

TITLE

DISCOURAGEMENT



Scripture Reading: Hebrew 12:14-17

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.

Scripture Reading: Hebrew 12:14-17

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.

The definition of the verb 'discourage**' is to deprive one of courage, hope or confidence. It is to dissuade and to obstruct one because of opposition or difficulty. It is to hinder.**

Discouragement is defined as an act of discouraging. It is also defined as a state of being discouraged.

My key text is found in verse 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.'

The theme of this text is discouragement can cause one to fail of the grace of God, manifest the root of bitterness and triggering one to be defiled.

Two groups of Jews are addressed here:

➤ **Believing Jews**



➤ **Unbelieving Jews**

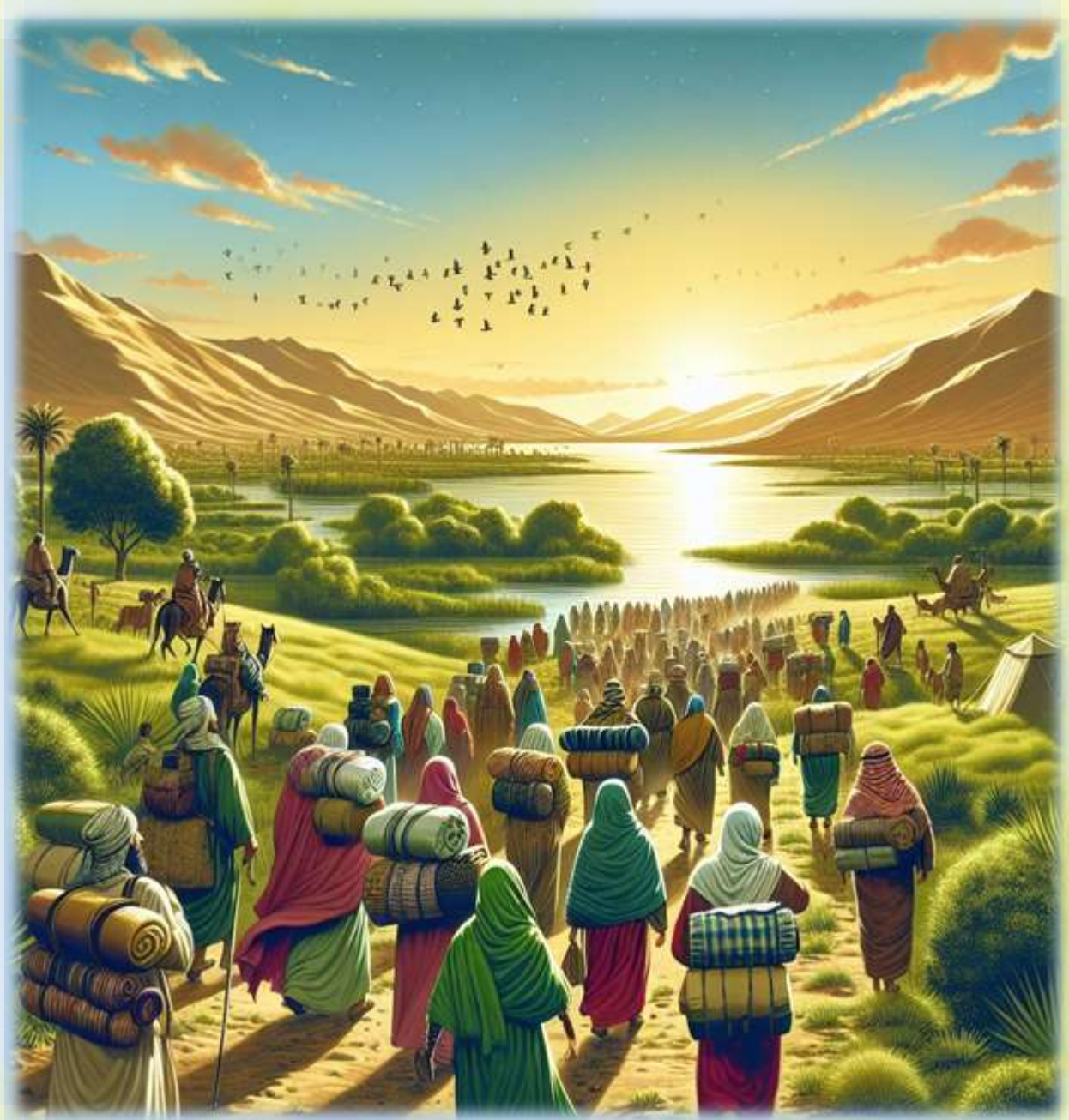


Applying it to today's context, two groups of Christians are addressed here:

- **Believing Christians**
- **Unbelieving Christians**

1. Follow Peace

The first warning to them was to follow peace.



In the NASB, it is translated as 'pursue peace.**'**
We are to pursue peace in the context of:

- **Persecution from without**
- **Unbelief among friends**
- **Doubt within**



The discussion of Peace is very important, especially to a child of God.

Psalms 34:14 says, 'seek peace, pursue it.'

Mark 9:50 says, 'be at peace with one another.'

Romans 12:18 says, 'If possible, so as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.'

Romans 14:9 says, 'Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.'

1 Cor 7:15 says, 'Yet if the unbelieving one leave, let him leave; but God has called us to peace.'

Hebrew 12:14 says, 'Pursue peace with all men.'

2. Follow Holiness



In some translation, holiness is replaced with the word, 'sanctification.'

The term sanctification must be related to Hebrew 12:10, which says, 'For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'

The usage of the term 'sanctification' is connected to discipline. God is seen here as an active agent, disciplining us and reminding us to follow sanctification.

The term sanctification mentioned here is not positional (instantaneous) sanctification, but experiential (progressive) sanctification.

Proverbs 23:35 says, 'They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.'

3. Discouragement

Actually, if you understand **Hebrew 12:14-17**, God comes in because that person is discouraged. Summing up the first 2 points, 'pursue peace with all people, and holiness' means to walk right with both men and God.



Discouragement makes us sloppy and unconcerned personal relationship and holiness.

Discouragement generally occurs when our expectations (what we think should happen) don't align with reality (what actually happens).

I like to mention 4 causes of discouragement which I find very real in my own personal life.

➤ Fatigue



Here I am not only referring to a particular incident but years of prodding, ploughing.

➤ Frustration



When unfinished tasks pile up, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. And when trivial matters or the unexpected interrupt you and prevent you from accomplishing what you really need to do, your frustration can easily produce discouragement.

➤ Failure



Sometimes your best laid plans fall apart, the project collapses, the deal falls through, no one shows up to the event. How do you react? Do you give in to self-pity? Do you blame others? As one man said, 'Just when I think I can make ends meet somebody moves the ends.' That's discouraging.

➤ Fear



Fear is behind more discouragement than we would like to admit.

Before you want to give up on holiness or sanctification there are some truths you need to know.

- **Regarding holiness, we are told without which no one will see the LORD**
- **Unholy Christians are the plague of the Church.**
- **This holiness is a thing of growth.**

Charles Spurgeon described four types of people who try to get on without holiness:

- **The Pharisee:** confident in outward ceremonies instead of true holiness
- **The moralist:** feels no need for holiness because his life is so good.
- **The experimentalists:** Their entire Christian life is lived inward, never looking to outward conduct but only to feelings.
- **The opinionist:** their Christian life is all about believing the right doctrines and is unconcerned about the way one lives.

4. Not Seeing the LORD



Hebrews 12:14 says, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.'

I believe that there are people that will see the LORD physically. But more likely this refers to one's spiritual eyes, in the sense of responding to the Gospel.

5. Fail of the Grace of God



Hebrews 12:15 says, '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.'

To fail of the grace of God is to come short of the grace of God.

This word is used in **Hebrew 4:1** in the sense of 'fail to attain.'

6. Root of bitterness.



We must live in regard to the grace of God. Whatever discouragement, we must keep ourselves from developing a root of bitterness. Whatever discouragement we face, we must keep both ourselves and others from a return to a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

What about this root of bitterness:

- A bitter root is a root that bears bitter fruit.
- Bitterness corrupts many, rooted in a sense of personal hurt, and many hold on to the bitterness with amazing stubbornness.
- William Barclay wrote that the phrase 'fall short of the grace of God,' might also be translated as 'failing to keep up with the grace of God. The idea is that the grace of God is moving on, past the pain and hurt of the past. We should also move on.'

The phrase '**root of bitterness**' – spring up, trouble you, defile you' is an allusion to **Deut 29:18**. In the Septuagint, it warns the people of God about the dangers of idolatry, both individually and corporately.

The example of Esau



Many Christian today, because of discouragement sold their Christian birthright, a birthright of intimacy with God. The bible says, he sought it with tears concerning his birthright but was rejected. Esau's birthright was not restored simply because he only wished it back. He never really wanted it. He only wished for it. He never got right with God and lost it in the end.

This morning, maybe some of you are tempted to be discouraged or you are already in a state of discouragement. This state has deprived you of courage, hope or confidence. It comes so strong to dissuade you and to obstruct your walk with God because of opposition or difficulty and hindrances. But God sent a man into an environment or condition like all of us. I mean he taught his disciples and the people of Israel, by the thousands, yet at the end of his life, no one stood with him. It was like all his teaching has fallen on deaf years.



The people he taught turned against him. Even his heavenly Father turned his face away from God. He cried out like many of us, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.' No one was there to save Him and he was crucified. But God saw it good to smite him, so that you need not be smitten. God allowed him to be discouraged so that you can be encouraged.



When he was resurrected, we don't have to be discouraged anymore because we know, we will have the victory just as Christ has his victory.

When Christ was risen, he came to us, so that we don't have to be alone in our discouragement anymore. We can be encouraged. He put His spirit within us to inspire us with courage, and confidence because our Jesus will encourage us throughout this marathon race to keep us running. We can be in high spirit because He is here as our assistance and he looks at us with approval. One of Jesus' chief duties is to encourage us his brothers and sisters in Christ. He will promote us and advance our cause and foster our spirit because He is here with us.