"Let Us Cleanse Ourselves!"

2 Corinthians 7:1
7/3/2011

Introduction:

**** We need to Cleanse Ourselves from the Filth of this World's Sin***

I. I should cleanse myself with <u>grateful appreciation</u> for what God promised me ***(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>conscientiously</u>)***
"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved"

II. I should cleanse myself with <u>determination</u> knowing that no one can do it for me. ***(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>volitionally</u>)***
"let us cleanse ourselves"

III. I should cleanse myself with <u>completeness</u> leaving no opportunity for contamination . ***(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>thoroughly</u>)***
"from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit"

IV. I should cleanse myself with <u>motivation</u>, having the goal of holiness .
(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>intentionally</u>)
"perfecting holiness"

V. I should cleanse myself with <u>reverential fear</u>, having respect for God .
(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>seriously</u>)
"in the fear of God"

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There is nothing quite as invigorating as a hot shower. To be cleansed of the summer sweat or the worker’s dirt is truly refreshing.

Today I’d like to speak of another type of cleansing; a washing that is of much greater importance.

Paul knew that the temptation for sexual immorality was great in 2 places - Corinth and Thessalonica. Why these two places?

> Both cities were geographically, economically and morally like NYC - very loose morals.
>
> Both cities were seaports and had traffic from all points of the world passing through.
>
> With mixed nationalities and mixed religions prevalent, there would also exist mixed moral standards. Confusion in sexual matters was prevalent.
>
> As a matter of fact, Paul is writing to Thess. from Corinth, and no doubt is reminded of the existing perversion daily.
>
> Liberals try to say that the teachings of the N.T. came from (were adaptations from) the society in which Paul, etc., lived. Not true! The Bible's "moral demands stand in stark contrast to the immoral practices of that day." (Hiebert, p. 167)
>
> The world then, like today, regarded all forms of immorality with <u>indifference</u>. They even defended it (like today) as a necessity of nature, like eating and drinking. (if it was a necessity, God would not forbid it)
>
> They got perverted to the point of viewing it as <u>"spiritual"</u> in some religious cults of the day.
>
> No matter how bad the world is, God's will remains the same!

**** We need to Cleanse Ourselves from the Filth of this World’s Sin***

I. I should cleanse myself with <u>grateful appreciation</u> for what God promised me *(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>conscientiously</u>)*

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved"

2 Corinthians 7:1 is really the conclusion of a parenthetical thought began in 6:14 – that being that we should stay clean of (separate from) anyone or anything that would prevent us from hearing and heeding God's message from God's man (in the Corinthians' case, that man was Paul).

"<u>Having</u> . . . these promises" – the present tense active participle shows that these promises were something held onto by the Corinthians at the present moment.

--Because my body is the temple of the living God (6:16)
--Because God dwells in us (6:16)
--Because He walks in us (6:16)
--Because He is our God and we are His people (6:16)
And
--Because He is our Father and we are His sons (v. 18)

. . . We should cleanse ourselves from all filthiness and live like we really belong to Him.

"Promises" - The promises involve the <u>benefits</u> of <u>sonship</u>.

Living in light of who I really am as a child of God is one of the greatest encouragements to holy living. I am already God's temple in which He resides (6:16). He made promise to dwell in His children, to walk in them, to be our personal God (6:16). . . a father to us (6:18) and we His sons and daughters.

Realizing I am a "King's kid" should motivate me to live like a King's kid.

"Dearly beloved" - One of the greatest incentives to holy living is the knowledge that God loves me. As His child, He loves me and it is His love for me that motivates me to love Him in return.

The love of god motivates a love for God, and that motivates obedience for God.

II. I should cleanse myself with <u>determination</u>, knowing that no one can do it for me. ***(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>volitionally</u>)***
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"Let us cleanse ourselves" – the reflexive pronoun (ourselves) reveals that cleansing is something we must do for ourselves. Just as a healthy person bathes himself or showers himself, so a holy person cleanses himself.

No one can do it for you. It is a conscientious choice or a volitional decision that I am going to (by God's grace and power) separate myself from filth (whatever form that filth may take). God calls upon us to make a choice for purity and then to implement a plan to see that we remain distant from carnal contamination.

"Let us" - all believers need to purify themselves; here Paul includes himself. He not only encourages God's people to be pure, but he places himself into the injunction.

It's not enough to pray, "God, keep me from it." God has told us to keep <u>ourselves</u> from it. God tells us to <u>flee</u> from fornication (I Cor. 6:18). Run from it! Don't flirt with it! Don't sample it! It will ruin you! Does God ever deny us anything that is good for us? NO!

You must decide also to keep yourself away from anything that might <u>lead</u> to sexual impurity (whether in thought or action). If premarital sex is wrong, then anything that would lead to it is wrong also (EX: petting). If adultery is wrong, thena nything that would lead to it is wrong also (EX: reading wrongmaterials, developing emotional relationship with secretary, etc.)

"Cleanse" = *katharizo* – to purify

"Avoidance of ritual defilement was a major pre-occupation of the Essenes and affected many areas of their life" (Rogers, p. 406).

Having clean hands a pure heart takes personal effort, as James 4:8 says:

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded."

"Hands" - symbolic of evil <u>actions</u> (deeds; <u>outer</u> defilement). You have done that which is wicked and have "bloody hands"

"Hearts" - symbolic of evil <u>motives</u> (thoughts; <u>inner</u> defilement)

III. I should cleanse myself with <u>completeness</u> leaving no opportunity for contamination . ***(Washing off this World's filth is something we do <u>thoroughly</u>)***
"from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit"

"From all filthiness" - not some, but all; not a partial bath but complete.

"Filthiness" *(molusmos*) – that which stains, defiles, contaminates or pollutes.

One thing we need to realize about sin is that it leaves its mark. We may try in earnest to cover it up or conceal it from others, but sin leaves a mark very visible to God and others.

IV. I should cleanse myself with <u>motivation</u>, having the goal of holiness .
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"perfecting holiness"

"Flesh and spirit" - defilement is both outward and inward. Filthiness is external and internal. Filthiness leaves its mark physically and spiritually.

Can you think of any <u>physical</u> defilements?

Can you think of any <u>spiritual</u> defilements?

Our concern for purity should propel us to keep both our bodies and minds clean.

Defilements call out for our attention all the time and in just about all places. How do we keep ourselves clean?

"Perfecting holiness" – The idea of "perfecting" (*epi + teleo)* means to bring to completion/maturity/or to its goal. The preposition in compound is "directive, indicating the concentration of the verb's action upon some object" (Rogers, p. 406).

"Perfecting" - the present tense indicates ongoing continual action.

Our advance toward a mature, holy life is a day by day, ongoing progressive sanctification. Don't expect to "arrive" overnight.

"The great tragedy for so many is that as they get older, they do not get any holier. Time has been the enemy. They left their moral apex in junior high school. They were better boys than they are men. Holiness is farther from completion. The demand for holiness is fearful, "in the fear of God." We will all stand "before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has d one in the body, whether good or evil" (5:10). Knowing this fear, we must work at "bringing holiness to completion." (Hughes, p. 144).

V. I should cleanse myself with <u>reverential fear</u>, having respect for God .
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"In the fear of God" - (not the fear of man, who may or may not be watching you) Respect and reverence for God. He sees you all the time; He is ever present.

God is to be feared.

> Deut. 6:13 - *"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by his name."*
>
> I Sam. 12:24 - *"Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things He hath done for you."*
>
> Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."*
>
> Eccles. 12:13 - *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."*
>
> *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"* (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10)
>
> The most spiritual people in history had this testimony, that they feared God.

My Vow of Purity

Today I make the following promises
to the Lord Jesus Christ:

I purpose in my heart to keep myself pure
from all sexual defilement;
I will be careful to avoid any circumstances
that would tempt me to be impure
in my thoughts or actions;
I will not date a non-believer;
I will pray for God's leading
as to who and when I should marry;
I will obtain my parent's blessing
on my courtship and marriage;
I will keep myself a virgin until my wedding day.

_____
Name

_____
Date

_____ _____
Parent(s) Pastor

1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4