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Hebrews 12:14

**PASSIONATELY PURSUE
PEACE AND PURITY**

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OPENING OBSERVATIONS

- Peace/unity are two sides of the same coin. The same is true for purity/holiness. We will use them synonymously.
- The *goal of separation is purity*, for holiness by definition is separation from evil.
- “Pursue” conveys hot pursuit, as in persecution (e.g. Mt. 5:10-11; Acts 9:4-5).
- Connecting peace and holiness teaches that *a life of strife is antithetical to growth in holiness*.
- Connecting the two also teaches that *peace at the expense of purity is a false peace*.
- Therefore, *purity/holiness is God’s ultimate standard*.
 - God loves the world, but the unrighteous face eternal hell.
 - “Wisdom from above is first pure then peaceable.” (More later on this)

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PEACE/UNITY

- We know from the news and experience that **peace is rare**. Some hate peace despite our best efforts (*Ps. 120:5-6*).
- Fightings and wars are dangerous (hard to contain, like letting out a flood of water – *Pr. 17:14*), but **because of our passions and lusts believers too are guilty** (*James 4:1*).
- It is good and pleasant when brothers dwell together in unity (*Ps. 133:1*).
- *“When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him”* (*Pr. 16:7*).
- Seeking peace requires *“departing from evil”* and *“doing good”* (*Ps. 34:14*). **Evil shatters peace, so look for the evil where peace is missing.**

OBSERVATIONS
ABOUT
PEACE/UNITY

Apply these things to (1) life on the field with your adopted people and (2) life with your fellow workers.

- Christ teaches that we should be more than peace-keepers.
- *“Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Mt. 5:9)*
- Make sure that *“so far as it depends upon you, [you] live peaceably with all.” (Rom. 12:18)*

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PEACE/UNITY

- Recall one of our core values:
GRACIOUS = *We desire to manifest an approachable, teachable, respectful, and charitable spirit in all our dealings within and outside of GFA.*
- This attitude will go a long way in enabling us to be peace-makers.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PEACE/UNITY

Apply these things to (1) life on the field with your adopted people and (2) life with your fellow workers.

- Peace is beautiful in many aspects.
 - To the Trinity
 - God the Father is
 - the *God of peace* (Heb. 13:20).
 - Christ is
 - the *Prince of Peace* (Is. 9:6).
 - The Holy Spirit
 - produces the *fruit of peace* (Gal. 5:20).
 - To believers
 - We are *called to peace* (1 Cor. 7:15).
 - We have beautiful feet for they are shod to preach the *Gospel of peace* (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15).

Jesus's high-priestly prayer provides several key points about unity (John 17).

Sanctify/holiness

Truth

Oneness

Union

John 17:17 **Sanctify** them in the truth; **your word is truth**.

17:18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

17:19 And for their sake I **consecrate** myself, that they also may be **sanctified in truth**. [both words are **hagiazō**]

17:20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word,

17:21 **that they may all be one**, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that **they** also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

17:22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that **they may be one even as we are one**,

17:23 **I in them** and **you in me**, that **they may become perfectly one**, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PEACE/UNITY FROM JESUS' PRAYER

- Jesus stressed holiness – being sanctified.
 - This holiness is the foundation for the unity that follows.
 - This holiness is based on and produced by “truth.”
 - **Unity apart from adherence to truth is a false unity.**
 - **It is like building a bridge on sand.**
- The example of unity is the perfect union of the Trinity (17:22).
- Jesus also stressed *vital* union. Only those who are “in” Christ can practice the unity.
- Jesus also stressed the purpose and result of this unity in holiness: *that the world may believe that the Father sent the Son and loves believers as He does the Son* (17:21, 23).

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PEACE/UNITY

- Paul also stressed the importance of unity and connected it with peace.
 - We are to be *“endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* (Eph. 4:3, KJV)
 - The Spirit binds all into the one body.
 - Peace then is experienced through mutual affection, as this mutual love maintains the bond.
 - Maintaining this bond requires continual effort.
 - The goal of ministry is that we *“all attain to the unity of the faith”* (Eph. 4:13).
 - Doctrinal purity and then a doctrinal unity are desirable.
 - This is the goal and we are not there yet.



Key Principle

TRANSITION:
HOW TO SEEK
PEACE AND
PURITY AT THE
SAME TIME

The requirements of
purity govern the
pursuit of peace.



Key Text about the Guiding Priority

TRANSITION:
HOW TO SEEK
PEACE AND
PURITY AT THE
SAME TIME

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

-- James 3:17



The foundation for peace must be on solid rock, otherwise
the result eventually is spiritual disaster.
Beware of living close to the edge.

HOW TO SEEK PURITY

- Must be done based on biblical principles and not anger or bitterness or love of strife.
- The main biblical principles:
 - **Love**
 - for God (*includes love for His Word)
 - for the brethren
 - for the lost
 - **Doctrinal purity (in order of importance)**
 - The fundamentals – no deviation here (e.g. *Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, justification by faith alone, and the authority of Scripture*)
 - Our denominational convictions

WHAT ABOUT
SO-CALLED
“SECONDARY
SEPARATION?”

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SEPARATING
FROM
PROFESSED
BELIEVERS

- The terminology is not biblical, but the question is legitimate.
- Jesus, Paul, Jude and John called for separation from professed believers for various reasons.
 - Jesus – Mt. 18:17; Rev. 2:14-15
 - Paul – Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; Titus 3:10
 - Jude – Jude 1:3-4
 - John – 2 John 1:7-11

JESUS

- Matthew 18:15-17, ““If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And **if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.**”
- Rev. 2:14-15, “But I have a few things against you: **you have some there** [Pergamum church] who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. 15 So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16a Therefore repent.”

PAUL ON SEPARATING FROM A BROTHER

- Rom. 16:17, “I appeal to you, brothers, to **watch out** for **those who cause divisions** and create obstacles **contrary to the doctrine** that you have been taught; **avoid them.**”
- 1 Cor. 5:11-12, “But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?**”

PAUL ON CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH UNBELIEVERS

- **This command is uncompromising: believers must keep separate from the lawlessness, darkness, idolatry and uncleanness of unbelievers.**
- **The danger of compromise with believers who do not separate is implicit throughout the passage.**

- *2 Cor. 6:14-18, “**Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.** For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 **Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing**; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”*

PAUL ON SEPARATING FROM A BROTHER

- 2 Th. 3:6, “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **keep away from any brother** who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.”
- 2Th 3:14-15, “If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, **take note of that person**, and **have nothing to do with him**, that he may be ashamed. 15 **Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.**”
- Titus 3:10, “As for **a person who stirs up division** [heretic – schism from their false doctrine; 2 Pet. 2:1], after warning him once and then twice, **have nothing more to do with him...**”

JUDE

Jude 3-4, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and **exhort** you that ye should **earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are **certain men crept in unawares**, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, **turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**”

- These men are “in” the church, but dishonestly.
- These men pervert God’s grace.
- These men must be earnestly resisted, for doctrinal purity and the peace of the church are at stake.

JOHN

2 Jn 1:7, “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.... 10 If anyone **comes to you** and does not bring this teaching, **do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting**, 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.”

If there come any — as a teacher or brother. The *Greek* is indicative, not subjunctive; implying that such persons *do actually come*, and *are sure to come* ... True love is combined with hearty renunciation and separation from all that is false, whether persons or doctrines. -- JFB

FIGHT FOR THE FAITH

**This is not optional
if we want to leave a
biblical legacy to
those who follow us.**

1 Tim. 6:12a

- “Fight the good fight of the faith.” (ESV)
- “We have to fight to keep our faith.” (Easy-to-Read Version)
- “Fight on for God” (Living Bible)
- Fight the good fight of faith.” (KJV)

*Note: this is not only for “fighting fundamentalists”!

2 Tim. 4:7

- “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” (ESV)
- “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (RSV)
- “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (NIV)

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