

HEBREWS -12: 15-17
Got Grace??
Don't Come Short of the Grace of God

Example: a putt for the win – the golfer gets it lined up, he studies the break, the wind, the grain of the grass, consults with his caddie, then putts...only to come up short. There goes the title, the big cash prize and maybe even the Green Jacket. All that work and effort over the 4 days of the tournament only for it to come down to a final putt where he comes up short. It can be heart-breaking...

BUT NOT AS SIGNIFICANT A HEART-BREAK AS coming short of the grace of God. That has eternal consequences. This passage shows us the indicators of coming short of the grace of God.

FIRST, LET'S REMEMBER the context of Divine Fatherly Discipline:

Application from v11-12

There is an oversight aspect to this as well as an individual aspect.

The Christian life is not a solitary life, or at least it shouldn't be.

We are to pursue peace with all and holiness.

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

16 that *there be* no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

** Application/ review- MAKE SURE YOU REMEMBER THIS...

The fight of faith, the fight of holiness is a fight to remember the Good News of the Gospel. Holiness is always the result of faith.

As we are called to pursue peace and pursue holiness, we need to remember that God, in His grace is pursuing us. Knowing His grace means that we can admit that we are bigger sinners than we would ever think, and we're more loved and forgiven than we dare imagine.

God pursues us and loves us as a Father; Jesus loves us as His Bride.

When we forget this then we slip into sin, perhaps a form of immorality and become bitter like Esau.

15-17 WE HAVE A LEGITIMATE SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE ANOTHER

v. 15 "exercise oversight"

v. 15 Check your heart- especially to guard against coming short of the grace of God

This is just one more sobering statement from the AOH.

Coming short of the grace of God means that we never really know it in its fullness.

What's scary is that we can be in the environment of the grace of God and be around those who know the grace of God while still coming short of it.

It is possible, says the author, to miss out on the grace – the undeserved favor – of God. "Misses" (NIV), "fails to obtain" (NRSV), "fail of" (KJV) is *hustereō*, "to miss out on something through one's own fault, to miss, fail to reach." The Hebrew Christians themselves are being strongly tempted to turn back to their former Judaism and miss out on God's grace through Jesus Christ.

This sort of coming short of grace can be deceptive. D.A. Carson..

A person gets partially cleaned up. He or she is drawn close enough to the Gospel and to the people of God that there is some sort of turning away from godlessness, a preliminary infatuation with holiness, an attraction toward righteousness. But like the person represented by rocky soil in the parable of the sower and the soils

(8:4-15), this person may initially seem to be the best of the crop, and yet not endure. There has never been the kind of conversion that spells the takeover of an individual by the living God, a reorientation tied to genuine repentance and enduring faith.

This requires an honest sense of self - VoV -

SELF-KNOWLEDGE:

Searcher of Hearts,

It is a good day to me when you give me a glimpse of myself;
Show me how to know when a thing is evil which I think is right and good,
How to know when what is lawful comes from an evil principle,
Such as desire for reputation or wealth by usury.
And let me not lay my pipe too short of the fountain,
Never touching the eternal spring,
Never drawing down water from above.

In reality no one has the means of knowing how soon he/she may cross the line between life and death. It is a dangerous thing to trifle with God by thinking that you're ok when in truth your pipe is short of the fountain. The exhortation of Isa 55:6 is important, "Seek the Lord while He may be found."

Don't come up short of the grace of God; is not a problem because God is stingy in doling out his grace but that we are remiss in clinging to it.

How do we know if we have come up short in of the grace of God?

Despite outward practice or observance, we have no inner sense of a new heart with new desires for God and new inclinations for holiness or the desire to learn what that even means.

We'll we start seeing the deeds of the flesh manifested in our lives. Look for the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit and we will know that we have come short of the grace of God or have not laid hold of it by faith. The issue is not a god problem; IT'S A ME problem.

Don't let me lay my pipe too short of the fountain.

If you're laying pipe of works and intentions, you're going to fall short of the fountain. The question is are you laying pipe thinking that you're going to contribute to the fountain or are you laying pipe so that you might drink from the fountain. **The only pipe that gets us to the fountain is the pipeline of faith alone in Christ alone.**

"See to it that ... no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." (11:15)

It is also possible for a "bitter root" of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12) to grow in a Christian community that is contagious and can infect others.

Verse 15 talking about bitterness and how when it springs up causes trouble and by it and many are defiled. **The problem with bitterness is that it is rarely an isolated solitary thing. Bitter people usually broadcast it and bring evidence of it and spread their bitterness like a virus so that many become defiled.** Bitterness is like a spiritual coronavirus.

Bitterness lives in a soul that has unreal expectations of God and others. It's a soul that is expecting a happy and whole life right now - your best life now. And then real life happens with trials and the loving discipline of the Father. If we don't have a Godward perspective, we will regard it lightly and we become bitter. We begin to blame God and others for our misery.

"Well, if my wife or my husband or my kids or my parents would just do this, this, this and this...If I could just get this much more money...If this circumstance would just change...If this person would just.... then I would finally be happy."

And what ends up happening is the root of bitterness takes root, breaks ground and begins to destroy everything around you. Bitterness is a horrific disease of the soul. Because you defile everything you touch

when you're bitter. Like, you're just looking around and waiting for some joyous occasion so you can destroy it. It's what happens. Bitterness takes root, "I don't deserve this...I can't believe this is happening to me...If there were a God in heaven, He would never let happen..."
And you begin to be bitter and angry towards others and towards God.

EX: Benedict Arnold was an example of one who cultivated bitterness like a garden and it led him into betraying his friends, his commander and his country.

Two particular sins flow from a spring of bitterness: Immorality and profanity /

v. 16 No immoral or godless (profane) person

Immorality is a sin as described in the 2nd part of the 10 commandments; Profanity is a sin as described in the 1st part of the 10 commandments.

Immorality = pornos

Eph 5 3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;

1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

Notice that the motivation for avoiding impurity and fleshly lusts is INTERNAL. That's not who we are as saints and aliens and strangers. As beloved adopted children of God we have been given NEW HEARTS and those old behaviors keep us from being our true selves as defined by God.

Keller...The early believers were known for their generosity and their moral integrity.

"The early church was strikingly different from the culture around it in this way - the pagan society was stingy with its money and promiscuous with its body. A pagan gave nobody their money and practically gave everybody their body. And the Christians came along and gave practically nobody their body and they gave practically everybody their money."

PROFANE

Profanity is to treat something holy as common or base. It is often seen by a mocking of religion or those things that are sacred. It is directed against the character and nature of what is holy. The two usually go together. Immorality is usually accompanied by a profane attitude. Those who are profane think lightly of the moral instruction of God.

EX: In today's world we see profane attitudes when it comes to three issues that are rooted in God's revelation: 1) Male and Female created in the image of God; 2) The sanctity of life- we are all created in the image of God. 3) Marriage is a picture of the relationship of Christ and His church. When those areas are disregarded or mocked, then it is an example of "profanity".

When immorality is joined with mocking of the sacred, then one is just a few steps away from a final apostasy.

Psalm 1

v. 16-17 Esau

16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

After addressing bitterness, immorality and profanity, the AOH lands on Esau.

Why Esau?

There is a question as to why sexual immorality is named here, as that is not explicitly part of Esau's profile in Genesis. But there was a tradition in Judaism that Esau was a sexually immoral man. In any case, the emphasis falls on what we actually know, that is, how Esau sold his birthright for a meal.

You might remember his story from Genesis. He was the older of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. His brother was Jacob, who was his mother's favorite. Esau was an "hairy man" and was a jock – an outdoorsman. (Gen 25) He came in one day from the field and Jacob was doing his Gordon Ramsay cooking show in the tent. Esau was hungry and asked for food and Jacob became Monty Hall to make a deal. "I'll give you some of this lentil stew if you sell me your birthright."

Esau – "I'm about to die, what good is a birthright."

The deal was done and the text says, "Thus Esau despised his birthright."

Hebrews 12 now puts that in the category of immorality and profane behavior. Why?

I think it is related to a root of bitterness.

Things for Esau got rather testy at home and he wanted to kill Jacob after Jacob got the blessing from their dying father, Isaac.

Even prior to the stolen blessing, we see in Gen 26:34 – that Esau married foreign wives and who made his parents lives "bitter".

Bitterness is an indicator of coming up short of the grace of God or being a godless person like Esau, who in his impatience, went for that which was immediate rather than valuing the birthright that was his. The scriptural evaluation of what he did was that it was a godless act.

Esau, who sold his birthright for a "mess of pottage" is the example of a person so godless that he did not value what he had.

The particular offense with which he is here charged is that "for one morsel of meat" he "sold his birthright."

Now the birthright or privilege of the firstborn carried with it the following things: the special blessing of his father, a double portion of his goods, dominion over his brethren, and priestly functions (Num. 3:41) when the father was absent from home.

Esau preferred the immediate gratification of the flesh rather than the blessing of God. He relinquished all claims to the privileges contained in and annexed to his being the firstborn, for a trifling and temporary enjoyment of the body.

AW Pink...By calling Esau "profane," the Holy Spirit reveals that he placed no higher value upon sacred things than he did upon those which were common.

WHAT ABOUT THE TEARS AND REPENTANCE??

Knowing how the grace of God works, it is safe to say that God knew his heart. It's true that his "tears" were shed: but they proceeded not from anguish of heart because he had sinned so grievously against God, rather they flowed from a sense of self-pity—they expressed his chagrin for the consequences which his folly had produced.

The AOH was here addressing professing Christians, and the fearful case of Esau is set before them (and us!) as a warning against departing from the Narrow Way, of exchanging the high privileges of the faithful for the temporary advantages of a faithless world.

COME TO THE TABLE

The true righteous tears were those of Jesus in the Garden as he considered the anguish and separation from God that was before Him. Yet he endured the cross despising the shame FOR US.

If, like Esau, you are holding on to the sins of the heart or of the flesh for immediate satisfaction rather than living according to the eternal perspective of Christ, then DON'T come to the Table.,

The Table shows us three things:

We Remember the work of Christ – his obedience in life and His obedience through the cross.

We Proclaim his death until He comes again

We Anticipate His return to make all things new.

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