

The Helping Hand that Heals

Hebrews 12:14-15

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble ...”

These two verses should be viewed in the context of Christians strengthening and healing wounded and feeble believers (vs. 12-13). How do we bring healing? We pursue two things and we prevent two things.

I. We pursue healthy relationships.

The healthy relationships we have with people are a result of our healthy relationship with God. Our text says we are to pursue peace with all men. This is impossible without true peace with God.

A. Pursue *the* sanctification ... without which no one will see the Lord.

If you are reading from the KJV you read *“pursue holiness without which no one will see God.”* What is *the holiness*? It is the righteousness that comes from Jesus Christ alone (Phil. 3:9). Pursue translates a word that indicates *a hunter in pursuit of his game*. He tracks the footsteps of his prey over dangerous ridges, through field and stream, desiring to capture it for himself. The hardest thing you'll ever do in the Christian life is capture the holiness of Christ for yourself. (1) It is of faith. (2) It contradicts feelings. (3) Its blessings are almost too fabulous to believe! Yet without this holiness, it is impossible to see God in heaven and please God here on earth. What is the evidence you've captured *the holiness* with your faith? You start smelling like Him!

B. Pursue peace with all men.

Do not merely be peaceful if nobody irritates you, but go out of your way to be peaceful with all. Give up things that you have a right to enjoy in order to be at peace with all, even your enemies.

1. The *unwillingness* to be at peace with another may be a sign that there is no peace with God.

This is a principle throughout Scripture (see Matthew 6:15). We leak what we have inside.

2. The more you pursue the sanctification, the more you pursue peace with all men.

How can you harbor a grudge, when He harbors none against you? *This is true grace.*

II. We prevent religious performance.

“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness [springs] up ...” At first glance this looks like the author of Hebrews is discussing the emotions of God and of people. It sounds like he's saying, “Make sure nobody misses God's attaboy, and make sure nobody's bitter.”

A. However, a ‘root of bitterness’ to the Hebrew mind was false teaching.

John Gill says, “This phrase *a ‘root of bitterness’* signifies in Hebrew writings an error or heresy, in opposition to *‘a root of faith’* or a fundamental doctrine.” What heresy must we prevent?

1. The grace and favor of God is due us because of our performance for Him.

This performance can be anything you do for God at home, church or even the work place.

2. The grace and favor of God is due us because of our performance compared to others.

Worse than believing we measure up for God is measuring ourselves compared to others.

B. To prevent people from falling short of the grace of God, we emphasize Christ.

1. We do not allow ourselves to get caught up in religious performance.

2. We do not compartmentalize our lives with church and personal life being separate.

3. We do not allow ourselves to replace the fear of God with the fear of man.

When we pursue healthy relationships and prevent religious performance, then we are able to be an assembly who breathes grace and strength. Healthy people heal hurting people. What are we?