

Real-Life Relationships — Delivery Transcript

Hebrews 12:14–17 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, June 8, 2025 • Faith IRL

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Well thanks to Scholar and Erica for leading our time together. If you have your Bibles, we're going to be in the book of Hebrews, chapter twelve this morning. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you. And we're going to continue an attitude of worship as we read the scripture together and look at what it has to say. If you're new to Broadview, we've been going through the book of Hebrews over several months now, and over the last couple of weeks we've been in a series called faith IRL.

And for you old people among us, that means in real life. That's what the young people say these days. I had to look it up myself. But we said that Christian faith, if it's true, ought to have an impact on the real lives of real people, ought to solve real problems in a really helpful way. And if it doesn't, it may be philosophically profound, it may be airtight intellectually, but it may not be all that useful. And if it's not super useful, is it really worth believing? Now, I would maybe say, yes, it's still worth believing even if it's not useful, but I also believe that real truth applies in real life, and Christianity is real truth, and therefore it auto-applied to real life problems and change and transform the way we address and orient ourselves toward these kinds of things.

And we've looked at a series of practical issues. One didn't seem immediately practical, but it's actually the most practical of all, and that's the issue of worship, how you orient your life and make what is most priority what is the utmost priority in your life, how that drives everything you do. We've looked at the issue of authority and how to respond to authority. We've looked at the issue of love. We've looked at the issue of suffering which everybody experiences and how Christian faith transforms the way we view all of those things.

This morning as we conclude the series, we're looking at maybe the most practical issue of all and that is the issue of relationships. And I don't mean just any relationship, I don't mean a particular relationship. I mean every relationship, whether it's your relationship with your friends or your enemies, your family, non-family, co-workers, associates, Jesus should transform theoretically how you relate to every single person in your life. And if he does not

transform the way you relate to people, you may begin to question whether or not you're really following Jesus because he talked about this issue more than many other issues.

And the book of Hebrews addresses this theme in the context of right after his discussion on suffering. And it's in Hebrews chapter 12, verses 14 and following. To give you a little bit of context to the book of Hebrews before we read our actual text, he is writing to a group of Christians who had trans who had trans Converted from first century Judaism. Many of you who've been with us know all the ins and outs of this, but essentially these were Christians who were struggling. And instead of You know, saying there it's not that bad.

He acknowledges their suffering. He says, it's terrible, and I want to encourage you. But he also rebukes them because in their difficulties they were complacent in their faith. They had allowed their hardships and difficulties to cause a spiritual apathy develop, and he rebukes that spiritual apathy even as he encourages them to maintain steadfastness in their faith. And when we get to our text this morning, he had just established Old Testament survey of people in the Old Testament who similarly suffered, who similarly triumphed in suffering through faith. And then the last example he used was the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he said, I want you to think about suffering through the lens of the cross. When Jesus suffered, it wasn't divine retribution. It wasn't as though God was an enemy and he was getting in trouble. He was redemptively. Purposefully atoning for sin through his suffering and in a similar way God can allow the pain and suffering in our life to produce something redemptive and purposeful and so endure your suffering as discipline. And then having established how to view suffering, he then goes on to apply it in the context of relationships.

We scratched it just a little bit last week with verses twelve and thirteen. So I want to reread that and then we're going to get to our text this morning. Verse 12, he says, therefore, in light of all that view of suffering, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees. And make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but healed instead. Said last week it's important to see these as corporate commands because it's tempting to read them and apply them individually. I got to be strong and I got to straighten myself up and I got to focus on the healing and those things are true.

But it's in the context of a local church. It's in the context of community. So it'd be as if someone was up here on this stage saying, hey, Broadview family. When one of you is weak, some others need to come around them and strengthen them so that they don't shipwreck in their faith. And when some of you are on a path that is full of debris and hurdles and things that ought not be there that's going to jeopardize their progress. Other Christians need to come around that person and say that needs to go and this is crazy and don't go this way, go that way.

We need community, in other words, in order to finish the race that God has set before us because Christians who try to finish on their own, who try to fly solo, usually don't finish the race. And that's true, I think, of anything, any enterprise. We're relational beings. We're made for community. We flourish in community. But it is especially true in the Christian faith. Perseverance requires a life-giving community. That's why I think church is so important. But not just church like go to worship and go home. Not church like YouTube church even necessarily, but a church in which you are relationally connected to other brothers and sisters so that when you are in a moment of weakness, they come alongside of you and when your life is full of cray cray.

They come and help you out to decrease the craziness and keep you running your race. That big idea, he narrows his focus and applies a very specific command with a very specific instruction to address three very specific things. And that's in verses 14 and following. So you need each other. You need that life-giving community. Verse 14, pursue peace with everyone. And holiness. Without it, without pursuing these two things, no one will see the Lord. Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God. Make sure that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble, defiling many.

And make sure there isn't any immoral or irreverent person like Esau, Old Testament character. Who sold his birthright in exchange for a single meal. For you know that later, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, even though he sought it with tears, because he didn't find any opportunity for repentance. And so you see this if you go back one slide, when I read this in the original language, there's some there's some things that popped out for me. In the Greek that I didn't necessarily see in the English immediately.

And I tried to point them out. I don't have my TV this morning, but you can kind of see the repetition of certain phrases. There's one big command, and it's right there in verse 14. And the command is to pursue peace and holiness with everyone. But that one command is explained with this one, I'd call it a strategy or a method of how to go about it. And that's that green phrase in verse 15 and again in verse 16. It's the word to make sure that. It's the Greek word *presb episcopas*.

It means to oversee or become a guardian or to see to it, ensure that these things happen and don't happen. And then you have three domains or three different ways to go about it, and they're all prefaced by these negative universal, make sure no one, make sure nothing. And the first is to no one fall short of God's grace. The second is that no root of bitterness spring up, and then lastly that there isn't any immoral or irreverent person like Esau. Now that's essentially the text. He doesn't use this language, but the word or the category that I want to use to describe all of this is the phrase grace-based relationships.

Life-giving community runs on what I'm going to call grace-based relationships. Christianity is unique from all the other religions in the world in its emphasis on grace. Could we agree

on that? A lot of the other religions in the world, it's about what you do in order to be rightly related to God. Christianity is unique in that it says it's not about what you do in order to get to God, but it's rather what God has done and coming down to save you. That salvation isn't by works, it's by grace through faith.

People talk about grace sometimes as getting what you don't deserve. Mercy is you don't get what you do deserve. Grace is I do get what I don't deserve. And that's what makes Christian religion distinct from all the other religions. And it's also what makes Christian community unique from all of its counterfeits Christian community ought to be characterized by a grace culture, namely giving to each other that which we don't always deserve. And that's what the author of Hebrews is saying we need to pursue. You need to pursue these kind of relationships.

Now I say it runs on grace-based relationships intentionally. In fact I got a picture of a of a hound chasing a rabbit. I looked for r of fox and the hound, but the only thing I saw were Disney gifts that were not conveying what I wanted to communicate. The idea behind the word pursue in the Greek text is this idea of hunting. Someone in my small group this week said you give another Christian a hunting license to go hunting in your life. That's actually a pretty good explanation of this Greek word.

Sometimes it's translated persecution, other times it's translated strive. Pursue, it's this idea of intense energy applied with zeal towards a particular goal or object. And in this context, the thing that we are pursuing or striving after with great intensity is peace and holiness with other Christians. Are not just other Christians, with everyone. Pursue peace and holiness with everyone. We use those words a lot, peace, holiness. They kind of lose their meaning. I talked about this last week with the same two words. Peace is not just the absence of conflict, although that should be true in your relationships with people.

No one likes to be fighting. But it's more than the absence of conflict, it's the presence of this settled assurance that everything is good. Everything is as it's meant to be. And you know when you're in relationships with people and it's all good, it's all good. Like everything is right. The word holiness is another word we use a lot, but we don't always think about what it means. It's not just moral virtue although that's how we often use it, I need to be holy as in I need to live a moral life.

But the word literally means to be set apart. The New American Standard Bible uses the word sanctification. Which is a great translation. It means to be set apart. We need to be holy other. We need to be unlike everyone else. And when the Bible talks about becoming holy, it puts it in language of sanctification. God is making you unlike the world. He's in your virtue, in your personality, in your temperament, the way you suffer, all of those things. You were becoming set apart like Jesus. You are going to be Christ-like in your attitudes and lifestyle in all of these ways.

And he's essentially saying, I want you as a Christian to pursue that in other Christians. I want the subtext for every Christian relationship in the context of a local church, and not just in a local church, but beyond a local church to every relationship that you have as a Christian with any other person. The subtext needs to be peace and holiness. And I don't want it to just be if it happens or incidental or maybe implied. But I want it to be intentional, proactive, zealously pursued every single moment of your life.

Now can you imagine a church in which the subtext for all of our relationships were those two things. This really came home to me in your notes. I'm using the language of spiritual investments. I don't have a great term for it, but grace-based relationships pursue regular spiritual investments in other people. And the best illustration I have of this and how it is so foreign to what we are used to today because of our culture, is I was at a Empower Evangelism conference. I was going to be on a panel speaking to a room and I was at the table eating dinner, the rubber chicken dinner, with all the other panelists.

And we were complaining about the rubber chicken for the first five minutes. And then out of nowhere, probably ten minutes into the conversation, one of the other panelists says, hey, what did the Lord show you this morning in your quiet time? And I was like, excuse me? I don't even know this guy's name. He's asking me what I've been reading in my quiet time. I was a little bit taken aback. Now, thankfully I had a great quiet time that morning. So it's like. Well it's actually in the in the book of Matthew, reading about the four soils, and I taught about the good soil and what all the things that the Lord was been showing me.

And then a little bit later he said, well are you discipling anybody one-on-one in your local church? I said, bro, it's none of your business. That's what I wanted to say. I didn't say that. And immediately as I started to feel that but out of my like business. This isn't the Lord convicted me and said, you needed this. If he would have asked you three days ago, you wouldn't have had an answer. And if he would have asked you two months ago, you wouldn't have had an answer. Because you'd gotten lazy.

And you need people in your life who can ask those probing questions about peace and holiness. And that's the subtext for all Christian relationships because without that, we drift away from those things. We need people who are pursuing those means of graces in our life. So that we can become holy, so that we can become the fullness of who God wants us to be. Now granted it's a little awkward for a total stranger to do it, but it should not be awkward. For brothers and sisters in this local church, and especially if they're in your small group or if they're relationally connected to you in any way whatsoever to say, hey.

It's not just that we're going to talk about the weather. I'm not just going to say how's your family doing. I'm going to ask you, how are you doing? How can I pray for you? How can I help fan into flame the good grace that God is producing in your life. That should be the subtext of a culture of grace. It runs on grace-based relationships which pursue regular

spiritual investments in others. These investments are regardless of who. It is. Now, in some ways, like I said, this applies inside and outside the church.

The Apostle Paul said that God is not willing that any would perish. But that all would come to repentance, and so our heart should be God's heart for people. We should pursue their sanctification. We want people who don't know the Lord to come and know the Lord. We want people who have lives of chaos to find lives of peace. But it's also in inside the local church that there are people that you may normally say, I don't want anything to do with that person. That person hurt my heart. That person gives me the willies.

Or you know, if it feels weird, that person just is you know someone I would not normally associate with, and he's saying no universally. Peace and holiness with everyone. Those universals are often inconvenient in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul said in Romans 12, 18, if possible, so far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people. And so it should be in the context of the local church. It's easy to write people off or to avoid people because of bad experiences in the past, but he's saying the thing that makes Christian culture unique is this culture of grace, and so I want you to intentionally pursue these things in your lives with other people.

Why? The reason, he says, is because without those things no one will see the Lord, which is an interesting phrase. Some people say that means you won't go to heaven. And some people apply it individually. I need to pursue a holy life or I'm not going to go to heaven. But that's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible doesn't say if you don't pursue good relationships with other Christians, you're not going to go to heaven. Salvation is by grace through faith, it's not of works. So what's he saying? He's not no one's going to see the Lord in that if you don't pursue these kinds of things in your relationships with other people.

Those around you are not going to be able to see the Lord. You certainly won't see the Lord in your dealings with other people if you're not pursuing what God is up to in their lives and in your life and all the other people around you. Certainly those outside the church are not going to see the Lord unless these things are pursued. Now how do you know that? How do I know that? Well, one of the ways I know that is because of the words he chooses to the words that he chooses as the objects of our pursuit.

Or why did he choose peace and holiness? You ever ask that question? Because we could have pursued a lot of things as believers. I could pursue Prosperity, I could pursue positivity. There's lots of things I should want to pursue in your life, but he says pursue peace and holiness. The reason I think he chooses those two words specifically is because those are the very two same words that he used earlier in chapter 12, verses 10 and 11. When he's talking about suffering, he said, God is disciplining you in your suffering, so don't lose heart.

Keep on keeping on. And he applies this contrast between earthly dads and heavenly dads, and he says, earthly dads discipline us as seems best to them for a short time. But our heavenly Father, he disciplines us for our profit. Why? So that we might share in his what it's on the screen. His holiness. Same word. Literally the same word. And then he says that the me at the at the immediate it's painful, it's not pleasant, nobody likes it. But in the end it produces a what kind of fruit of righteousness?

A peaceful fruit of righteousness. And we said last week that that word righteousness, again, is not just moral virtue. It's at least that. I don't want to discount that. But it's this everything is right. I'm rightly related to God, I'm rightly related to people. That's what peace is. It is shalom, it is wholeness, it is it is a settled assurance that things are good. He chooses peace and holiness to be pursued in our relationships because peace and holiness are the very graces God is working in us privately. So this is a principle of Christian sanctification.

Paul said in Philippians 2, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Why? Because God is working in you. So we work out what God works in. That's the basic idea. And he's saying the same thing relationally. I want you to work out in your relationships what God is working in you through discipline. As he develops holiness and peace and righteousness within your heart, I want you to display that and how you relate to other believers. Your relationships with other Christians are a pulpit for the Lord. They are how God demonstrates to a watching world the power and beauty of his grace.

Which means ultimately our relationships aren't even about us. They're not for us fundamentally. Our relationships with other Christians are fundamentally for the Lord. They're about the Lord, which is great motivation for pursuing peace and holiness. It's not because of what I get out of it's not because it's super pleasant for me. It's because through my pursuit of peace and holiness in their life, God is being glorified to a watching world who needs him. It is for the Lord's glory, without which no one will see the Lord. And so I will invest spiritually.

In the lives of other people, intentionally, not incidentally, but intentionally with great zeal, regardless of who, regardless of when, because through it I am revealing visibly the grace that God is producing inwardly in my life. And that's why Christian community so important. It's not just what it does for us, it's what God does through us to a world who is watching. So how do we go about it? If that's what is so important, how do we go about it? He says one thing two different times. It's implied in the Greek in verse 16, but it's stated explicitly in verse 15 at the very beginning in the Greek text make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God.

Again, listed in verse 16 in the CSB, but it's not in the original Greek. The word *episcopas*, when you hear the word *episcopas*, you probably think of episcopalian. Maybe you think bishop, leader in a local church, a Catholic church or a Presbyterian church or a Lutheran

church. But the word the original word in the Greek just meant spiritual overseer. It meant someone who's in charge. It meant to take responsibility for. And that's what he's saying. Christians, we've got to see yourself as that in the lives of other people. You are a guardian for other believers You are their parental guardian, if you want to use that language spiritually.

You are their overseer. It is your business, in other words, what's going on in their life. And that is so counter-cultural, so counter-cultural to the world in which we live, right? We have friendships in the West. Americans are de desperately lonely. We crave friendships. But one of the rules of the road if you're going to be friends with people in our culture is You can contribute insofar as you agree and support. But if you don't agree or support where another person is coming from, You better tread very carefully and mind your own business.

Right? But this is none of your business. And when you start acting like it is your business, you might get a new friend next week. And that is the opposite of what Christian relationships embody. No, I'm your guardian. And I know it even feels weird saying it out loud. What is a parental guardian? A parental guardian is someone that for a child steps in when they can't talk for themselves, when they can't act for themselves, they step in and intercede. And he's saying, I want you to have that posture towards other people, and I want you to receive that posture from others in the local church.

I want you to let it be their business. Pastor David used to say when I was on staff here as a whatever I was, not pastor, he would say, everybody's business is nobody's business. It always stuck with me because it was so true. Like everybody's business to change the toilet paper. Well, it never gets changed. Actually it's not everybody's business, somebody else's business. But in the point is, if you see it You pick it up, you take care of things, but when everybody's supposed to do it's really easy and convenient for you to say, well, somebody else will do it, I don't have to.

And the opposite is true in the Christian life. Everybody is our business. Cain said to God, Am I my brother's keeper? The answer was yes. If you see something, you should say something. If you hear something, you should say something. You should treat yourself as a guardian for other brothers and sisters in the context of a local church. See to it that these things don't happen. See to and he lists He doesn't just leave it generic. If you're taking notes, grace-based relationships respond to anything in need of attention. That's true in the general.

You know intuitively when something's a little off with another person, you just kind of feel it in your bones. They're acting weird. They're they're they're hesitant, they're they're not as expressive or whatever the case may be. You respond. But then he lists three specific things to respond to that I think will threaten a culture of grace more than anything else. Number one is when people are struggling. The second is a root of bitterness, and the third is a is a

worldly is a worldly spirit. First he says, see to it that no one among you falls short of the grace of God.

Interesting phrase falling short of the grace of God. In your notes, I translate this as restoring every weary struggler unable to continue. This idea of falling short of grace, people, what does that mean? Does that mean you're not a Christian? Does that mean you lose your salvation? We've talked about this in the sermons in the past. I'd point your attention there. I don't think he's talking I don't think in this context he's zeroing in on heaven or loss of salvation. Although it's obvious if you don't believe in the Lord Jesus and you shipwreck in your faith you will not go to heaven.

We're saved by grace through faith. If you stop believing, then the then you fall short of the grace in that way. I don't think you lose it, but you demonstrate you didn't have it. But he's not just talking about that in the ultimate sense. I think he's talking about it in a very practical temporal sense. When people fall short, in other words, when people fail spiritually, they are prone to want to give up on everything to check out this came home for me this week when a pastor friend of mine up north dallas just became a senior pastor he was super excited.

He was actually part of my cohort through the SBTC. He showed up for the first cohort, he missed the second, missed the third, missed the fourth, and just checked out and call no, no response, check-in, very limited conversation. And I got a clip from a newspaper article from another pastor in the same area, and he had just been arrested for a very terrible, terrible thing. And his ministry's destroyed, his family's likely destroyed, his life, his future, all that, all the hope is gone. And the immediate thing that came to my mind was, man, I wish he would have showed up.

And I wish I would have pestered him a little more. Just say, don't isolate yourself. It is a dangerous thing to do as a pastor. But that's what he did. And when you isolate, sin thrives in isolation, and that sin began to spread in his life. When the opportunity was right, the enemy pulled the f the hook, snagged him, and then when the opportunity was right after he had been snagged and done some terrible things. It was publicly exposed, destroyed, it didn't just destroy him, it destroyed his church, it destroyed the community, and Satan's having a field day.

That's why we need each other. You got to restore the weary struggler. And it's not just in that up to that point. Even after that point, I was thinking to myself, if I was in his shoes, what would I need? I would need someone to come alongside of me and remind me, don't stop being a Christian. You have not divorced yourself from the grace of God. Don't give up. Don't give up. I know you can never pastor again. I know that's over, but that doesn't mean that that all of it was for naught or that Jesus isn't sufficient to sustain you in this season of

failure and if everyone else in his life is speaking condemnation and shame, I'm not saying you don't point those things out, but you come alongside and say it was terrible.

It was wrong. It's inexcusable. But I will not give up on you. Because God's grace is sufficient. It's greater than your sin. And I will walk with you. I'm telling you, when people fail spiritually, they need that word. Because they are struggling. And failure can weaken the strongest of hearts. In fact, often the stronger the heart, the more devastating the failure. And so you need people to come alongside of you. And you need that and you need to be that. I'm so thankful for other pastors in my life. I'm thankful for the SBC.

I can't believe I said that out loud, but I'm thankful for the Southern Baptist Convention. Why? Not because the politics are embarrassing. We have the convention this coming week, but when I go, I'm going to talk to ten or so very close brothers in Christ who play that role for me. Who are those people for me. I'm thankful for our past pastoral team, men like Randy and Ken and Ron and Jace who walk alongside of me every single month checking in, how's things going? And for my staff, for our staff, and for my family, we need to be surrounded by people who can restore us when we fail and then can strengthen us when we are weak.

You need that, I need that, we all need that second thing he says is to resist bitter roots. He says, make sure that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble, defiling many. The word root of bitterness comes from Deuteronomy chapter 29, verse 18. In that original context with the Exodus generation, it was applied to Israelites. Who through their grumbling and complaining turned away from the Lord and started to worship other idols. And Moses said, you've got to check up on people so that those bitter attitudes don't cause them to turn away from God and bring chaos in their life.

Now the author of Hebrews is appealing to that and he's repurposing it relationally. And he's saying as a Christian in the context of a local church, you need to make sure no root of bitterness. Gets lodged and begins to spread in your heart. So it's not just idolatry in a general, it's resentment in particular. And that's what that's what bitterness is. Bitterness is unresolved resentment. And resentment is like a root in that it's under the surface at first. It's slow, it's subtle, it begins to spread, but as it begins to spread, it does incredible damage in your heart.

And as it springs up and does damage, it destroys a culture of grace. And the reason that resentment is so uniquely capable of destroying a culture of grace is because of what it does in your heart. When you have resentment in your heart, and all resentment is like a grudge, a grudge you don't let get resolved. If you've ever had resentment, you know how powerful it is. It's like it's almost medicinal in that the more you wallow in your resentment, the better better you feel because you're using the failure of the other person to make yourself feel good.

It goes something like this. Well I would never do something like that. And they always do X, Y, or Z. And essentially you're removing yourself from the community of sinners. And then you're removing that person from the community of normal humans. And in either case, you're destroying grace. Whether it's through pride or shame, grace is denied. You don't need grace because you're super perfect. Well, you would never do that. You don't need grace. You're so good. And then they don't get grace because they're less than human. They are disqualified. They are unworthy.

And resentment is uniquely good at doing those things in your life, in your heart. I know from experience, I'm not pointing the finger, this is what resentment does. I've never done cocaine, but I hear when you're on cocaine, you feel invincible. No one's nodding their head, so I guess y'all haven't tried cocaine either. And I'm not recommending it from the stage, but one of my favorite commentators says resentment is the devil's cocaine. And I believe it because it makes you feel invincible. You can do nothing wrong. They can do nothing right.

And then how does it work in the church? How it works in the church is it starts out under the hood, it's slow, it's underneath the surface. You don't say anything, you don't do anything. But then when it does spring up, here's how it usually happens with words, conversation with other people. You present yourself in your very best light. You present the person you're resentful towards in their very worst light and through half-truths and distortions and manipulating the narrative, they get infected with the poison and they think, well, I just didn't know that about that person.

Wow, that's terrible. That's crazy. That's so devastating. And now the root is in their heart and it's beginning to spread. And it can kill any church. It can take down any culture of grace. I remember this in our own church. There was a there was a thing when I was younger pastor and there was a fight in our leadership with I'm not going to give all the details, but I remember not knowing what to do. I remember being devastated. I remember thinking this is this is this is going to ruin everything.

And I remember someone texting me or emailing me saying, listen, on this deal I'm on your side. And I was so bothered by that statement. I'm on your side. And I remember talking, emailing one of our other deacons saying, I feel like because sides are forming, everybody's losing. Because if it's got to be this person or that person, the thing, the mission, the culture of grace that we're striving after is abolished when sides get forged, and that's what resentment does. Us versus them, you versus them, it destroys a culture of grace.

And the only way to root it out is to let the grace of God re- Fresh your heart again to be reminded as you look to the cross that I was chief of sinners and God in love died for me and that they, even though they sinned against me, are loved by God and forgiven by grace. And if God can forgive me of the sins that I've committed against him, who am I to withhold that

grace from this other person? And as you meditate on the gospel of grace, the power of resentment begins to fade in your life.

But if you divorce yourself from community, if you remove yourself from those people who are going to take you to the cross, the power of that gospel has no ability to root out that resentment and it will spread and poison. And spring up and defile. The word defile means to stain with a foreign substance. I think of West Texas red dirt on a white Oxford wedding shirt, so specifically because I have one and I've seen the damage that it can do and you can't get it out. You just tuck it in a little further so no one else will see it.

But the blood of Jesus has the power to wash away the darkest stain of sin in your life. And in their life and in your relationship with that other person. It's not you don't need an apology. It might be nice. The thing that you need the most is not an apology. It's certainly not revenge. It's the gospel of grace. It's the foot of the cross. Which has the power to abolish the power of has the power to abolish the root of resentment, which destroys a culture of grace. And I'm telling you, if churches don't figure out how to do this, the churches die.

And if marriages don't figure out how to do this, marriages die. And if Christian brothers and sisters don't figure out how to do this, they check out of the local church, they check out of community. And so you've got to destroy the root. You've got to strengthen the struggler. And then lastly, you've got to rebuke. You've got to rebuke a worldly heart unable to repent. He says in verse. 16, make sure there isn't any immoral or irreverent person like Esau who sold his birthright in exchange for a single meal. That word translated immoral.

Some translations say sexually immoral. That's true. He married godless women. But the emphasis, I think, is more general. Like he was just a worldly person. And that's why the word irreverent is used. He just had no fear of God. He was concerned about the here and now, and that's why he exchanged his birthright for a single meal. His birthright was God's inheritance, it was the advancing of the Abrahamic covenant. It was a big deal, but Esau was like, I'm hungry. That tastes good. Give it to me now. And that worldly spirit of the here and the now divorced him from the greater realities of God in his life.

And as a result of that, it separated him from the blessing excecparated him from the inheritance. And he's saying I want you in the local church to make sure that doesn't happen to people. Now if you don't think as a Christian you can become worldly, just skip church for 90 days and see what happens. Divorce yourself from any Christian influence for 30 days and see what happens in your heart. Some of you already know because you've done it and you and you and you felt yourself drift spiritually from the things of God.

And grow callous to the goodness of God and the grace of God and then maybe finally you show back up in church and one of two things happen. Either you are overwhelmed with the glory of God's grace, you think to yourself, this isn't anything special. What's so good about

this? And you separate yourself further and further and further. That's what worldliness does. It numbs you, it blinds you, it desensitizes you to the goodness and the grace of God. And he's saying believers need to. Rebuke that spirit in each other when you see worldliness, when someone's skipping three, four weeks of church, call them up.

Hey, what's going on when you see someone that's more concerned about the here and the now than they are the glory of God or the advancing of the kingdom, say, why are you so concerned about this? Why does this have such a grip in your heart? If you're not careful, this is going to produce something very bad in your life call it out. Be an overseer. Be a guardian. That's what grace space relationships are required to do. Why? Because irreverence can irreverence can misguide even the most sincere hearts. It says in verse 17 that when he found out he had made a mistake, it was too late.

He wanted to inherit the blessing, but he was rejected. His dad said it's already done. It's too late. Even though he sought it with tears because he didn't find any opportunity for repentance. I see this all the time in biblical counseling. Husband or wife, concerned their marriage is over. They say, okay, I'll do the counseling. I'll do whatever you want. They show up in counseling. The tears are real. The repentance is legit, but it's for the wrong reasons, usually, at least initially. I just want her to forgive me so we can get back together.

I just don't want her to divorce me. I just don't want him to leave me, fix this temporal earthly problem. I'm not saying the problem is irrelevant or unimportant. It certainly is. But Christian repentance is first and foremost grieve that we've violated God's design, that we've grieved the heart of God, and true repentance is reconciling with the Lord even as you reconcile with other people. And when you work with people to get to that place of repentance, then you begin to discover the healing is lasting and the change is sincere.

But those who never get there. And grow in that worldly spirit, eventually cross a threshold where repentance becomes impossible. And that's the danger. And that's why he says can't you can't allow it in the church. You've got to snuff it out when you see it. Now imagine a world in which we related to one another in these ways. Would it be uncomfortable? Absolutely. Would it require great courage and boldness? 100% But there are people in our church who have experienced spiritual failure. There are people in our church who have a poison growing in their heart right now.

There are people in our church who are increasingly becoming numb to the things of God in their life. And if we do what the world does, we're going to pretend like everything's okay on Sunday morning. And silently, Monday through Saturday, people are going to wither away spiritually, and many will just silently check out. And you'll go, where has that person been? I haven't seen them for a while. A better way forward is to be a guardian to take ownership of the spiritual flourishing of the people in your life on your left and on your right.

Maybe you don't know that person, but in your small group, if you're not in a small group, get in a small group and be this for someone else and let someone else be this for you.

During vacation Bible school, what a wonderful opportunity for us to practice these things in our church. And all of it is fanned in the flame as we fix our eyes on Jesus, who pursued us when we were running from Him, and who sacrificed Himself so that we could be healed and we can do that very same thing for the people in our church family.

I've been praying this week that God would use this message not just as a sermon, but as a seed planted in the soil of our church family and that it would bear fruit that materializes in the coming weeks and months. And so as you respond, would you pray not only for your own heart for the people in your own life, but would you also pray for a church family as well