

HEBREWS

“NO TURNING BACK”

Hebrews Lesson 19

Ice Breaker: What is the problem with weeds? How do you get rid of them?

INTRO: Weeds tend to choke out good plants and they spread with no help at all! To get rid of them, you have to pull them up at the root or they'll just keep coming back. The writer of Hebrews warns us of two different kinds of weeds that can ruin our spiritual lives: bitterness and ingratitude.

READ: Hebrews 12:14-28

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.

18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” 27 The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our “God is a consuming fire.”

Q: In verse 15 we are told to “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” What is he saying about grace and bitter roots?

- A bitter root can make you miss God's grace.

- Heb. 4:16 *“Let us then approach the **throne of grace** with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help us in our time of need.**”*
- You may not be able to find help in time of need if you have let a bitter root grow!

Q: What is this “bitter root”, and why does it cause trouble and defile many?

- Deut. 29:18-19 *“Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today **whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.** 19 When such a person hears the words of this oath, he invokes a blessing on himself **and therefore thinks, “I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way.”** This will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry.”*
 - The bitter root, or root that produces bitterness, is an attitude that says **“I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way.”**
 - Saying things like, “God won’t punishment even though I sin”; “I can be blessed even though I am disobeying God.” “I’ll repent when I’m ready.”
 - Moses said turning away from God happens when you let a root of idolatry, compromise and self-serving motives grow up.
 - That root produces a bitter poison.
 - That poison kills!
- It defiles many because serving self is more natural than sacrificing self, so others often catch the same attitude.

Q: Why does verse 16 say Esau was godless? What was the result of his godlessness?

- He wasn’t grateful for inheritance; he took it for granted.
 - Gen 25:34 says, *“So Esau despised his birthright.”*
 - He despised his birthright by treating it so casually.
- He lost his birthright and couldn’t get it back.
- As born-again citizens of the Kingdom, we have a birthright... an inheritance. Do we treat it casually? If so, it means we despise it... it could mean we have become godless.

Q: In verses 18-24, the writer compares Mount Zion (the Kingdom of God) to Mount Sinai. What are some of the differences and why does he point them out?

- Everyone was scared to death at Mount Sinai. You couldn’t go near God or bear to hear His voice. (Ex. 19:10-20:18)
- In the Kingdom, love has replaced fear (1John 4:18) and we not only can go near God, but we live in the city with Him!
- He doesn’t want us to treat our inheritance like Esau treated his!

Q: According to verse 28, what does it take to worship God acceptably?

- Reverence and awe.
- We can’t worship just anyway we want and be acceptable.
- We can’t take worshiping God for granted. We need to be thankful!

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. Do you have a bitter root you need to deal with?
 - a. If yes, how do you intend to get at its root so it won't come back?
2. Have you lost touch with your gratitude or taken for granted your inheritance in Christ?
 - a. If so, what can you do to regain it?
 - b. If you haven't lost it, what can you do to make sure you keep it?
3. Would God say you worship Him with reverence and awe or casually?
 - a. What would reverent worship look like in your life?