

Hebrews

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[0 : 00] In your scripture sheet, we are on Hebrews chapter 12, and we are closing in on the book of Hebrews. It's been quite some time, but it is a lengthy book containing 13 chapters, and we are going to just jump in, if we may, with verse 14.

That would be on 12F from Hebrews chapter 12. That would be Hebrews 12, 14, for those of you who are following along in different translations. And the writer of Hebrews offers this piece of solid advice.

Follow peace with all men. And holiness, that is, a separated lifestyle. This holiness does not mean some kind of sinless perfection, which we do not deal in.

But holiness literally means separated. It's the same word in the Greek from which the word sanctify comes, and it means set apart.

Same word from which the word saint comes. And it means that we are to live a separated lifestyle, as opposed to the kind of typical lifestyle engaged in by the world.

[1 : 14] And the reason we are to do that is simply because God has given us that ability to do so. And he's given us the ability to follow peace with all men.

Rhames renders it, peace be pursuing with all. Montgomery says, run swiftly after peace with all men. Weymouth translates it, ever strive for peace with men.

And there is reference in, we don't have it here in our text, but I've noted it in Romans chapter 12. Those of you who have your Bible might want to look at this. Romans chapter 12 and verse 18, picking up on the peace thing. The apostle Paul says, if possible.

Interesting that it clarifies that. If possible. You know why? Because sometimes it isn't possible. Sometimes it is not possible to live at peace with everybody, because you don't have control over those with whom you are trying to live at peace.

[2 : 24] You have control only over you. And this is why I am convinced that the apostle Paul clarifies this when he says, if possible, so far as it depends on you.

And that simply means that if hostility is going to arise between you and another, just make sure that you are not the one who initiates it.

Now, that's a good solid principle that needs to be kept in mind. In schools, in the workplace, in the neighborhood, community, and in the marriage.

If there is going to be a breakout of hostility, just make sure that you are not the instigator of it.

That's verse 18.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. And I think we can easily insert the idea of the ladies there, too.

[3 : 32] It isn't talking about just masculinity. It's talking about be at peace with all men, men with men, men with women, women with women. We are to be at peace.

You know, when the apostle Paul wrote, let's see, what book was that in? I think it was Philippians. And he talked about Iodias and Syntyche, two women.

And apparently these two women in the congregation had a reputation for stirring up things, and they didn't like each other. Maybe there was some spirit of competition between those women, or who knows what.

But there's the possibility that in the flesh, now, of course, men don't do this. You understand. Men don't do this. Only women do this. And women call it, they have a special name for it.

You know what they call it, don't you? They call it cattiness. Cattiness. And this seems to be a peculiarity, a peculiar trait of femininity, because there can be certain items of jealousy or competition that can arise among women that don't even occur to men.

[4 : 47] It just kind of goes right over our head, you know. But a lot of ladies have an incredible sensitivity that we men don't have.

They pick up on everything and anything. And this stuff just goes right over our heads. And we don't even see it. We don't think about it. It doesn't enter our minds at all. But they focus in on it.

And Paul wrote about lodias. He said, lodias. I remember J. Vernon McGee, one of his radio messages, their names were Syntyche and lodias.

And according to J. Vernon McGee, one of them was Odeas and the other was Suntouchy. And I thought, well, you know, that fits some of the ladies.

They can be Odeas and Suntouchy. And very sensitive and very, and by the way, need I remind you guys that this is the day and age when everybody seems to be offended about everything.

[5 : 54] You can't hardly breathe without offending somebody. But, and I don't mean to say that men are not capable of this rascally behavior, because we certainly are.

But the ladies, the ladies have made this an art form. I mean, they just have a way of picking. And you know what our art form is? It's the opposite.

It's denseness. We just don't get it. You know, so many times. And our attitude of not picking up on something leaves the ladies speechless.

And they say, you mean you didn't see? You didn't hear? You didn't pick up on it? You're like, duh, I don't know what you're talking. Why, how could you miss it? It was as plain as a notion. Oh, well, if you say so, dear.

It's just kind of, and it just kind of goes right over her head. And it leaves, it leaves a lot of the ladies exasperated. And you know what they say in response to that? Men.

[6 : 54] And when your wife says to you, men, you know, you've had it, and you're out of her league, and you might as well not. Oh, well, we won't go there any further.

I'm probably already in trouble. So, if possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. And I think we can safely insert, be at peace with all ladies, too.

Be at peace with everybody. We are to have a peaceable spirit as opposed to a hostile spirit. So, let's get back to our page here in 12F.

Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, looking diligently, carefully, intently, lest any man fail or fall of the grace of God.

And some other renditions say this. Lest there be anyone coming short of, Reigms translates it, lest anyone be falling behind from the favor of God.

[8 : 04] Moffat renders it that no one misses the grace of God. Berkeley says that no one falls short of divine grace or fails to avail himself of the grace of God, fails to gain God's favor, fails to respond to the grace which God gives, fails to use the loving help of God, or forfeits the grace of God.

Why or how could anybody do that? Think about that for a moment. How could someone fall or fall short of the grace of God? Any ideas?

Yeah. Pride. Okay. Pride. What is it that injects the salvation, the forgiveness, the grace of God into the life of the individual?

It is there coming to terms with who you are and who God is and with seeing God and Christ as your salvation. And here is where the exercise of the will really comes into play.

Salvation, the gospel of the grace of God is available. the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, Paul tells Titus. And it's appearing to all men does not mean that all men appropriate it.

[9 : 32] Because all men do not. Here is the activation of the will. And we pointed out in time past how that God works in partnership, in concert with the individual.

He initiates our salvation. He provides it. and he offers it to us. And our response to his offer is what the Bible calls faith.

And it's called the obedience of faith. Human faith is a response to God's gift through Christ. And he says, he talks about falling short. He's going to use Esau as an example.

So let's get on to the text and we'll get down to Esau. Lest any man fall or fall short of the grace of God. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you.

And someone has said that bitterness is anger that is turned inward. Bitterness is the kind of thing that can eat away at you from the inside.

[10 : 41] and it's consumed a lot of people. It's ruined a lot of lives. Someone says, if a man is consumed with bitterness, it will not even allow him to enjoy a good steak or anything else.

Because this bitterness that is in his soul colors everything he does, everything he is, everywhere he goes, everything he sees, everything he hears. There is this splash of bitterness that kind of contaminates everything.

At the root of bitterness springing up and thereby many be defiled. And this defilement is a terrible way to live. Contaminated is the way Berkeley renders it.

And Norley translates it and be a poison to many. And so poison the whole community. Lest there be any fornicator.

Now fornicator is simply someone this comes from the Greek word pornea from which we get the word pornography. And fornication simply means any kind of illicit sexual activity that may occur between any people who are not joined together as husband and wife.

[12:02] If it is outside that marriage relationship and it is sexual it is fornication. And Paul wrote to the Corinthians and told them to flee fornication.

And if you know anything about the city of Corinth it was I guess you could say I don't know that they coined this term back then or thought of it this way but it probably would have been very appropriate to to have said whatever happens in Corinth stays in Corinth.

That's what they're talking about now with Las Vegas you know and talking about all of the illicit activity that goes on in Las Vegas when people go off to Las Vegas for the business conventions and the call girls that are available and the one night stands and all the rest of it.

and that's what a believer is supposed to have nothing to do with because it is well it's for a whole host of reasons unacceptable to God and unbecoming of anyone who is a believer lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau and a profane person actually our word our word profanity comes from this and when one uses profanity or uses profane language he uses vile words as if they were common words as if they were everyday words in other words they are as natural to his vocabulary as ordinary words of communication are to the average person is someone who reduces language to the gutter and boy do we ever see this in spades now it's all over it's all over TV of course it's all over the internet and now there are even people in public places shouting vile obscenities even at our president or at other elected officials because they disagree with some position they've taken and they shout out four lettered words to them and it's the what shall I say the lack of civility that is engulfing our nation whereby people are reduced to rude crude behavior and we're seeing this on a level that has never before been witnessed in our lifetime and they are taking profane words and using them just as if it is ordinary vocabulary and it is taking a toll and of course it affects the young people and when adults do it that automatically seems to give license to kids to do it because they look to the adults as their example in so many ways and he's going to use Esau here as an example talks about an immoral or godless person like Esau Esau was a what shall I say Esau was a was a party boy he was a vile individual the book of Genesis makes it clear that Esau was locked in to the present and the material he was a good time guy and nothing mattered to him but personal pleasure and whatever it took to obtain it it was an Esau mentality he was he was

[15:46] I guess you would say a kind of playboy of his day his whole his whole emphasis was on the here and now he had no respect for spiritual things he had no respect for the future his motto was eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die pull out all the stops and just enjoy yourself if it feels good do it that was the key song yeah well we've got an abundance of Esau's living in this country today there's no question about it it's a licentiousness and a pursuit of pleasure at the expense of decency and everything else and it goes on and what he's saying here to these Hebrews is look you can expect that and anticipate that from the world because that's what they are that's all they are and they're just being what they are don't look for worldlings to manifest godly behavior it isn't in them they don't want to and they couldn't if they did want to because they don't have the capacity but it's to be different for those of you who name the name of Christ so we are to be the opposite of the

Esau the example here who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright why would he do that very simple here is a perfect example of someone who put materialism above anything of value and spiritual characterization all he thought about was satisfying the urge of the immediate moment and that was he smelled that stew boy that really smells good I've got to have some of that and he was a man who was very impetuous very impatient and he had no sense of value and that too characterizes much of our nation today someone said Americans today know the cost of everything and the value of nothing boy that really kind of comes home and it's it's a it's an accurate

characterization of the world we're living in today where they know the cost of everything the value of nothing and Esau if ever there was a biblical example of a guy who just lived for the moment the hell with the future

I may not be here I'm going to pull out all the stops enjoy myself in any way and every way I can satisfy every lust and every desire and see if I can cram more and more pleasure into my present life that was his motto then that was all he cared about consequently the blessing and fellas we don't have we don't have an ability unsatisfied to really to really get a hold of this blessing thing but in that culture and in that time you could not put enough value on the power and the significance of the blessing this was a cultural thing and it was a historic thing and it it what it consisted of was the elder or the one in position of authority didn't necessarily have to be a father but very often it was a father he would bestow he would bestow his paternal blessing upon a particular child and that child would be his heir apparent he would be it was kind of kind of like the equivalent of drawing up a will only there wasn't anything in writing it was strictly audible it was verbal it was communicated and it was done in the presence of witnesses this is something that prevailed for a long long time actually it comes over even into the

New Testament times and Paul picks up on it and talks about us being adopted adopted as sons and we can't really identify with that because we always think in terms of adoption for children underage children they are the ones that we adopt but that's only in our present culture and in ancient culture both in the Old Testament and in the New it was an act of priority or of favoritism that was bestowed by the Father well let me give you an example probably the most dominant example in all of the Old Testament is Joseph Joseph remember Joseph and Benjamin were the two sons that were born of the one woman that Jacob really loved that was Rachel and when Joseph was born he was the tenth he was the tenth one out of the twelve or no eleven he was eleven Benjamin would be twelve and Rachel is going to die when she is birthing Benjamin but Joseph was born of Rachel earlier and he was the eleventh born and Jacob designated him as the adopted one the heir parent that's why he had the royal coat the robe that he wore that's why all his brothers hated him is because his dad made him the heir parent and you know who that right usually fell to was the first born and the first born was

[22 : 16] Reuben and Reuben for different reasons was disqualified and here is where some emotion enters in because you've got to remember the two sons who were favored of the father and this is a perilous thing when fathers and mothers play favor it happens but Joseph and Benjamin were the two sons that were born to the woman that Jacob really loved that was Rachel so he had a connection he had a tie with those two sons that he didn't have with the others because the first I were born of Leah and then two sons were born two or three were born of Bilhah and two or three sons of Zilpah so there are twelve sons but only two of them were mothered by the one woman that Rachel really loved and the other women the one he was tricked into marrying remember that fiasco with Leah and then their two handmaidens so he had a real deep emotional connection with Joseph and that's why he named him the heir parent and that is another reason why the other ten sons were so jealous of Joseph and made it rough for him they got after him any way that they could and they hated him for that so there is a perfect example of the blessing being given and when Jacob and Esau come to their father I'm sorry Esau Jacob I'm sorry Jacob and Esau come to their father Isaac for the blessing remember the old man is blind he can't see and Rachel rigged up this thing because Esau's body and arms were real hairy and she tied a lamb skin onto her son and they cooked up this deal where Jacob was to go in and pretend that he was Esau because Esau was Isaac's favorite and he was the one that he intended to give the blessing to and everybody well not everybody but most people really fault Rebecca and Jacob for hatching this deception and making sure that he got the blessing rather than Esau and they are faulted for that and condemned in some circles for their deception but you really need to keep in mind that this woman

Rebecca was doing the right thing and Jacob was doing the right thing you say but they tricked they deceived that poor old blind man listen that poor old blind man was the guy who was out of line because earlier God made it clear to Isaac that it would be Jacob who was the son of blessing and would carry on the line not Esau and the reason that is strikingly different is because which one was the oldest Esau Esau was born first he was the first born they were twins remember but Esau was born first ordinarily that meant he would be the one to receive the blessing but God made it very clear that he was not the child of blessing the seed would continue in Jacob not in Esau and as you

read as you read the genealogies you will see that the royal line comes from Jacob actually it comes from Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and then to Jacob's fourth born son Judah and that's going to be the royal line and it will come through Jacob not through Esau and what happens to Esau Esau ends up going off into Mount Seir and starts his life anew there and he becomes the father of a great nation and they are called the Edomites they are descendants of Esau and they live to this very day in southern Transjordan and one of the kings that was on the throne when our Lord was born in Bethlehem his name was Herod and he was one of the most evil individuals that ever lived and Herod was a direct descendant of Esau he was an

[27 : 43] Edomite he was not a Jew in order to be a Jew in order to be a legitimate Hebrew you have to be descended from Abraham Isaac and Jacob that establishes Jewishness now Abraham had other children but they were not Jewish and they would not be Jewish they would be the father of the Arab nation remember with Ishmael and then there is Esau and he is not considered Jewish and by the way they are Arab today and they are Muslim in their theology they are certainly not Jewish so all of these things come into play so when this blessing was going to be bestowed it meant so very much and when Jacob got the blessing from his father even though it was by deception the blessing went where it was supposed to go and God had made that clear it was

Isaac who was out of line and he was going to give the blessing to his son Esau because he favored him and Rebecca said no nothing do it but you know what she favored Jacob so each one each parent had their favorite but the point that needs to be made is that God also had his favorite and it was not Esau it was Jacob so what happens here as we go on and read about before the morsel of meat that this meat that he sold his birthright for sold his own birthright he would have by being the firstborn he would have had that birthright he would have been entitled to it as the firstborn and Isaac was going to deliver it to him and when when he wanted the meat the dish that his brother had cooked up maybe he was a real gourmet cook you know and this stuff really smelled good he said

I gotta have some of that and like I said he was the guy who lived for the moment nothing regarding the future his his his stick was now I want it and I want it now and Jacob said how bad do you want it oh well what what are we talking about here and Jacob said give me your birthright and it was his ordinarily in the culture it would have been his by birth by by virtue of being the firstborn and and you know what Esau's attitude was birthright smurfright who cares about any old birthright I'm hungry give me that dish and he forfeited his birthright now you talk about an incredibly odd transaction you talk about minutia over something that is really valuable this is the example and yet the point is he regarded it as worthless in other words his attitude was birthright hey

I can't eat a birthright I'm hungry who cares about an old birthright that's just some old fuddy duddy stuff anyway so what's going to happen is with some years of maturity Esau is going to come to realize and appreciate what he has forfeited but it will be too late and verse 17 talks about for you know how that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected now what that means is afterward it means after he had changed his mind after he had seen the light after he had realized what he had done what he had forfeited I'm sure he came to the position later that says oh how could I have been so stupid how could I have been willing to do that

I forfeited what could have been my whole future now it's all down the tube all because I had a demand that had to be met at the moment and later he is going to really regret his stupidity and his foolish hey guys is there anything in your life I know there is in mine that I can look back on 20 30 maybe 50 years and say boy I'd really like to have that one to do over I'd really like to run that by me again I'd like to be able to make that decision over again why because you didn't have the perspective years ago that you have now and now you see the significance and the connection and the value but years ago earlier as young men we could just dismiss it no big deal no big deal but now after the dust has settled the years have gone by some gray hair has come upon the head we think with a different mind we've got a different value system it's called maturity and development and we've got some regrets

[33 : 21] I doubt that there is a one of us that doesn't have some regrets in our past and thank God for his forgiveness full and free and here Esau is one of the chief men of regret and the text says when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected wishing to inherit the blessing desired to inherit the blessing and it's too late he was refused for he found no place of repentance and I want to just clarify something here because this is a terrible translation here the way they render this it isn't that it isn't that it isn't that Esau wanted to repent but couldn't and that's the way the text reads

that's the way that's the impression it gives you it wasn't repentance that he was seeking with tears no no he had already repented that means he had already changed his mind he had already come to a new conclusion about how foolish he was as a younger man he had already repented what he wanted was the blessing but he can't have it it's gone it's given to another in fact it was given to the one to whom it was originally intended by the

Lord and here he recognizes with great bitterness what he has done and he sought it carefully with tears and some translations render that a little differently and we'll take time to look at it a little more thoroughly next week but for now we've got enough here to chew on I trust that you all have a great day enjoy your breakfast any closing comment before we yeah Mike would a thinking Arab today trace their hatred of Israel to this story absolutely absolutely question is would any Arab today trace their hatred of Israel back to this source and I would say most definitely and not only that but the Arab population in general traces their hatred back to Esau or not I'm sorry back to Ishmael and Isaac and that is that is an animosity that has been brewing for 4,000 years and it is still hot and heavy today and the Arab world and the Jewish world live in a hostile kind of environment to this very day and it all goes back to this and by the way it's going to end with this too in the final analysis when the showdown comes and the revelation these things are going to be front and center and they will both be major players so what else is new something that started thousands of years ago but they