

# LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES

**TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 6:14—7:1**

## **Introduction:**

1. Second Corinthians 7:1 properly belongs to the previous chapter – there were no chapter and verse divisions in the original Greek text.
2. “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves...” To understand what Paul means by “these promises,” we must go back to chapter 6.
3. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:17).
4. These are the “promises” referred to in 7:1. These are wonderful blessings promised to us if we obey God and separate from evil.
5. The doctrine of separation is taught throughout the Bible, but it is scorned by many professed Christians, especially in this day of “anything goes,” “seeker-friendly, purpose-driven” Christianity.
6. God wants us to be separated, and God wants us to be “cleansed” (7:1). I want to preach on the need to cleanse ourselves (7:1).

## **I. HOW ARE WE CLEANSED?**

## **II. WHAT ARE WE CLEANSED FROM?**

## **III. WHY DO WE NEED TO BE CLEANSED?**

## **I. HOW ARE WE TO BE CLEANSED?**

1. First of all, notice the Bible says: “Let us cleanse ourselves.” This cleansing work must start with us. We cannot help others if we ourselves are not clean – “let us cleanse ourselves...”
2. Let me emphasize that this is a message for Christians – “dearly beloved” (7:1). These are not instructions for unbelievers.
3. The apostle Paul included himself – “us” (7:1). Paul had not arrived at a state of sinless perfection. He wrote in Philippians 3:12, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”
4. Remember what our Lord said in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

5. This should be the goal of every genuine Christian. The fact we are seeing so much subnormal Christianity today indicates how unreal the Bible is for most Christians.
6. While we should strive for perfect holiness, we must realize it is impossible in this world. If Paul had not attained, then it is highly unlikely you or I will this side of heaven.
7. Furthermore, I John 1:8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It will be this way right up until we leave this wicked, sin-loving world.
8. But there should be continual victory over sin in the life of the believer. We have been saved from the power of sin.
9. Romans 8:6 says, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Not death and sin and unrest and guilt and despair – but "life & peace."
10. The participle "perfecting" (II Cor. 7:1) indicates a process that begins with regeneration and is completed when we see Christ (cf. I John 3:2, 3).
11. This cleansing began when God saved us. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul writes in I Cor. 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
12. This is important to understand because these church members who had been cleansed by the grace of God had been wicked sinners before God saved them.
13. Corinth was a wicked, sin-loving city. To say a man "lived like a Corinthian" meant that man was a filthy disgusting reprobate.
14. Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:9-11).
15. But after they were saved they were cleansed. Paul writes in II Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
16. "Our consciences can be cleansed from sin only by the precious atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ" (HA Ironside).
17. But after this original cleansing, we need to be cleansed on a daily basis. This comes from staying in the Bible all the time.
18. I must be frank with you this morning. If you do not love reading the Bible, and studying the Scriptures, and meditating on the Word of God you are either not saved or you are badly backslidden.

19. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9).
20. As we study God’s Word and act upon it, we cleanse ourselves from everything that is dirty and defiling and disgusting.
21. “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:25, 26). This is how we are cleansed...next...

## II. WHAT ARE WE CLEANSED FROM?

1. “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit: (II Cor. 7:1).
2. There is a distinction here between the filthiness of the flesh and the filthiness of the spirit (II Cor. 7:1).
3. Let me be clear – all sin is filthy. All sin is wicked. All sin is disgusting. All sin is offensive. All sin brings down the judgment and wrath of God.
4. Nevertheless, here we find two classes of sin – sins of the flesh and sins of the spirit (7:1).
5. “Filthiness of the flesh” refers to the gross sins of the body – unlawful lusts, sensual appetites, drunkenness, gluttony, lewdness, immodesty, adultery, fornication, etc.
6. If you are born again, you cannot watch about 90% of the junk on TV without feeling filthy. And if you can watch that garbage and not feel convicted, well then you have seared and defiled your conscience and you need to get cleansed.
7. Sin is glorified on television and in the movies, and preachers need to speak out strongly against it. Rap music is all about the filthiness of the flesh.
8. Bro. McGowan and I ran into a fellow the other day who was listening to “Christian reggae.” It was loud and worldly.
9. How can Christians listen to this garbage and not be convicted?
10. Spurgeon said, “The more light we get, the more we discover our own darkness. That which is scarcely accounted sin by some men will be a grievous defilement to a tender conscience.”
11. I was listening to a good sermon on the Internet recently. The preacher was out visiting and was in the home of a family of professed Christians. On the living room table was a glossy magazine featuring articles and photographs of immoral movie stars and their wicked, lascivious lifestyle.
12. The preacher asked them, “How can you fill your minds with this dirty garbage?”
13. Indeed! The old-time preachers preached hard against sin. They even preached against sensual poetry and worldly novels. If they were around

- today, what would they think of the Internet, cable TV, raunchy music, sleazy radio, etc. ?
14. Referring to sensual poetry, AB Simpson wrote, “So saturated is much of this with the very spirit of darkness that Lord Byron gave express commands that his most famous poetical romance should never be allowed in the hands of his own daughter. Too well he knew the fatal blight which it would bring to her modesty and purity.” What would AB Simpson think if he were alive today?!
  15. I read this recently (Christian Law Association):
    - 12% of the total Internet is pornography.
    - Average age of first Internet exposure to pornography – 11 years old!
    - 9—16 year-olds who have viewed online pornography – 90%.
    - 15—17 year-olds having multiple hard-core exposures – 80%.
  16. What about “filthiness of the spirit” (7:1)?
  17. This would include pride, conceit, haughtiness, arrogance, vanity, envy, greed, covetousness, an unforgiving spirit, etc.
  18. Filthiness of the flesh is very obvious. Filthiness of the spirit is more subtle and sometimes more dangerous.
  19. Andrew Murray said, “Every defilement, outward or inward, in conduct or inclination, in the physical or the spiritual life, must be cleansed and cast away.”
  20. Everything filthy – “both external and internal, both seen and unseen, both public and private” must be thoroughly cleansed (Philip E. Hughes).
  21. “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).
  22. There are certain things which seem doubtful to the child of God. A preacher was getting dressed one day and he found a shirt in his closet. He said to his wife, “Is this shirt clean?” She replied, “If it is doubtful it is dirty!” That is good advice.

### III. WHY DO WE NEED TO BE CLEANSED?

1. Our goal as Christians is perfect holiness – “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (7:1). Our Lord said this in Matthew 5:48.
2. In I Cor. 7:34, Paul refers to the unmarried woman who cares for the things of the Lord, “that she may be holy both in body and in spirit.” Note “holy both in body and in spirit.”
3. Holiness is one of God’s attributes. God is holy, and he wants you and me to be holy. First Peter 1:15, 16 says, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

4. When we were saved, we were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. “For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (II Cor. 6:16).
5. Separation and cleansing as taught in II Corinthians 6 (and throughout the entire Bible) are necessary steps on the way to “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1).
6. Those who ignore the Bible’s commands to separate from sin are out of the will of God. Most churches in America today need to seriously consider what the Bible has to say about this.
7. “The fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1) makes us hate sin. It is impossible to be holy without a holy hatred of sin.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The deplorable condition of most churches today is heartbreaking. Our Lord says in Revelation 3:16, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.”
2. Consider this recent article from David Cloud:  
**CHURCH HOSTS RAUCOUS FASHION SHOW** (Friday Church News Notes, February 29, 2008, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org) [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) -  
 Victory Church in Amarillo, Texas, hosted its third annual Fashionably Loud event on February 24, featuring fashion models, rock and hip hop music, light shows, break dancing, an electric guitar battle, and other things. The fashions included very low-cut necklines, short skirts, bare midriffs, punk hairstyles, tight pants, you name it. The church's senior pastor, David Brown, said, “It helps us to suggest to people that Christians are not living in another world, but the same one everyone else lives in and that Christians can be interested in fashion. Christians can be Christians and yet trendy too” (“Victory Church Is Letter It's Hair Down,” Amarillo.com, Feb. 23, 2008). Mike Eminger, associate pastor of student ministries, said: “We will challenge the attendees with the fact that God has fashioned us and that he wants us to live loud, full lives.” In fact, God wants His people to live meek and holy lives. Christian women are to adorn themselves in “modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety” (I Timothy 2:9) and with “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit” (I Peter 3:4), which is the diametrically opposed to the worldly fashions. Christians are indeed supposed to live in another world. We are exhorted, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2), and, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (I John 2:15), and, “be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). The “grace” preached by the contemporary churches is not the true grace of Christ, which teaches us to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts” (Titus 2:12). The apostle warned of false teachers “whose God is their belly, and whose

glory is in their shame, WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS” (Philippians 3:19). Few things would be more out of place in the church of Jesus Christ than a modern fashion show. What carnal, blasphemous foolishness!

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