

I. Review

- A. The writer has been exhorting his audience in hopes of strengthening them in their faith in order that they do not continue on the downward spiral of losing their faith in the face of trials and suffering.
- B. We will pick up in the middle of the writer's practical exhortations. After addressing the mindset and heart concerning the suffering and trials they are facing, the writer now continues by turning to the interpersonal relationships.
 - 1. Refresh and re-establish the promise of the restoration of all things.
 - 2. Look to the good testimony of those who have gone before.
 - 3. Understand the chastening from your Father is for your good.
 - 4. Position yourself with the right heart posture for the trial that tests your faith to produce righteous fruit.

II. Verse-by-Verse

- A. Relational factors that hinder faith - The writer addresses three different areas relationally that greatly hinder and affect our faith.
 - 1. Pursue Peace - The Greek word translated “pursue” means to run swiftly with fierce intent. Most conflict builds from unspoken offenses or disappointments. Relational conflict derails our faith because it generally becomes all-consuming once it builds to true conflict. The writer calls for intentionality on your part to make sure there are no hidden offenses or disappointments within your relational sphere. (Rom. 12:14-21)
 - 2. Pursue Holiness - With the same intentionality and intensity, we are to make sure our relationships are holy. This speaks of searching out the intentions and manner of our relationships. This includes, but goes far beyond, immorality, and into the reality of purity of the why and the what of the relationships we are in and pursuing. (Mt. 5:8; 1 Pet. 1:22-23)
 - 3. Give no place for Legalism - In its context, “falling short of the grace of God”, sets you up for having a “root of bitterness”. If this is allowed to remain and grow, it will lead to “faith being defiled”. Falling short of the grace of God is to lose sight of the essential doctrine of justification by faith through grace. In other words, legalism, or justification by works, kills life-giving faith. (Acts. 8:23; Rom. 3:14; Eph. 4:31)

B. Lest you become like Esau - The story of Esau is that he was seeking comfort for his suffering, and in doing so, was willing to sell his birthright in the promise of God to gain some temporary relief for his flesh. This word picture fits perfectly in the context of this portion of the letter where the writer is imploring the reader to endure the trial and suffering they are currently in. They could easily give in and renounce their belief and practice of Christianity and immediately find relief from their trial. However, in doing so they forfeit their inheritance of the promise of salvation.

1. Fornicator - The Greek word translated “fornicator” here speaks of the selling of one's body for financial gain. This is essentially what Esau did by trading the temporary gain of appeasing his flesh for the eternal promise of God. Why? Because the promise of comfort was a long way off and the temporary pleasure immediate.
2. Profane - The word used here means “common” or “base”, speaking of the fleshly nature or the thinking of fallen humanity. This thinking is devoid of godliness or an eternal perspective, and is contrary to the heart of God; therefore, contrary to the fullness of life and love in the faith of the believer. (SOTM Mt. 5-7; Gal. 5:16-25)

C. Who afterwards wanted to inherit the blessing, but found no place for repentance - Again, the word picture is clear. Esau could not get back that which he chose to give up when it came to his eternal inheritance in the age to come. He was supposed to be in the family through which the seed came forth, and with that came a certain eternal position and reward. However, because of his double-mindedness, he gave up that eternal position and his brother took his place.

1. For a bowl of soup - A lifetime of relief from temporary discomfort, suffering, or trial through unrighteousness will be compared to trading your inheritance for a bowl of soup when the sheer weight of eternal rewards is realized. (Rom. 8:16-19; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Heb. 11:25-26, 35)
2. Though he sought it diligently with tears - Although there is concern of the full loss of faith altogether, the writer is clearly talking about the current reality of the Hebrews giving up eternal rewards and the fullness of life through their response to suffering in the moment. God is wanting to form something in them that will produce an eternal weight of glory and

many are saying ‘no’ to His process. (Heb. 10:32-36; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 1 Cor. 3:11-15)