords? How frustrating to be locked out of your own files with the password you set up!

How rewarding to successfully remember (guess) the right password! You cracked the code. You have done what others cannot. You can go where others cannot. Access is a big deal—and a big problem. There is nearly always a link to “Forgot Your Password.”

The Bible makes access a big deal! The phrase “draw near” appears seven times in Hebrews. Two different words – come near (Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6) and approach (7:19, 10:25). Six times the writer tells us why Christians have access to the very throne room of God. (The often-cited reference in 10:25 is different, a reference to the “approaching day.”)

What difference can access make for you and me this week? I will try to be brief. The sacred rituals of Judaism shouted exclusion. People were required to stay at a distance from the Holy Mountain, the Tabernacle, and Temple. Only priests had access to the Holy Place. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place: the high priest, only once a year.

When Jesus died on the cross, the entrance veil to God’s presence was torn in two (Mt. 27:51), the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Hebrews 10:19-23 shows that anyone can now approach God directly and personally, through Jesus, our High Priest. This is the message of grace. You can go directly to God. You can worship, serve, minister. God is not seeking to exclude but to include—all people. The “priesthood of believers” is not exclusive. Christians have access to God—with confidence, true hearts, and assurance; cleansed, hopeful, faithful, part of the faith community.

Access. You have access to God’s throne. What will we do?

We will pray more often, better. Prayer is not convincing a reluctant God, but is personal and direct conversation with one who is eager, generous, willing, longing, pursuing. He longs to give grace and mercy (Heb. 4:16).

We will worship. In the Old Testament, worship depended on the priests. When the New Testament talks about believers as priests, the message is that believers draw near to worship. The book of Hebrews clearly uses the phrase “draw near” to describe people approaching God in worship.

We will speak God’s word. A concept less well-known. Malachi 2:7 says that priests guard knowledge and give instruction as messengers of the Lord.

**PRAY, WORSHIP, TIME WITH GOD’S WORD.** Why? Because we have access!

We log in often! Why? Because we do not want to forget our password!