

Round Top Church Christian Fellowship

Devotional

Hebrew 12:14

Pursue Peace and Sanctification

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Scripture Quotes from New American Standard Bible

Day one Devotional

Hebrews 12:14 **Pursue peace** with all men, and the **sanctification** without which no one will **see the Lord**.

This devotional is about looking at the three attributes, elements or life changing principles in Hebrews 12:14. God's **peace**, **sanctification** and being the Lord's **witness so that others can see Him**.

First Peace: Hebrew: *shalom*; Greek: *eirene*:

Peace or Shalom In the Old Testament: Is a condition of freedom from disturbance, inward peace was the portion of the righteous who trusted in God (Job 22:21, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace (Heb: *shalom*).") Peace was to be sought and followed by the righteous (Psalm 34:14, "Seek peace, and pursue it"; Zechariah 8:16, 19, "Love truth and peace"). (5) Peace should be a prominent feature of the Messianic times (Isaiah 2:4; 9:6, "Prince of Peace"; 11:6; Ezekiel 34:25; Micah 4:2-4; Zechariah 9:10). Jerusalem (Je-ru-salem) (*yerushalem*) is the city of Peace.

Peace or Eirene In the New Testament: The gospel in Christ is a message of peace from God to men (Luke 2:14; Acts 10:36, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ"). It is "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," in Romans 5:1.

God directs the writer of Hebrews 12:14 to tell us to pursue peace with all people. Who is the **Prince of Peace**? You guessed it. Jesus. Therefore, it is through the Prince of Peace we pursue peace. We do not pursue peace by ourselves.

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, **Prince of Peace**.

7 There will be **no end** to the increase of *His* government or of **peace**, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

In **Paul's** letters he extends the word "peace" as his calling card from the Lord. Peace is Paul's calling card; peace is Paul's authority, a rock which he catapults the witness of Jesus from. An example is read in 1 Cor. 1:3 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Peter's witness in Acts 10:36 "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)."

Jesus states to the disciples in John 20:19, 20, 26 during the resurrection "Peace be with you."

Devotional Question:

When you pursue peace with someone do you think of biblical principles to go by? What are the first few principles you turn to.

Day Two Devotional

Second ~ Sanctification

The second attribute or life changing principle we are to pursue is sanctification: This word is often misunderstood due to how it is translated in the English Bible.

Sanctify and Sanctification: The word is used in different contexts; within these contexts the application of meaning can be attained. We will look at two contexts or meanings. In addition the word *holy* is compared to *sanctify*.

To **Sanctify** is an event, a status for one who has been set aside for God. This applies to all believers as we have all been set aside from the fallen world for the Lord. We are to live our lives separate.

Sanctification is a series of events that take place throughout our lives. Being sanctified is the first step in sanctification.

Holy is a word that has a similar meaning. The word *holy* means a state of being also as one who has been set aside for God. One can be *holy*, but we do not say one is *hollying* as we would use the word *sanctifying*. In Greek the two words are similar. Holy/ *hagios* and *sanctify/hagiasmon*. We can say that one is *holy* or *sanctified*. These two words in their original language can have the same application in their use. However, context and spelling changes things. When we say sanctification we are saying two things. We are communicating that something has been established and that there is motion forward.

Context One ~ a person has been set aside - sanctified.

God *sets aside* (*sanctify*) people for His purposes and His ways. God desires for us to choose by surrendering to Him our will and from that point we can mature; we can grow in our relationship with the Lord. We enter into a lifelong sanctification process.

From the very beginning God's sanctifying work can be seen. In Genesis 2:3 God sanctified (שָׁדַשׁ *qadash* **Meaning: to be set apart or consecrated**) the seventh day and made it Holy. (שָׁדַשׁ *qodesh*: *apartness, sacredness* / Greek: ἅγιος *hagios*; **Meaning: sacred, holy**)

In Genesis God set the seventh day aside for people's benefit so they could be spiritually and physically replenished. This is the main point of the day of rest. Paul does declare (Colossians 2:16; Romans 14:5, 6) that one day is not above the other. After the resurrection the Sabbath (Saturday the seventh day of the week), as a day of rest, is moved to Sunday as the day Jesus rose from the tomb. We see in Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2, and Rev. 1:10 believers meeting to break bread and collect offerings and John being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Therefore, God set aside many things in life for His plan. This is the "Way of God." People can then

accomplish the “Will of God” if they surrender to the “Way of God.” The Hebrew people are an example throughout history God uses to display to us how to have a relationship with Him and each other. He calls whole people groups aside for His plan. Therefore, we read in the Old Testament that it is:

God who sets the Hebrews aside from other people groups and works in them.
Abraham, Genesis 12

God who makes them whole again. Ezekiel 36:24-27

God who brings peace and completeness and healing into their camp through righteous judgment. Psalm 94:14 ,15; Romans 2:5

God who sets them apart from their sin. Leviticus 21:7, 8, 15; Ezekiel 20:12

The sanctifying work of God in them is what makes His people holy and what makes us holy, that is living lives set aside for God.

Devotional Questions:

Do you remember the day or a time in your life when you became set aside for God?

Can you describe or recall the circumstance you were in that pressed God’s calling upon you to be set aside?

Sanctification Context Two

We are maturing and growing in our sanctified state, we are not static.

Breaking the verse down

In Hebrews 12:14 we are told to *pursue peace* and the *sanctification*. To *pursue* is an action, directed towards the words *peace* and *sanctification*. *Peace* is a state of being. To accomplish *peace* there must be action to *pursuing*. When we *pursue* we are not static, but moving forward. This text also tells us we are to *purse sanctification*. Therefore we, as believers have already been set aside or *sanctified* or have been made *holy*. Beyond being in a state of life set aside for God, the text tells us that in our state of being *sanctified* (*being set aside*) we should be *pursuing peace* and *sanctification*. These are to be at work in us, they are to increase in us. We do not stop as if we have received a medal for past performance. We are still in the race.

Greek example: There are many Greek dictionaries. When you look up the word sanctification found in our English Bibles in a Greek dictionary we find the Greek word ἁγιασμόν – *hagiasmon*. The first letter “ ἁ ” is an “ a “ with a turned out accent mark over it. This means we pronounce with an “ ha “ sound.

Hebrews 12:14 **Pursue peace** with all men, and the **sanctification** ἁγιασμόν, without which no one will see the Lord.

Greek parsing ~ ἁγιασμόν, noun accusative masculine singular,
common from root word ἁγιασμός (**Hebrews 12:14**)
Romans. 6:19, 22; 1 Ti 2:15
Mediated by God through Christ (1 Cor. 1:30)

In this **context** of **maturing** our relationship to God, Hebrews 6:1-3 tells us to mature in the faith. 1 Peter 1:2 tells us this is accomplished by the Spirit of God.

Hebrews 6:1-2 1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, **let us press on to maturity**, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

1 Peter 1:1-2 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **To those who reside as aliens**, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen** ² **according to the foreknowledge** of God the Father, by the **sanctifying** (Greek *agiasmos*) **work of the Spirit**, to **obey** Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

God has called for Believers to be set aside to accomplish His good work in them. God is all knowing and has known who the saints are from before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).

Therefore, according to His foreknowledge, God chooses, approves the real saints. God has known all along who will surrender to Him and His Cross; for it is the work of the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin (John 16:7, 8). In other words, God, as the Holy Spirit, sanctifies/sets aside the saints and works through them in a process called sanctification. This in turn creates a visual for others, who have not surrendered, so they can see God.

In reading Hebrews 6 (mature), Ephesians 4 (building up), 1 Corinthians 12 (gifts), and Galatians 5:22-24 (fruits) we see God's great purpose for all believers to answer His call to mature and use our **spiritual gifts**, applying them with our **spiritual fruits**.

Ephesians 4:12, 13, 15-16

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the **building up** of the body of Christ;

¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **mature man**, to the **measure of the stature** which belongs to the **fullness of Christ**.

¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up** in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, *causes the growth of the body* for the **building up** of itself in love.

In Ephesians 4:13 we can see that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been given to us to work God's Will in us to achieve a fullness of knowledge and faith. It is all to equip the saints for the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). God is constantly drawing His people closer to Him in this process called *sanctification*. Paul writes in Philippians 2:12-13 that we are to be in a work of God who is at work in us.

Philippians 2:12-13 ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, ¹³ for it is **God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Devotional Question

Once you entered into a saving relationship with the Lord, what is the most impactful change God has addressed in your life that has made you a better person? That has made you draw closer to Him? This has most likely been a change over a period of time, a time of sanctification.

Sanctification in a Fallen World

Paul clarifies that the believer's spiritual walk in life is one of obeying the Lord's commands. We have been set aside (sanctified) in a fallen world and God desires for us to grow spiritually in this environment. How can we obey the Lord's commands in a fallen world? The answer is that we are not alone in this world. Think of this miracle in three ways. "To *work out/live out* your own salvation with fear and trembling" is to:

1. live knowing **the Lord** is at work **in** you and it is not you
2. to know that a **supernatural power** is at work **in** you
3. to know that **God's Holy Spirit power** has **overtaken** your will

This is the only way to be successful for the Lord in this fallen world. In fact, God planned it this way. Paul witnesses to us in Romans 8:9-11:

⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,
if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.
But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,
he does not belong to Him.

¹⁰ If Christ is in you,
though the body is dead because of sin,
yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead
will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

God does not leave us on our own to *work out/live out* our salvation. God equips us. God builds us up, and builds up the whole body/congregation of believers. **God does not tell us to work out our salvation for it is you who are at work in you?** Salvation is not earned (Eph. 2:8) and salvation is not kept through works. Salvation is demonstrated in the life of the believer; for no one can take us out of the Lord's hands (John 10:28 -29), for we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1:13). The Lord desires for others to see Christ in us and no longer see us (Gal. 2:20).

If a believer does slip in their walk they should fear the consequences of breaking God's command (fear and trembling). Believers should fear what sin can and will do to them. In addition, it is an awe (reference) inspiring realization to know God is at work in us. It is in this maturing process of learning from God's school of hard knocks that we grow. In this school of life we are being sanctified and in this the Lord is faithful to forgive (1 John 1:7-10). Who wants to stub their toe on the same rock twice? We are being drawn closer to Him through our failing and His grace forgiveness.

Examples:

One) Moses taking the life of an Egyptian while defending a Hebrew (Exodus 2:12). He had to flee for forty years before God could use him again. However, God was patient and waited for Moses.

Two) David had Bathsheba's husband slain in battle. God's prophet Nathan called David into account. David confessed and was used again by the Lord (2 Samuel 12:13).

Three) The resurrected Lord restored Peter after Peter denied Him (John 21:15-17).

The encouraging news here is that God can still use us after we have repented/turned from an evil. This is due to the fact that in this fallen world God picks us up after repentance and confession and moves us forward to serve Him. It may be embarrassing at times for people to see us stumble, but it is the Lord who restores. And the Lord may work through others to restore us (Gal. 6:1). Therefore, we mature; we are in the process of sanctification.

Devotional Questions

Can you think of time a when the Lord restored you after a great stumbling in your life?

Can you see the ways in which you have grown from this life experience?

Experiencing Sanctification

It can challenge and hurt, but then there is peace at the end of the process.

Examining Hebrews 12:14 in Review

After the first thirteen verses in chapter twelve, verse fourteen proclaims God's intention for disciplining us in order that we pursue His peaceful fruit of righteousness, which has led to our healing and witness. Equipped with God's healing peaceful fruit we are empowered to pursue *peace* with all people and to pursue *sanctification*.

The New American Standard Bible is one of the few English versions that translates the Greek word *agiasmon* from the root *agiasmos* into the English word *sanctification*. Most English translations supply *holiness* which has a meaning to be *set aside* for the purpose of God's use. *Sanctification* in English most often refers to the process of maturing in the faith. Obviously a person needs to be *set aside* from the fallen world for this to take place; hence the word *holiness* can be used. An example of the Greek word *ὁσιότης* *hosiotēs* (*piety, holiness*) used in *Luke 1:74-75* reads:

⁷⁴ To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might *serve Him without fear*, ⁷⁵ *In holiness* and righteousness before Him all our days.

In Hebrews 12:14, By using *sanctification* (*ἁγιασμόν*) it adds to the context of being set aside in that it directs us to be *in motion not static*. God desires witnesses in growing motion, not just standing in one place. To give an expanded translation we can say that we are to pursue peace with all men and in that ministry we mature and grow in the Lord becoming *more set apart* before Him all our days (Luke 1:74-75). The more we spiritually mature, the more we distance ourselves from the fallen world. We are to be separate from the fallen world and at the same time witness to the lost. Therefore, a simple example is - if we go to a bar to witness to the patrons we stick to the Message of Christ and not become intoxicated with them. If we do become intoxicated with them they will not see Christ at work in us. They will not see God.

Sanctifying (set aside for Growing) in Our Spiritual Vocation

In our careers in the world we are set aside to train and learn our occupation or vocation. I was a Field Training Instructor and Evaluator for the Houston Police Department in the 1980's. This on-the-job training program called for daily documentation in twenty-five categories of performance; from officer safety to how to read a Key Map. The scale was one to seven with four being the passing grade. A number of officers, who after graduating from the police academy, failed the field training program and were let go by the city. All the academy training went down the tubes. The city paid them to go through the academy; but now they were left with no choice but to release them due to their on-the-job failures that were documented. Once they hit the street in real life assignments they failed to the degree that they were a detriment to themselves and to the community for the purposes of being a police officer. They never matured to a level that was satisfactory. They failed their sanctification process.

I was assigned to train a female officer who was five feet tall and weighed ninety-five pounds with her gun on. She was twenty-one years old. She informed me that she just passed her driving test in the State of Texas a few weeks before she entered the police academy. The first bar disturbance call we

responded to was an embarrassment. We walked in and someone in the back yelled out. “What we have here is a sawed-off police officer.” A few days into her training program a hurricane came through Houston. She was to drive that night, but after running a few citizens’ cars off the road I decided to drive that night in hurricane weather. At least if I were to die that night it would be by a force of nature and not by a rookie driver. She was eventually let go. She was a good person, but just could not perform the job task to an acceptable level. For the record, I served with other female officers who excelled in all areas of the job.

We compare this temporal vocation to being a witness for God. We are all on the job all the time. We are all in an on-the-job training program all the time. Think about how many training categories God has. Think it is more than twenty five? Most likely we could list many.

In our training or sanctifying role there are no days off. We are challenged and at times hurt physically and mentally. The difference is, for the most part, God does not fire us because we are not good speakers, teachers or can’t read a Key Map or shoot straight. However, God does fire people. God fired Aaron and took him to sleep with his people (Num. 20:24). However, Aaron’s firing does not represent a person losing their salvation. Aaron lost his temporal assignment God had given him. As our lives move forward in time we gain more experience and mature in our field of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12) to be used at home and work. It is understood that as you grow your family members and co-workers do not call your growth *sanctification*. It would be odd to hear your boss say, “John, I have noticed your *sanctification* process and you will receive a raise.” However, God does communicate that way to us. God writes to us in the book of Hebrews laying out His plans for us. God’s plans are directional and connecting. They are directional in that they direct others we witness to, to turn their focus on Him. They are connecting in that they connect the fallen world to God’s heavenly kingdom to God’s love and forgiveness.

Our employer can see that we have worth and we can become good examples for other employees to see and model their work effort after ours. We then can receive pay raises and promotions. This sounds self promoting and in the secular world hard work is noticed and is rewarded. At least that is the world I grew up in. In God’s economy your witness is not important in order for you to keep your salvation, get a pay raise and promotion in heaven. These are temporal values. Yes, there are crowns written about in the Bible, these are spiritual assessments and have values as we mature here and for the next life:

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For who is our hope or joy or **crown of exultation**? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

James 1:12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the **crown of life** which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

1 Peter 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading **crown of glory**.

Revelation 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the **crown of life**.

How many categories can you list God is grading you in as a believer? The application of this question focuses on the life of the believer in motion. Example: Parenting, Co-worker, Teammate, or think of this in another way . . . in your forgiveness, loving kindness, and thankfulness.

God's Spiritual Economy

An economy is where things of value are exchanged. There is a spiritual economy that reaches out to others so they can see the Gospel at work in a fallen world, in you. So they can see that God loves them and through your witness God is calling them. The value in God's economy is the value of saving souls. God's economy is in purchasing souls from this fallen world via the Cross. He paid the debt (Romans 3:25 propitiation). This is what the Lord wants others to see in you, His peace. Pursuing peace with man is what God is doing through the incarnation and through the creation from the beginning (Romans 1:18-21).

Ephesians 2:14 - 16

¹⁴ For He Himself is our **peace**,
 who made both *groups into* one and broke down the **barrier** of the **dividing wall**,
¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the **enmity**,
which is the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances,
so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace
¹⁶ and might **reconcile** them both in **one body** to **God through the cross**,
 by it having **put to death the enmity**.

We can see that there is symmetry in God's Word. Understanding God's peace is key in surrendering to God in the first place and in the life of the believer. Irrespective of a person's realization of the presence of God's peace, peace is still at work. It is natural in God's creation that peace and sanctification are paired together in Hebrews 12:14.

Hebrews 12:14 Pursue **peace** with all men,
 and the **sanctification** **ἁγιασμόν**,
 without which
 no one will **see the Lord**.

God chooses to be direct and uses men like Paul to convey His message. The message in Romans 6:19, 22, and other verses listed below, points to realities in which we live. God wants us to receive, to accept, that we are human and are in a weak state of existence without Him. These are just the facts. Ignoring them, leads us further away from the Lord. There are several passages of Scripture in Romans, and 1 & 2 Thessalonians relating to sanctification and being a slave to God, listed below. Since we are in God's economy, He has exchanged Himself for our sins on the Cross (Romans 3:25). Some may not like to look at their person as being a slave, but in God's grace it is our protection that we are an extension of Him. In today's computer language hard drives can be set up to be the master hard drive. This gives it unidirectional control over one or more other devices. God desires that we function in the same way because this allows us to be capable of being a mirror image of Him in a fallen world. This is what God demonstrates to us being Jesus. This results in a lifelong practice of righteousness resulting in sanctification.

Romans 6:19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as **slaves** to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as **slaves** to righteousness, **resulting in sanctification**.

Romans 6:22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, **resulting in sanctification**, and the outcome, eternal life.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and **righteousness and sanctification**, and redemption,

1 Thessalonians 4:3 - 4 3 For this is the will of God, **your sanctification**; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality;
4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel **in sanctification and honor**,

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God has not called us for the **purpose** of impurity, but in **sanctification**.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 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**

[Note: **The Spirit convicts and those that receive conviction are set aside (sanctified) for God's purpose (sanctification)**]
and faith in the truth.

Devotional Questions: Yes / No

Do you consider yourself a slave to God? _____

Do you think you have to be a slave to God to go through a sanctification process? _____

Do we live in a society where the connotation of being a slave is just too negative? _____

Would you wear a T-Shirt printed with the words "Slave to God" or Slave to Jesus? _____

Is this too much of an in-your-face message? _____

Ok...say that it is too much in our culture; however, can you perceive yourself in that kind of a relationship with God? _____