

2 Corinthians 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Analysis

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit—The Greek *katharisōmen* (καθαρίσωμεν, "let us cleanse") is a hortatory subjunctive, calling for decisive moral action. Paul links this to the promises of 6:16-18 (divine indwelling and father-child relationship). *Molysmos* (μολυσμός, "filthiness/defilement") refers to ritual and moral contamination—both bodily *sark* (σάρξ, "flesh") and spiritual *pneuma* (πνεῦμα, "spirit") dimensions require purification.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God—*Epiteleō* (ἐπιτελέω, "perfecting/completing") suggests ongoing sanctification, not instantaneous perfection. *Hagiōsynē* (ἀγιωσύνη, "holiness") is the state of being set apart for God. The motivation is *phobos Theou* (φόβος Θεοῦ, "fear of God")—reverential awe that drives moral transformation. This verse bridges separation from idolatry (ch. 6) with reconciliation in relationships (ch. 7), showing holiness encompasses both vertical and horizontal dimensions.

Historical Context

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians around AD 55-56 from Macedonia, following his 'severe letter' and Titus's mission to Corinth. The Corinthian church struggled with pagan culture's pervasive immorality and philosophical syncretism. Temple prostitution, civic idolatry, and Greco-Roman sexual ethics created constant pressure toward

compromise. Paul's call for cleansing addressed both cultic contamination and everyday ethical compromise.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What specific 'defilements of flesh and spirit' am I tolerating that compromise my witness for Christ?
2. How does 'fear of God' differ from worldly fear, and how should it motivate my pursuit of holiness?
3. In what ways do I compartmentalize holiness (treating it as private piety) rather than integrating it into all relationships?

Interlinear Text

ταύτας οὖν ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀγαπητοί
G3778 therefore G2192 G3588 promises G1860 G27
G3767 G575 G3956

καθαρίσωμεν ἔαυτοὺς ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ
let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and
G2511 G1438 G575 G3956 G3436 G4561 G2532

πνεύματος ἐπιτελοῦντες ἀγιωσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ
spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God
G4151 G2005 G42 G1722 G5401 G2316

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (Holy): For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

1 Peter 2:11 (Love): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Proverbs 8:13 (Parallel theme): The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

James 4:8 (References God): Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

Psalms 51:10 (Spirit): Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

1 John 3:3 (Parallel theme): And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (Spirit): And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 55:7 (References God): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

1 Peter 1:22 (Love): Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 Corinthians 6:20 (Spirit): For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.