

Studies in Hebrews



Lesson XXI

Text: Chapter 12:14—17 (NIV)

¹⁴ Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

¹⁶ See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

Questions for Group Discussion

1. What makes it difficult to maintain peaceful relationships (vs. 14a)?
 - a. How can we maintain peaceful relationships when we disagree with a person's viewpoints and life choices?
2. Verse 14 presents not one command, but two. What is the significance of this pairing: "live in peace...and be holy"? (vs. 14b)
 - a. Does peace sometimes lead to compromise?
 - b. Does fear of compromise sometimes keep Christians from being at peace with others?
3. How is it possible to miss the grace of God (vs. 15a)?
4. What is a "bitter root" ("root of bitterness," KJV) and how does it cause problems in a congregation? (vs. 15) Do Christians sometimes leave the faith because of traumatic interpersonal experiences in church?
5. How does Esau's short-sightedness and carnality serve as a warning to 21st century believers? (vv. 16-17)