



Lights and Perfection, Inc.

Go and make disciples!

E-votional 83

Holiness and Perfection

2 Corinthians 7:1 (ESV),

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

There really is a lot that we can say about the idea in the Bible about holiness and perfection. I often think of the saints of old and how they hated sin and loved the Lord.

When we think of holiness and perfection, we often think of God in such a way that He is far off and cannot be reached because of it. And while this is true, even in His holiness, His great desire is to be with His people. The problem lies in that we are all sinners born into depravity and have nothing good about us in and of ourselves as Paul said in Romans 7:18 (ESV),

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

And because of this very fact, we have been separated from God. Now, Paul was illustrating the problem with his flesh and all of humanities. It is really important to understand this and is further clarified through the remainder of Romans 7 and sums up in Romans 7:24-24 (ESV),

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Paul is thanking the Lord for this deliverance from that evil that lies within his flesh. In context, with other Scriptures, this does not mean that the flesh was somehow less sinful because of the death of Jesus on the cross. A careful study of the entirety of the New Testament will reveal this. Rather, the thanks to the Lord for the deliverance from this sinful body of death was because now, being

born from above, we are able to live life in the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Notice the word before Spirit as being Holy. This implies that God alone is Holy and His Spirit being Holy abides within us making the way for us to be holy even as He is holy. Praise the Lord!

Understanding the holiness and perfection of God and our complete imperfection I believe is necessary to make it to the understanding that God will only abide in a clean vessel. Thus, the reason we needed to be born again, to be given a new spirit, not flesh. The resurrection is where we are delivered even from the flesh with new sinless bodies. Hallelujah!

You see, just as it was in the Temple in the Old Testament, God does not change and cannot live in sin. He is holy and perfect and in Him is no darkness. Paul was expressly speaking only of his sinful flesh and that is the reason he could say that he knew that no good dwelt within him. It was the sinful nature of humanity that is the reason God cannot abide in them. Paul was not making an excuse to be ok with sins committed, nor was he laying the foundation for believers to be ok with even the occasional sin in their lives.

While, yes there is forgiveness, we must understand the pattern given to us by Jesus when He said, "*the Spirit is willing the flesh is weak.*" (Matthew 26:41) While Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15), it was never intended to be an excuse for the believer to neglect personal holiness. Jesus was illustrating to His disciples that the way to resist temptation and therefore sin would lie in the power of one's prayer life and reliance upon the Holy Spirit. I will speak more thoroughly on prayer soon. That teaching will be about the altar of incense in the Temple and its link to the believer and their prayer life as found in Scripture.

The point is this, that through the blood of Jesus we are made clean and as a clean vessel can receive within ourselves the Lord and can become a dwelling place for Him. However, if we continue to live in sin, we negate this vessel as a dwelling place for the Lord. It really is quite simple and a cause for the death of Jesus in the first place. That we were born into sin and as such were separated naturally and eternally from God. The blood of goats and calves sanctified the earthly Temple just as the blood of Jesus offered made a way for us to be the Temple for God to dwell in. Jesus passed into the heavens into the true temple and made the ultimate sacrifice for us to enter in.

So, in short, the promise mentioned in 2 Corinthians 7:1 is very simply that Jesus paid it all and with His blood we are cleansed by faith through grace. And because of this God's desire to dwell in us and be our God is established granted we keep in step with the true grace of God which trains us to renounce sin, ungodliness,

and worldliness by the very power of God that dwells in us (Titus 2:12). Never in the history of the Bible has this truth ever been diminished. Although we see much of the church today fall into a watered-down version of grace, the Bible still never neglects it. The point is the holiness and perfection of God within us. You see, because we have this promise of entering eternity with our God, we must also understand that in no way will sin be allowed to be in the habitation of the Lord. So, Paul exhorts the believers to, “*cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*”

There it is, “*bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.*” Praise the Lord! Paul is exhorting believers to do this. While it is true that it is God who works in us to will and work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13), we must of necessity have this same mind in Christ. From this perspective, we work together in participation with the Spirit of the Living God to complete this work through the exercise of great prayer and faith.

To have this mind, we must understand, while through love, faith, and grace that sin is sin and for this reason Jesus went to the cross. It is when we start to accept sin as the norm that we begin to fall away from grace. Grace is not some abstract type of favor whereby God just distantly forgives sinners. No brothers and sisters, it is the very favor of God given to us through faith and His love that is active and powerful through His living and active Word to demolish the strongholds of sin in our lives. Thus, bringing to completion holiness in our lives. If you believe this practice this and teach this to the believers in love.

Lord, we are nothing and it is true that there is no good within our sinful flesh. Yet in Your love and mercy, You still chose to die for us. Thank You Lord! For this reason, we want to live in the fulness of what You paid for and be holy Temples for You to dwell in. Give us clean hands and give us pure hearts, in Jesus name. Amen.

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In Christ's Love,
Chris and Jeanne
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