



Perfecting Hope and God's Means

Lesson Fifty-Three • Hebrews 12:14-17

The Five Warning Passages and the Progression of a "Slow Fade" into Apostasy				
1 NEGLECTING <i>Danger of DRIFTING</i> 2:1-4	2 HARDENING <i>Danger of DISTRUSTING</i> 3:7-19 / 4:1-13	3 STAGNATING <i>Danger of DELAYING</i> 5:11-6:12 / 6:13-20	4 FORSAKING <i>Danger of DEPARTING</i> 10:26-31 / 39	5 REFUSING <i>Danger of DEFYING</i> 12:14-24 / 12:25-29
APOSTATIZING: The Danger of Denying Faith in the Triune God				

*Apostasy is a **SLOW FADE** fueled by a variety of obstacles (temptations, trials, tests) in the race to the finish line!*

- The Warnings:** One of God's sovereign **MEANS** to ensure true believers will persevere to the end!
 "It is evident from 6:4-6 that the writer addresses Christians, that he warns believers about what will happen if they fall away. His purpose in the warning isn't to pause and to say, 'Some of those I am addressing are not truly believers.' Believers are addressed in the admonitions...the warnings were a means used to preserve them in the faith until the end. Another way to put it is this: the author doesn't attend to a question that often holds our attention. He doesn't consider whether some of those addressed aren't truly believers, for to do so would be to distract him from his main purpose and would blunt the force of the warning." – Tom Schreiner

- The Point:** There's no **MIDDLE** ground for spiritual sluggards and lame runners!
 Get growing and start moving forward despite persecution and pressure, temptations and trials, since renewing hardened apostates to repentance is impossible!
Hebrews 2:3; 3:16-19; 6:9-20; 10:26-27; 12:15-17

Who Has Already Fallen Away Among These Believers?

NO ONE yet...but some have *already* made it a habit of forsaking to gather together as a church! (10:24-25)

Who Won't Fall Away but Are Still Warned Not to Among These Believers?

The **ELECT** whom God securely keeps by grace through persevering faith that obeys these warnings to stay fixated on Christ's greater glory (Ch 1-4), hold fast to their confession of the Son as their Priest-King (Ch 5-10), and who move forward together with confidence to enter God's final rest (Ch 10-13).

Who Might Fall Away Among These Believers?

Those who profess Christ but **WON'T UNITE** by faith in the gospel with those who are persevering to the end. (4:2)

How Should We Respond?

OBEY these gospel warnings by persevering faith with perfected hope!
 They are God's gospel-centered means for finishing faithful and not falling away from Christ!

- The Truth:** God uses His **REVEALED** means of grace to get us to His Winner's Circle!
 Last Week: God's grace uses the means of **HELPING** one another in our weakness with perfecting hope!
 With perfecting hope, we *strengthen* one another's hands and knees, *straighten* one another's path, *set* one another's lameness, and *support* one another to *stay* in the race! (12:12-13)

Make Every Effort to **PURSUE** the Fruits of Grace with Perfected Hope!

"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." (11:14)

1. Make Every Effort to Pursue **PEACEFUL** and **HOLY** Living.

"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification." (11:14a)

Why Pursue Peaceful and Holy Living?

- They will characterize our perfected **HOPE** in the future. (12:22-24)

Three Tenses of Salvation...*Again!*

- **POSITIONALLY** we have already been given both peace with God and His people on the basis of our holy standing before God by the blood of Jesus *in the past!* [Justification]
- **PROGRESSIVELY** we make every effort to pursue both peace with God and with all people (as much as it depends on us!) as well as holy living before God *in the present!* [Sanctification]
- **PERFECTLY** we will fully and finally experience both peace with God and His people as well as being presented holy in God's presence *in the future!* [Glorification]

➤ They are the **HARVEST** of God's parental discipline of His children *in the present!* (12:11)

➤ They are the **HEALING** result of strengthening one another *to run with endurance!* (12:12-13)

Hebrews 4:16; 10:24-25

2. God's Grace **MOTIVATES** Us to Make Every Effort to Pursue His Means of Grace.

➤ This pursuit is *divinely* **GUARANTEED** by God's grace in the New Covenant.

Why Is Holy Living with God Divinely Guaranteed? (8:10; 10:10, 14-16a)

Why is Peaceful Living with God and His People Divinely Guaranteed? (8:10-12; 10:16b-18)

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the LORD." 1 Corinthians 1:30-31

➤ This pursuit is *absolutely* **NECESSARY** to be saved by God's grace in the future.

"Pursue...the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." (v. 14)

*"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation **through sanctification** by the Spirit and faith in the truth." 2 Thessalonians 2:13*

*"For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, **but in sanctification**. So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God **who gives His Holy Spirit to you.**" 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8*

➤ This pursuit *graciously* **REQUIRES** us to make every effort by persevering faith with perfected hope!

Make Every Effort to Pursue Peaceful and Holy Living by God's Means of Grace with Perfecting Hope!

*"Now the **God of peace**, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through **the blood of the eternal covenant**, even Jesus our Lord, **equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight** through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." Hebrews 13:2-21*

*"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**" Philippians 2:12-13*