



Raising the Standard “The Pursuit of Personal Holiness” Hebrews 12:12-17

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- In 1662, Thomas Brooks, a Puritan Pastor said, if he could preach only one sermon to the whole world, he would preach on no other text than Hebrews 12:14, where the writer challenged his **readers to “Pursue peace with all men and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”**
- In the mid-1500’s, Martin Luther, who led the Protestant Reformation said, if he preached the greatest sermon ever preached, but **“failed to address the point at which the world and the devil were attacking at that moment,”** he would not be confessing Christ at all.”
- From my perspective, over the last 50 years, Satan has mounted his greatest attack upon the institutions of marriage and the family; the two institutions that God ordained as the foundations of our society.
- Therefore, in our pursuit of personal holiness, we must begin in the home, in our marriages, and in our families, for as goes the family, so goes the Church, and as goes the Church, so goes the nation.
- In Genesis 1:27, the Bible says, **“God created man in his own image...male and female he created them,”** which

means there are only two genders.

- In Genesis 2:18-24, God named the male ***“Adam,”*** meaning man or humanity,
- It wasn't until Genesis 3:20 that Adam named the woman God gave to him as ***“Eve,”*** for she was the mother of all living.
- God told them to ***“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”*** so they could subdue it and have dominion over it.
- God described the physical union between the male, Adam, and the female, Eve, as a marriage, and said: ***“There will come a time in every man's life when He will leave his father and mother and be joined to his own wife, and the two shall become one flesh,*** i.e., reproduce themselves into another human being.
- In Matthew 19:5, Jesus confirmed marriage as that divine institution that God ordained as the foundation for society. He told the Pharisees, ***“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.”***

1. What God Commanded – Hebrews 12:14-17 – *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”*

- To pursue means to chase after something until we find it. The writer of Hebrews said Christians are to pursue.
 - **Peace with all mankind** – we have done all we can to be at peace with all others.
 - **Holiness before the Lord** – not the holiness imputed to us when we are born again, nor the holiness that is derived through the daily disciplines of discipleship, nor the holiness we practice when we are involved in religious activities.

The pursuit of holiness is our intentional desire to live out before others that spirit of holiness the Holy Spirit infused within us when we were born again.

- The Holy Spirit removed that cold, stony heart that kept us focused on self, sin, and Satan, and gave us a new heart that is focused on God, and enables us to walk in the world as Jesus did; aware of the darkness of sin, but able to walk in the light of His love.
- Until the day our Lord returns, the Church represents the Body of Christ in the world, which means, those who make up His Body must live in such a way that the world can see Christ in them and be drawn to Christ because of them.
- When the people saw Jesus, they were made aware of His holiness and His righteousness compared to their unholiness and unrighteousness. God has given those who receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord the same assignment.
- 1 Peter 2:11-12, the Apostle said, ***“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”***
- The pursuit of holiness must begin in the home and the family, for that is where the enemy has come in like a flood.

The abolishment of the family unit has been Satan's goal since the beginning. However, over the last 50 years, the

intensity of the attack has increased dramatically.

- The abolishment of the family unit is the 10th plank in the Communist Manifesto published in 1848, by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. This goal was recently reaffirmed by the Democratic Socialists of America in July, 2025.
- The abolishment of the family unit was behind the counter-culture revolution of the 1960's, which promoted free sex, radical feminism, and introduced the LGBTQ+ agenda.
- The abolishment of the family unit is behind the new roles and expectations of men, women, marriage, homosexuality, gender dysphoria, and the family unit.
- **The Bible says a man is masculine** – his character qualities are strength, confidence, and independence, which are necessary for the positions of leadership which God intended men to have. God created the man to be the spiritual leader, the provider, and the protector of his wife and family.
- **The Bible defines a woman as feminine** – her character qualities include gentleness, wisdom, and an intrinsic desire to honor God in all they do. God created the woman to be a “help-meet” to her husband and the life-giver and nurturer of their children.
- **The Bible defines a marriage as an “holy institution”** – a covenant relationship between one man and one woman for life. The Bible uses the marriage relationship between a man and a woman to illustrate the loving intimacy between Christ and His Bride, the Church.
- **The Bible declares that God created mankind male and female.** There is no description of an acceptable homosexual relationship or transgendered individual in the Scriptures.
- **The Bible says a family is made up of a man who leaves his father and mother, takes a woman from another family, and after being united in marriage, they produce their own children.** Their God-given assignment is to raise those children in the “**nurture and admonition of the Lord,**” so they can contribute to the support of society.

Three ways to pursue holiness and righteousness within the family.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9:

- **Permeate** your home with the love of God.
- **Saturate** your children's hearts with the love of God.
 - **Verbally** – parents should talk to their children about the love of God as part of their daily conversations.
 - **Visibly** – what your children see in your home should point them to God, not to the world.
- **Validate** your children's faith when they first start asking questions about God, about the Lord Jesus, about heaven, etc. This is where you give them the reason for the hope that is within you.