

Nearer My God to Thee

Simplified chords

$\text{♩} = 100$

1. Near er, my God, to Thee, near - er to Thee, e'en though it
 2. Though like the wan - der - er, the sun gone down, dark - ness be
 3. There let the way ap - pear, steps un - to heav'n; All that Thou
 4. Then, with my wak - ing tho'ts bright with Thy praise, out of my
 5. Or, if on joy - ful wing cleav - ing the sky, sun, moon, and

be a cross that rais - eth me! Still all my song shall be: Near - er, my
 o - ver me, my rest, a stone; Yet in my dreams I'd be near - er, my
 send - est me, in mer - cy giv'n; An - gels to beck - on me near - er, my
 ston - y griefs Beth - el I'll raise; So, by my woes, to be near - er, my
 stars for - got, up - ward I fly, still all my song shall be: Near - er, my

12

God, to Thee. Near - er, my God, to Thee, near - er to Thee.
 God, to Thee.
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 God, to Thee.
 God, to Thee.

Nearer My God to Thee is commonly more associated with its place in modern folklore than with its thematic richness. Allegedly, this hymn was played by the band of the RMS *Titanic* as it sank in 1912. Whether that speculation is true or not, we stand to profoundly benefit from the hymn today. With its sweeping melody and majestic lyrics, it manages to encapsulate a poignant sense of intimacy. In other words, it's a timely reminder of both God's transcendence and His imminence.

The hymn was written by Sarah Flower Adams, born in England in 1805. Adams was an accomplished actress and performer, but as her health struggles began to impede a once-promising theater career, she turned to writing. Oftentimes, she would write hymns with the help of her sister, Eliza, who would provide music to Sarah's verses.

In 1841, Adams' pastor approached her to include a selection of her hymns for a hymnbook he was compiling. That day, he also mentioned that he was looking for a hymn that covered the account he was preaching from that Sunday: the story of Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:20-22). Struck with inspiration, Adams took the rest of the week to pen a hymn inspired by the passage. That Sunday, "Nearer My God to Thee" was sung for the first time.

The hymn uses imagery from Jacob's story such as the "wandr'er" and the "steps unto heaven" to call to mind God's promises of His own goodness to saints tempted to hopelessness and despair. "Nearer My God to Thee" compels us to consider not simply our nearness to God, but God's own merciful nearness to us.

Scripture to consider:

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|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Genesis 28:20-22 | Lam. 3:25-26 | Hebrews 10:19-22 |
| Psalms 73:27-28 | John 1:43-51 | Isaiah 41:8-10 |
| 2 Chronicles 16:9 | 2 Timothy 4:16-18 | Matthew 28:20 |

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