

Hebrews 12:14
September 4, 2016

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Have any of you ever been a part of a community that had a homeowner's association?

Q: If yes, what are some examples of HOA rules? [With the exception of July 4th and New Year's Eve, fireworks cannot be used after 10pm; lawn must be properly maintained; architectural control – can't add or alter walls, fences, landscaping, add a pool, etc, without approval]

Q: Why do communities have homeowner associations? [They want to create a safe and enjoyable environment for all of the residents of the community. They also want uniformity with how properties look.]

We all appreciate a community of people who strive to show respect to one another by keeping their properties well-kempt and to make sure certain standards are maintained.

Transition: We find ourselves in a similar situation in that we are citizens of God's kingdom and there are some guidelines we need to follow to help us function in this community well. Because God is over His kingdom, He has certain "homeowners association" rules of conduct. All of us CAN show our highest respect and reverence to God BY exercising the RESPONSIBILITIES He gave us to be exemplary citizens in His kingdom.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.14:

- Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What is the first responsibility we have been given? [Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy.]

Q: What does "living in peace" with all men look like? [Let people engage. Remember "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," Heb. 12:11.]

Q: When there's conflict or discord, how does a citizen of God manage it?

Observation: Being a "citizen" strongly implies that we have responsibilities to a community of people, and in this case, to our own brothers and sisters around the world. If each of us worked hard to make every effort to live in peace with those around us, imagine what our world could look like if 100% of us made that a top goal!

Q: Since another part of our responsibility is to “be holy,” what does that look like? [Be Christ-like. We are called to be Christ-like, and holiness is one of His attributes.]

Q: Why is being “holy” so important to God? [Without holiness no one will see the Lord.]

Process: “It’s hard for people to be drawn to Jesus if we aren’t conducting ourselves in a godly manner. As citizens of God’s Kingdom, God expects us to act like it!” [Let people engage.]

LOOK:

God expects us to exercise responsibility as a citizen in his “homeowner’s association” or Kingdom: *make every effort to live in peace with all men and be holy.*

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 2, p. 325)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Enablement of God’s Grace (Heb. 12:14)

As we run the Christian race, what is our goal? The writer explained the goal in Hebrews 12:14: *Peace* with all men, and *holiness* before the Lord. (Remember “the *peaceable* fruit of *righteousness*,” Heb. 12:11.) These two goals remind us of our Lord’s high priestly ministry—King of *peace* and King of *righteousness* (Heb. 7:1–2). It requires diligence to run the race successfully lest we “fail of the grace of God” (Heb. 12:15). God’s grace does not fail, but we can fail to take advantage of His grace. At the end of the chapter, there is another emphasis on grace (Heb. 12:28).

In this section, the writer encouraged his readers to depend on the grace of God by urging them to look by faith in three directions.

Pentecost, J. D. (1985). *Daniel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, p. 810)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

12:14. **Peace with all men** as well as personal holiness must be vigorously sought since **without holiness** (*hagiasmos*) **no one will see the Lord**. Since no sin can stand in God’s presence, Christians must—and will be—sinless when they see the Lord (cf. 1 John 3:2). That realization offers motivation for pursuing holiness here and now. But the author may also have had in mind the thought that one’s perception of God even now is conditioned by his real measure of holiness (cf. Matt. 5:8).