

# Gospel and Perfecting Holiness — 1

## (Overview)

*Cor 6:16-7:1 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." <sup>17</sup>"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." <sup>18</sup>"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

### Outline

1. Promises
2. Purification
3. Perfecting Holiness

### 1. Promises

**2 Cor 7:1 These promises** refer to God's promises in the new covenant relationship with His people. (*I will live with them and walk with them and I will be their God and they will be my people — 2 Cor 6:16*). In general, **covenant language is a three-part formula**:

*I will be your God.*

*You shall be my people.*

*I will live with you.*

It is like a groom telling his bride: I will be your husband — You will be my wife and I will live with you.

From the time of Abraham, it has always been God's intention to live with His people in a covenant relationship. Lev 26:12 gives the complete general formula for covenants. God says to the Israelites, "*I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.*" (also mentioned partly in Gen 17:7; Exod 6:7, Jer 31:33; 32:38; Zech 8:8). After the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the heart of man was sinful and was unable to keep the external Law of God. The prophets knew mankind needed a new heart and spirit (Ps 51:5, 10-11; Ezk 36:26-27).

The good news (**gospel**) is that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, rose from the dead and conquered sin, death and disarmed Satan. When we receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord, we enter into the New Covenant with God established by the precious blood of Jesus. In the New Covenant, God gives a new heart and spirit and writes His law inside our hearts so that we can walk closely with Him. The Holy Spirit resides in us. We become a child of God, and He never stops doing good to us.

*Jer 32:38-41 They will be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>39</sup>I will give them singleness of heart and action so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. <sup>40</sup>I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me so that they will never turn away from me. <sup>41</sup>I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly*

*plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.*

## **2. Purification**

Since we have these promises, Paul says, “Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness. “Body and spirit” refer to the whole person — externally and internally. Sins of the body are sexual immorality, drunkenness, laziness, gluttony, and every type of sensual pleasure. Sins of the spirit are jealousy, hatred, bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, revenge, lustful thoughts, gossip, selfish ambition, envy and so on. Paul is asking every individual believer to take action. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we must cleanse our bodies from defilement by yielding to the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Holiness has started in us. It needs perfecting.

## **3. Perfecting Holiness**

**2 Cor 7:1 *Perfect holiness out of reverence for God.***

Perfecting holiness does not mean sinless perfection but a progressive growth in maturity and Christlikeness (sanctification)

### **a. God will use all things for perfecting holiness in you,**

It would include every encouragement, suffering, discipline and pruning. So, when you go through suffering, discipline, pruning, and difficulties, do not doubt that God works in you. Trust Him, embrace humility and persevere in your pursuit of holiness. God has not abandoned you.

*Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

*Heb 12:10 But God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*

*John 15:1-2 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*

### **b. Perfecting holiness out of reverence for God**

*1 Peter 1:15-19 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup> for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” <sup>17</sup> Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup> For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

- Have reverence for Jesus Christ because His precious blood redeemed you from your empty way of life (vv 18-19). Look at the cross. Behold the Lamb of God.
- Have reverence for your heavenly Father because He is holy and wants you to pursue holiness in your conduct on earth, which is not your final home and in which you are in exile (or passing through as a pilgrim). And reverently fear Him, for He is impartial and will judge your work without favouritism. God will reward you according to your conduct on earth (vv 15-17).

### **c. Perfecting holiness for your reward of His presence on earth**

You will experience the presence of God in your homes when you are perfecting holiness.

*John 14:23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*