

Exhortation to Holy Living
Hebrews 12:14-17

Introduction

1. Section IV of our outline starts with 10:19 and goes through 12:29, and this section is called, “A Call to Follow Jesus Faithfully and with Perseverance.”
2. In this section, we are dealing with the following
 - A. Having Confidence to Enter the Sanctuary (10:19-25)
 - B. A Warning against Persistence in Sin (10:26-31)
 - C. Persevering in Faith under Pressure (10:32-12:3)
 1. As in the past, so in the future (10:32-39)
 2. Faith and its many outstanding examples (11)
 3. Jesus, the supreme example (12:1-3)
 - D. Encouragement to Persevere in the Face of Hardship (12:4-13)
3. In this lesson we are going to see an Exhortation to Holy Living (12:14-17)

a. KJV...

14) Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15) Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16) Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17) For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

b. NLT...

14) Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. 15) Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. 16) Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. 17) You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.

c. AMP...

14) Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration *and* holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord. 15) Exercise foresight *and* be on the watch to look [after one another], to see that no one falls back from *and* fails to secure God's grace (His unmerited favor and spiritual blessing), in order that no root of resentment (rancor, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble *and* bitter torment, and the many become contaminated *and* defiled by it—16) That no one may become guilty of sexual vice, or become a

profane (godless and sacrilegious) person as Esau did, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17) For you understand that later on, when he wanted [to regain title to] his inheritance of the blessing, he was rejected (disqualified and set aside), for he could find no opportunity to repair by repentance [what he had done, no chance to recall the choice he had made], although he sought for it carefully with [bitter] tears.

E. Exhortation to Holy Living (12:14-17)

1. We are to live holy

a. Our God is a holy God and demands that His people be a holy people

i. Leviticus 20:7...

Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God.

ii. 1st Peter 1:15-16...

15) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Note 1st Peter 1:13-16 for a better understanding of this Scripture.

i. Look at the Scripture

13) Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14) As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

ii. v17 begins with “and” which adds the next few verses to these verses, and in v17, we are told to live life here reverencing the One whom we call Father, for we are to live to please Him.

iii. v18-21 tells us that we are to be holy, that we are to live reverencing our Heavenly Father, because He purchased us through the offering of His Son on Calvary.

iv. In v15, we find the word “conversation” which means conduct, behavior, which means that we are to conduct ourselves as befitting those who are “holy” or “saints,” for holy means saint.

Note: What kind of conduct would be considered proper for a “saint.”

b. Our holiness comes from Christ’s work within us, not our own works or ability

c. We are though, responsible

i. To Sanctify ourselves according to Leviticus 20:7

- 1) If we are “sanctified through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost,” how do we sanctify ourselves?
- 2) The Old Testament word “sanctify” from the Hebrew means
 - a) To consecrate, so to sanctify yourself, you consecrate yourself to God
 - b) To dedicate, means you dedicate, commit, consecrate yourself to God
 - c) To prepare means you prepare yourself for God to use you
 - d) You set yourself apart so He can set you apart for His glory
- 3) The New Testament word for “sanctify” means
 - a) To render (cause to be, make, turn into) something that is “holy” or sanctified.
 - b) We cannot turn ourselves into something that is “holy,” but God can “through the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.”
 - c) We can do the following in sanctifying ourselves
 - i) Separate ourselves from things and activities that are not suitable for a Christian
 - ii) Consecrate and dedicate ourselves to God.
 - iii) Submit ourselves to the Lord for purification and sanctification asking God to “set us apart” for a holy use.
 - iv) God has to clean the inside of us, but we can clean up the outside by separating ourselves from the world, worldly things, worldly activities, and from habits and behaviors that are destructive to our spiritual lives as well as our physical bodies.

ii. To guard ourselves to make sure that we live as we should

- 1) 2nd Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

2) 2nd Corinthians 6:14-18

14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18) And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

3) 2nd Corinthians 7:1

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

4) 1st Corinthians 3:16-17

16) Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17) If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

5) 1st Corinthians 6:19-20

19) What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

2. "Follow Peace with all men."

a. Nlt...Work at living in peace with everyone

b. Amp...Strive to live in peace with everybody

c. Romans 12:18...

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

d. Peace in Hebrews 12:14 comes from a word meaning

i. A state or condition of tranquility

ii. Harmony between individuals

iii. Peaceably in Romans 12:18 means to make peace, to cultivate peace, to keep peace and harmony.

Note: Does this mean that we are to never disagree with someone?

Does this mean that we are to accept everyone as if they are where they need to be with God?

Does this mean that we should never point out to someone that their philosophy is all wrong?

3. Let me remind you

- a. All afflictions and sufferings are not chastisement
- b. Yet, some are
- c. So we carefully examine ourselves as we go through difficult times
- d. The reason we examine ourselves is so we will not be guilty of falling from God's grace because of a stubborn or rebellious attitude..
- e. When you face a difficult time, do a check list of your life
 - i. Lord, show me if I have failed you
 - ii. If God brings something to your mind, do not argue, but acknowledge, confess, repent and move forward looking to the day deliverance will come
 - iii. If God does not show you something, then consider that it may be a test of faith, an endeavor to build your patience and faith, and or an outright attack of satan, which in case, you rebuke him declaring that you are going to serve the Lord anyway.

4. When an affliction or suffering seems to be for chastisement than let us do the following

- a. Two things in v15 which we must carefully avoid
 - i. Falling from the grace of God

Note v15a...Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God

- 1) Is an abandonment of your faith (apostasy)
- 2) Is becoming spiritual bankrupt
- 3) Falling from the grace of God happens many times
 - a) Because a person does not have a good foundation

- b) Because there is not suitable care by the individual and others
 - c) Because a person is not diligent enough to watch themselves, and others are not diligent enough to help watch for them
 - d) The Nlt and Amp indicate that we are to watch one another to see that we do not fall from grace.
- 4) Falling from grace is losing your love for God and coming short in your relationship with God

ii. Being defiled by a root of bitterness

Note v15b... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

- 1) One of the dangers of falling from God as well as a cause is a root of bitterness

Note: What causes a root of bitterness?

- 2) A bitter root produces bitter fruit to oneself as well as to others
- 3) In a person who has fell from God's grace, you can find many times a root of bitterness about something real or perceived, intentionally or accidentally that has happened which constantly nags at them to make them upset and angry.
- 4) Bitterness produces corrupt principles
- 5) Bitterness causes unrest, anxiety, anger, dysfunctional relationship
- 6) A bitter person is an unhappy person, and a church with bitter people is an unhealthy church
- 7) The writer said to "follow peace with all men," which means that bitterness has to be put aside, and that we have to be careful that hurts, disappointments, disillusionments, disagreements, etc do not turn into "a root of bitterness."
- 8) Peace will never happen when bitterness is present

5. The writer uses Esau as an example

Note v16-17

16) Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17) For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

- a. Esau was born as the eldest with the entitlement and privilege of being prophet, priest, and king in his family
- b. Esau could have had the Abrahamic covenant passed to him from his father Isaac
- c. Esau did not care for the things of God
 - i. Esau despised the things that were sacred
 - ii. Esau despised his birthright by giving it up for a bowl of lentils
 - iii. Esau sinned by his rejection of what was holy, and the writer here calls him a “fornicator, or profane” person.

Note: The lesson here for us is to make sure that we do not relinquish our relationship with God for the worldly attachments. The things of God should be more important to us than anything this world has to offer.

- d. Esau was punished because he rejected the things of God
 - i. v17...When he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected:
 - ii. v17...He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.
 - iii. Esau at the moment of his rejection saw that that which he had rejected was worth a lot more than what he had considered.
 - iv. Esau found out that his actions would come back to haunt him at a time when he wanted the blessing, and this is also a lesson for us.
 - v. He was rejected by his father and God because his repentance was too late which is also a lesson we need to understand, for we can wait too long to repent.
 - vi. Esau in his wickedness rejected God, and God in His righteousness rejected Esau

Conclusion

1. Let us endeavor to live at peace with those around us
2. Let us set ourselves apart to be used of God
3. Let us make sure that bitterness does not grow in our hearts
4. Let us accept God’s call instead of rejecting Him, for one day, we will face God.