

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 *sarx* (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* (ἁγιωσύνη, "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	Having	G3588	promises	dearly beloved	
	G3767	G2192		G1860	G27	
καθαρίσωμεν	ἐαυτοὺς	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.