

# Hebrews

## Chapter 3:12-15

July 16, 1995

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- **Hebrews Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Jesus is greater than the prophets and the angels.
- Chapter 2 Jesus' message is greater than the angel's.
- Chapter 3 Christ is greater than Moses.

- **Introduction & Review**

The author of Hebrews gives a stern and solemn warning to the recipients of the letter. He is concerned about them falling into sin and some falling away. The sin they were tempted towards was the same sin that the Jews fell to in the desert prior to entering Canaan. Many of the Jews wanted to return to Egypt; back to the bondage that they were just delivered from even though God had manifested himself in awesome ways. The author warns these people not to do the same thing. They were tempted to return back to Judaism and it's system although it was about to be judged and destroyed.

In these few verses, the author instructs them to exhort each other so that they will not fall just as the Jews did whose bodies were scattered in the desert. Although our situation today is not the same, we do run into similar situations where it is necessary to exhort a brother. We will do well to understand the original instruction so that we may rightly apply it to our situations.

Today, we are going to discuss how to address a brother or sister who you think is perhaps slipping or perhaps is entertaining sin even though there is no blatant evidence of it. It is crucial that we know how to deal with this situation in order to ensure that we are a body of believers who are acting like a body, not a group of unrelated members.

- **Exposition**

*12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." (NKJV)*

- The Christian life is one filled with peril; there are always things tempting us to be distracted. This warning is to all Christians in that there are none who have overcome all temptations. As long as we have this flesh, we must flee from immorality and put to death the deeds of the flesh by means of the Spirit. God has not seen fit to remove us completely from the influence of sin yet. But, we are not in bondage to sin. The way that we know someone is a true Christian is that they will hold on firmly to the end.
- A sinful unbelieving heart does not occur overnight. As we saw earlier in this book, people can drift away. It is not possible to be experience months of excellent fellowship with the Lord and then one morning wake up and decide to get into big-time sin. It happens by many successive compromises. It is drifting. It is the development of an unbelieving heart.
- It is also very apparent that the author believes that many of the recipients of his letter are Christians. But, he is concerned that there may be those who only profess with their mouth but are not those in whom God has begun a good work. How does he know who they are? The real Christians will hold on until the end.
- We are to first guard ourselves to ensure that we don't have an unbelieving heart and then we are to exhort our brothers to ensure that they don't harden their hearts either. How often should we do this exhortation? As long as it is called today. This exhortation is not a rebuke but rather it is an encouragement that will prevent the deceitfulness of sin. If we do not do this, sin will creep into the church and we will see big sins happening. We are to address the little things so that we don't find ourselves lied to or deceived at the end. If we have gotten to the point where sin has occurred then we have waited too long to do this.
- Given that we live in time, all things mature. Good things mature in a good direction and bad things mature in a bad direction.

This means that it never gets easier to confront or exhort a brother. When a little deceitfulness of sin is tolerated today it will always become harder later.

- **Signs that exhortation is necessary.**
- If the encouragement is resented then it is past due.
- If the encouragement is past due, there will be danger signs
- Claiming that their situation is unique. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

When we are headed in a direction where we give in to temptation, we will frequently attempt to justify our position by claiming that others can't possibly understand our position because the circumstances are unique.

- A rejection or lack of true piety.

When a brother or sister is heading for sin (and certainly when they are in it) the first thing to go is typically private prayer. Then you will find that they won't engage in fellowship and worship.

- Role abdication, role reversal or a blurring of the lines between the calling that God has given us.

When sin is getting a foothold of deceitfulness, people will begin to abdicate their responsibility given them by God.

- A lack of submission to the Scriptures.

The deceitfulness of sin will produce an improper handling of the Scriptures. They will begin to look for as much latitude in Scripture as they can.

- Danger signs in children:
- Children will misbehave simply because of a lack of discipline.

When children are not disciplined, sin (although cute) will be on the increase. They will become complainers and sassy. This sin when it matures will not be cute at all.

- Children will misbehave simply because they are not loved.

Children do not need quality time; they need quantity time. When a child is starved for attention, *any* attention is better than nothing.

***Psalm 51:10-13 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. (NKJV)***

***Psalm 19:12-13 12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. (NKJV)***