

April 3, 2005
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

Do You Want to See the Lord?

Heb 12:14b NLT

... seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

The word “see” here refers to being admitted into intimate and blessed fellowship with God in His future kingdom. And, it says, those who are not holy will not see the Lord in His future kingdom. Make no mistake about it, our hope of seeing the Lord, the hope of our final salvation hinges on being holy. And it is clear that this holiness must be possible now, since it is needed in our time of death (to see the Lord), and death, of course, can come at any time. So, what is meant by “holy”? The word “holy” here means a separation to God resulting in behavior fitting that separation. It means being set apart for God and so devoted to Him that all we want to do is to please Him. That is what we were created for, to know God and to please God. That is your purpose for existing. Your life will have no purpose if you do not live a holy life. And, according to these verses you will not see the Lord in His future kingdom if you do not live a holy life. That holy life begins through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and continues that way as we will see from Hebrews 12. Holy living means you must:

1. Put off the sin that so easily hinders your progress (of being separated /devoted to God)

(Heb 12:1 NLT) let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us.

If you were going to be in a race you wouldn't put on baggy pants and a baggy shirt, a coat, hat and gloves along with weights on your ankles and wrists. What does someone who runs track wear? A T-shirt, shorts and running shoes. That's it! Nothing that hinders, entangles or weighs down the runner. In many places in the New Testament the Christian life is compared to a race. The Christian “race” is not a sprint it's a marathon. Many who run a marathon want only to finish the race. It doesn't matter if they finish 1st, 15th or 115th. It doesn't matter if they come crawling over the finish line or ended with a sprint. They just have to finish the race. Everyone who finishes is rewarded with something signifying they finished the race. But there is no reward unless they finish. In our Christian life also we have to finish the race to get the prize.

What things hinder you in your Christian race? What weighs down your heart so that your care is for the things of this world rather than the things of God? What sin are you easily tempted by? What things are coming before the will of God? Avoid these things. Get rid of these things. Flee from them. Pursue holy living, a life devoted to God. Finish the Christian marathon and you will see the Lord. (Heb 12:1) Let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. (v2) We do this by ...

2. Keep your eyes on Jesus

(Heb 12:2a NLT) keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.

In the ancient Grecian games the runners were to keep their eyes on the mark of the prize. They kept their goal in view. (Heb 12:2b NLT) "He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy He knew would be His afterward. Now He is seated in the place of highest honor beside God's throne in heaven." Jesus because of the joy set before Him, of being at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, endured the cross. Fix your eyes on Jesus. (Heb 12:3-4 NLT) "Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up. After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin." Faith in Jesus and His grace is the reason we will see God. Keep your mind on the goal of seeing the Lord in His future kingdom. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Think about all He endured for you so that you don't become weary and give up. He is your salvation and He makes you holy. When you are willing to put off sin and all that hinders your progress, and surrender or yield yourself completely to God, to please Him in all things, then He declares you holy and fills you with His Holy Spirit. Then you must maintain that holiness by obeying God, like Jesus did, even if you have to endure discipline...

3. Submit to God's will and discipline

(Heb 12:5-11 NLT) 5 And have you entirely forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you, his children? He said,

"My child, don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you,
and don't be discouraged when he corrects you.
6 For the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes those he accepts as his children."

7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Whoever heard of a child who was never disciplined? 8 If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children after all. 9 Since we respect our earthly fathers who disciplined us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father and live forever?

10 For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness. 11 No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening--it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

A father had to spank his son for his son's disobedience. After the spanking he said to his son, "you know I spanked you because I love you?" And his son, rubbing his bottom said, "I know daddy, but don't love me so hard next time."

What Parent does not discipline their child; They do it because they love them and want to protect them. The parent who disciplines is a parent who cares. And God's discipline

is an expression of His love and care for us. We can accept God's discipline as obedient children. Humbling ourselves and submit to God, being thankful that He cares about us or we can rebel. How does God discipline us? He warns us, He convicts us of sin, He corrects us and rebukes us through His Word, other people, especially those in the church to whom we are to be accountable, and sometimes through external events and hardships. Remember His goal is our holiness, because He wants us to win the prize of seeing Him in His Kingdom. How might God be disciplining you? How are you responding? Accept the Lord's discipline.

4. Correct your attitudes, relationships, and way of living.
(Heb 12:12-14a NLT) So take a new grip with your tired hands and stand firm on your shaky legs. 13 Mark out a straight path for your feet. Then those who follow you, though they are weak and lame, will not stumble and fall but will become strong.
14 Try to live in peace with everyone...

Holy living and pleasing God includes loving other people. What is your style of relating to others? Do you know what's strange? The attitudes and ways of others that bother you are the same attitudes and ways that are in your life; you just don't see it as easily. When someone says something about how you make them feel, instead of defending yourself, ask yourself why they might feel that way...is there something you need to change? Care about others before yourself. Encourage others instead of manipulating encouragement from them. As far as it depends on you live in peace with everyone. This peace must be compatible with holiness. A weak compromise with evil would not meet this requirement.

Do You Want to See the Lord? Then seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. Here is what being holy means, you must:
Put off the sin that so easily hinders your progress
Keep your eyes on Jesus
Submit to God's will and discipline
Correct your attitudes, relationships, and way of living.