

Lesson 28 - Hebrews 12:14-17**Main Idea**

In order to finish the race of the Christian life, we must clear all obstacles, encourage one another, and heed the warning of Scripture's negative examples.

Study Questions

1. Looking back, what is the relationship between the Lord's discipline and the exhortation to strengthen our tired hands and weak knees (vs. 12-13)?
2. What does pursuing peace have to do with the path of righteousness? What does the author mean he exhorts us to pursue peace with everyone (vs.14)? What does this look like within the context of the local church?
3. How do Christians pursue holiness? If holiness is a divine gift, then in what sense can we legitimately strive for holiness (See 1 Peter 1:15-15; 2 Peter 3:11)?
4. What does it mean to fall short of the grace of God (vs.15)? How should we understand this phrase?
5. How does a "bitter root" grow in a church and how does this cause divisions in the congregation? (See Deuteronomy 29:18 - Moses uses this expression to describe the rebelliousness in the heart that produces the poison of idolatry). What other bitter roots defile us as a group and where do they come from?
6. In verses 16-17, the priority of holiness and sexual purity is contrasted with the example of Esau, who because of his false priorities was deemed unholy (Gen. 25:33-34; 26:34-35; 28:6-8). Even though Esau desired the blessing, even in tears, he showed no true repentance for his actions. In what ways is it possible to desire the blessings of repentance without truly being broken over sin?

7. What is the difference between regret and repentance? Why is regret such an insufficient response to our sin? Why is it not enough to be heartbroken over sin? Take a look at David's response to his sin as displayed in his confession of Psalm 51. How might this be reflected in us?

Gospel Glimpses¹

Holiness. God's people are called to be "set apart" or holy (Lev. 18:2-4; 1 Peter 1:15-16). Holiness includes full ethical purity and freedom from sin. Because God is holy, without holiness no one will see him (Heb. 12:14). Thankfully, Christians are set apart as holy through the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ on the cross (10:14). In response to God's grace, Christians are called to persevere in holiness as worship. Moreover, God will discipline his children in order that we might share in his holiness (12:10).

- Consider for a moment what root of bitterness might be growing in your life. List one or two and consider how these came to be, what caused them?

- In addition to the positive and negative examples given in Hebrews and throughout Scripture, are there other people in your life whose examples of faithfulness teach you?

- Find a close friend in whom you can confide and ask them to pray for and with you regarding this matters.

¹ Capps pg. 79