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Hebrews 12:14-17

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord, ¹⁵ watching out lest anyone comes short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶ lest *there be* any 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.

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¹ For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*.
² For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? (Heb. 2:1-3)

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¹⁴ "Now not with you alone am I making this covenant and this oath, ¹⁵ but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not with us here today... ¹⁶ lest there be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood. ¹⁷ It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, 'I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered *land* with the dry.'

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²⁰ The LORD shall never be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.

(Deuteronomy 29:14-20)

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Mutual Vigilance

1. The Command: "Pursue"

- "Peace" – harmony and wholeness of our common life together with believers
- "Holiness" – a continual living in the cleansing from sin and access to God provided by Christ
 - this holiness alone qualifies us for final entrance into God's presence ("see the Lord")

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Mutual Vigilance

2. The Warning: “watching out lest...”

- anyone fails to endure and not enter God’s final salvation – “falls short of the grace of God”
- any poisonous root of unbelief and rebellion infects many with its defilement (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6)
- anyone’s godless appetite leads to open apostasy, like Esau

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Mutual Vigilance

2. The Warning: “watching out lest...”

- Persistent neglect of the things of God leads to a love for the transitory pleasures of this world which may result in apostasy

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Mutual Vigilance

3. The Example: “Esau”

- he represents the danger of apostasy – there is a time when repentance is no longer possible
- his rejection is reflected in a life of callousness that does not desire repentance or seek to turn from its rebellious ways

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Mutual Vigilance

➤ Implications

1. This warning is designed to awaken us to the dangers of unbelief, not to undermine our hope
2. Mutual vigilance and encouragement is a necessary means to our endurance in faith

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¹² Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

(Heb. 3:12-13)

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