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**INTRODUCTION**

- there have been glorious truths given to us by the author of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ
- we come to another section which is more intensely practical, and which continues to the end of the book
- the danger here is to drift away from the Gospel, and move toward mere moralism
- I will work hard, and you need to work hard, and always grounding these commands (which are absolute and authoritative and which are an outworking of the Gospel in our lives) in the glorious things we have in Christ
- A life of faith not only rests in what Christ has done and will do, but also strives toward what God calls us by the Gospel to do

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**EXPOSITION**
**TWO THINGS WE ARE CALLED TO PURSUE IN A LIFE OF FAITH – v.14**

- Pursue (Gk. diokete) – persecute/chase after/strive for; a call to strive after something with all our might, with an obsession until we get it
- 1.) **Peace** – (Gk. eirene) – harmony, welfare, the absence of war and hostility - Ps34:14 Pr12:20 Mt5:9
  - With all people - Rom12:18 – not peace at all costs (even righteousness), but as much as we can
  - This includes believers and unbelievers, and takes humility, forgiveness, and willingness to trust God for the outcome
- 2.) **Holiness** – sanctification, likeness to Christ, purity of heart, a life confirmed to God’s commands born out of a heart to please Him
  - The reason given – without these no one will see the Lord
  - The wrong way to think about this warning – peace and holiness as a final destination or level which is reached, and if it is not reached then you will not see the Lord
    - o This tends to externalize and discourage (even to the point of despair)
  - The right way to think about this warning – a life of genuine, though struggling, pursuit of peace and holiness
    - o This brings humility, readiness to start anew with Christ when we see our failures

**THREE THINGS WE ARE CALLED TO LOOK CAREFULLY FOR IN A LIFE OF FAITH – vv.15-17**

- Looking carefully – (Gk. episkopeo) look over, examine, keep a watchful eye on
- These are three particular dangers that can develop as one seeks to live in peace and holiness
- 1.) **Falling short of the Grace of God – v.15a**
  - primarily, by not persevering in a life of faith, departing from Christ in the Gospel, giving up on God, self-righteousness
  - falling short of God’s grace could also be a reference to bearing the fruit that God’s grace brings
- 2.) **Bitterness – v.15b**
  - any root of bitterness springing up – this is an internal disposition brought about by disappointment – Dt.29:18
  - cause trouble and by this many become defiled – bitterness not only affects us and defiles us, but also can be like an infection that spreads to others and destroy relationships
- 3.) **Sexual Immorality – v.16a**
  - lest there be any fornicator (Gk. pornos) – all forms of sexual immorality outside of marriage covenant between one man and woman
  - or profane person (Gk. bebaylos) – open to all, used for any purpose; opposite of sanctified or holy (set apart)

**The Bad Example of Esau – v.16b-17**

- This is historically, and pastorally, one of the most troublesome texts in Scripture (next to blasphemy of the HS)
- We should see that this is clearly a serious warning against sin – not to take it lightly
- Without diminishing its seriousness, I also wouldn’t want it to lead any of us who believe in the Gospel to despair, even when we have sinned greatly
- **What Esau did** - for one morsel of food sold his birthright; a single act which had ongoing consequences
- **The consequence** - afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears
- I question whether this gives us a definitive statement about Esau’s ultimately spiritual condition
- What it does warn us of is the temporal consequences of even single sins (like Moses’ anger and David’s adultery/murder)
- His repentance was particularly related to his desire to inherit the firstborn blessing, and even though he sought it with tears his mistake was not able to be remedied
- The warning to us, particularly in relation to bitterness and sexual immorality is that there could be such deep and serious consequences that while we can receive the grace of God in forgiveness, they could have serious consequences in this life that repentance may not remove

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**APPLICATION**

- Peace and holiness can only be pursued first out of pursuing the grace of God in Jesus Christ