**Hebrews 12:12-15 – Before it’s too late**

**Main idea: A bad response from me leads to a bad response from God**

**Introduction**

**‘Too late’(Webster’s): “Not enough and not soon enough to make a difference”**

**How can it be too late?**

* 1. **We are not promised tomorrow**
  2. **The entire book warns of not growing in our faith and the danger that presents (2:1-4; 3-4; 5:11-6:9; 10:26-33)**
  3. **It can be too late if we don’t grow and instead our hearts grow hard.**

**Hebrews 3:7-14 “Today, if you hear His voice”**

* **The idea is “Respond while you have opportunity”**
* **The danger is a hard heart**

**Immediate context: respond well to God’s child training**

**The Text**

**1) Hebrews 12:12-13 – Our response impacts both our lives and others**

* **Deal with areas that need correction.**
* **The idea is taken from Isa. 35:3-4 and Prov. 4:26**
* **“Limb…lame…turned aside…healed” A struggling brother or sister.**
* **When we walk with God, we help others who are weak (Heb. 10:25-26).**
* **The concern is corporate and the goal is the kingdom in all contexts.**

**2) Hebrews 12:14-15 – Grabbing grace and avoiding a bitter root**

* **Pursuing peace is a “straight path”.**
* **We make things worse for ourselves and others when we grumble and complain.**
* **Another “straight path” is to pursue holiness.**
* **The ancient world saw the correct view of God directly tied to holiness and purity - Matthew 5:8. Rev. 22:4; Ps. 105:4; Job 33:26; 1 Jn. 3:6; 3 Jn. 11.**
* **“No one will see the Lord.” The idea is that sin never arises from a true knowledge of a true vision of God. A person who sins does not see God for who He is or know God for who He is (1 Jn. 3:6). When we sin, we’ve lost sight of God (3 Jn. 11)!**
* **“Holiness…without which no one will see the Lord” – Two ideas:**

**1) Respond to God’s child-training (12:11); Since one day all believers will see God, start becoming what you will be. You’ll better understand (“see”) God now and shape a better future (possibly “see” Him better?)**

**2) By pursuing holiness you’ll help other believers. People see God in us as we love and obey (1 Jn. 4:12).**

* **If we do not, pursue peace and holiness, we come short of God’s enabling power or grace – Heb. 4:14-16. This leads to deterioration, anger, and bitterness toward God, others, and life in general (Phil. 2:14).**
* **“Root of bitterness” - The person risks becoming a bitter root; a carnal, dangerous Christian (Dt. 29:18; Acts 5 and 8:23).**

**“The “bitter root” in Hebrews refers to a source of evil or wickedness within the church. A root may be small and slow in its growth, but, if it carries poison, it is malignant; it is dangerous. Sin in the church must be diligently rooted out; the result of tolerating wickedness is that “many” will be defiled.” (gotquestions.org)**

* **1 Cor. 5 (Pr. 22:10) – Some say, “That’s really unloving”. It’s more unloving to see other Christian lives “infected” by that person. Complainers are often partially true, but lack Christ-like perspective.**

**3) Hebrews 12:16-17 – The example of Esau and the danger of being hangry**

* **Gen. 25:29-34; Ch. 27, esp. vv. 30-35**
* **“Immoral” – Three wives**
* **“Godless” – “Totally worldly; pertaining to being worldly as opposed to having an interest in transcendent matters; devoid of interest in divine blessing.”**
* **“For a single moment of sensual pleasure…”**
* **The issue here is clearly NOT salvation, but his inheritance/blessing**
* **The same thing is the issue with us**
* **“No place for repentance” - Isaac had given his first-born rights away**
* **Esau was too late to inherit; gave up first-born rights!**
* **His disregard for spiritual things caught up with him**
* **Play with sin, play with fire; This can, and does, happen to believers!**
* **There is no effective repentance in eternity**

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