

2 Corinthians 6:16–7:1

- <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?
- <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”
- <sup>17</sup> Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”
- <sup>18</sup> “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”
- <sup>1</sup> Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## ***Commandments and Exhortations to Holiness*** ***2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1***

INTRO:

Brian reminded us that there are few songs which speak of God’s wrath. There are also few songs that exhort us to live holy lives. Yet, that theme is scarcely absent from the Bible. ***“As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’”*** (1 Peter 1:15–16).

When we return to Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, Paul, as a good spiritual father and a pastor, cared deeply about the Corinthian’s progress in personal holiness. He gave practical commands and backed them with great practical promises from God to motivate them and us to personal holiness.

***I. The Promises to Motivate Us to Holiness (6:16-18)***

***II. Paul’s Application (1 Corinthians 7:1)***

***I. The Promises to Motivate Us to Holiness (6:16-18)***

***2 Corinthians 6:16 “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’”***

A. Before we launch into this command we vitally need to understand some background. Corinth had become a cosmopolitan city by the time of Paul’s coming to

Corinth the first time in **Acts 18**. According to a contemporary writer, the religion of Corinth was pagan and varied. *There were “temples or altars dedicated to Poseidon, Palaemon, Aphrodite, Artemis, Dionysus, Helius, Hermes, Apollo, Zeus, Isis, Eros and others.”* This background informs these commands from Paul.

1. Paul’s desire in this text is to motivate the Corinthians to not go back or to involve themselves in idolatry. We can draw legitimate applications from some of these commands.

2. Yet, we must remember this was first written to Christians converted from paganism or Judaism, and not to us.

B. We are leaping into the middle of Paul’s discussion. Still, this question makes the point above. Can the temple of the living God have anything in common with idolatry? The obvious answer is, no. Paul is not satisfied to just answer the question but explains it by citing an Old Testament text.

**v.16** *“For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people’”*

If we have put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are God’s dwelling place. He lives in us and He changes us from the inside out. We know from the Gospel of **John (14:21-23)** this indwelling is because the Spirit of God lives in us. In the Spirit of God, the Son and the Father also live in us. Because we are God’s we live in a relationship with the one and only living God. He is our God and Father and we are His children.

C. How do we respond to this reality?

**vs.17-18** *“Therefore, ‘come out from among them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean,’ and I will receive you. ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.’”*

1. **Verse 17** opens with a command. This quotes the book of **Leviticus**, but is applied to these converted pagans. They must not go back to idolatry. In fact, the safest thing to do was to totally stay away from it.

2. Notice the motivation was not, if you touch it God will smack you. Rather, Paul cites great promises.

**vs.17b-18** *‘Do not touch what is unclean,’ and I will receive you. ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty’”*

This is not saying that serving and obeying God is the means of our salvation.

The Lord promised He will recognize our choice to obey Him and will welcome us and make us know we are His sons and daughters.

3. Many ask me how do we know that we know we belong to Him? The long answer is the book of **1 John**, the short answer is here. He lets us know when we obey Him.

## *II. Paul's Application (1 Corinthians 7:1)*

**2 Corinthians 7:1** *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*

A. How do we apply this? We will allow the Apostle Paul to apply this for us.

**[my translation]** *“Because we have these promises of God, loved ones.”*

Having God's Word on something is no small thing. Our challenge is the same as that the original Corinthians had. (1) Do we believe them? Do we know in our heart of hearts we are God's loved ones? (2) Do we believe God said it and that settles it?

B. Now comes the exhortation,

**v.1** *“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”*

How do we do this? This involves **1 John 1:7** and **9**.

*“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another [God and each of us], and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*

This is our motivation to separate ourselves unto Him. Because we want to be constantly in fellowship with Him, we confess our sins.

**1 John 1:9** *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

C. If we follow Paul's exhortation we will be doing this, *“perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (v.1). The idea is not that if we do this we will be holy once and for all.

Bringing holiness to perfection is a process. God desires indeed commands holiness in His children. Ultimately, the growth in holiness will mark us out as His children and will allow us to enter into the heavenly presence of God.

**1 John 3:1–3** *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

**Hebrews 12:14** *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”*

Hymn #210 **Jesus Paid It All**