

THREE IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

Hebrews 12:14-17

Introduction: Regardless of who we are, what position we hold, what language we speak, what country we live in, there are three relationships which greatly contribute to our happiness. No one is exempt, everyone is involved to some degree or other. From the single, living alone person to the person with a large family and many friends. The degree of our relationship with God, our fellow men (women), and God's Christian family contribute greatly to our "real" happiness.

I. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS MAKES A DIFFERENCE (v. 14)

1. *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord..."*
 - The idea of "follow peace" is to push, press, reach for, pursue it. Very few make it a priority to seek to maintain peace with others, taking the initiative.
 - It is a "goal," a way of life God wants His Children to work for.
2. *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*
 - God wants His Children to make the effort, to reach for peace.
 - God wants His Children to go after a fellowship free of bitterness and hostility.
3. God wants us to do our best to get along with others, to work at it, to strive for peace.
 - It always takes two to have an argument.
 - We are to do away with bitterness, strife and hatred.
 - We are to love and to forgive.
 - We are to be right with others.
4. Those who are not of God's family must get right with God first, then with their fellow men.
 - Christians are to get right with their fellow men first, then get right with God.
 - An important truth/fact that most forget is that a Christian cannot be right with God if he/she is not right with his/her fellow men.

II. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD MAKES A DIFFERENCE (v14)

1. "Holiness" is something we struggle with as it is not a part of our natural human nature.
 - It is to be whole, complete, separate unto God.
2. One cannot know God and not be holy as God is. To know God is to walk with God.
 - "Knowing God is not superficial knowledge, it is deep and personal, on God's terms.
3. God is so different from us. Not sinful, not hateful, not confused. God is holy, full of love, order and purpose. God is everything we are not.
4. So, how do we get "holiness?" By God's way only and that is yielding to and obeying God.
 - Our biggest problem is not that we don't know how, but we are not willing to obey.
 - We do not want to have to bow our knees or obey God or even admit we do need God.

5. God's holiness does not come in a single step.
 - It is a way of life.
 - Jesus Christ longs to be in us, to be our strength, to be our wisdom, to be our comfort, to give us purpose in life.
 - We must reach out to Jesus, He is waiting.

III. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER CHRISTIANS MAKES A DIFFERENCE (vv 15-17)

1. ***"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."***
 - To "look diligently" is like a pastor would, as an overseer. To look out for one another and to encourage one another.
2. We spend a lot of time condemning, criticizing, looking for flaws and undercutting others and this is directly opposite of how we should be acting toward others.
3. We are to help, provide for one another.
4. To "fail of the grace of God" is not becoming lost again.
 - It is to lag as in a race so we are to make sure nobody stops or drops out and we are to be kind, encouraging and restoring to and with the weaker ones.
 - "root of bitterness" involves hidden things, bitterness, anger, resentment which will make us ineffective and cause hurt to others.
 - These attitudes were displayed in Jesus' life by His enemies and hurt Him.
 - "fornication" is immorality but we are to lead a pure life and to lift up and encourage each other."profane" is not considering the things of God sacred, just plain, ordinary, things.
 - Esau turned from God's plan for him and lost everything and never got it back.
 - We are to be serious and not to "Play Church."

CONCLUSION:

1. Give yourself an attitude check. How is your attitude in these three areas?
2. Is there an area you need to do some work in, something you need to correct?
3. We are to pursue peace and holiness and when these three areas are working as they should there should be complete happiness.