



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
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2 CORINTHIANS 7:1

2 Corinthians Series

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, singing that song about holiness and holy, holy, holy, and just looking at all of the things about your character in your word and how we're drawn into that. We just ask that you'd help us to focus in on that now. We ask, Lord, as we open your word and we study it that you would give us some fresh teaching. We may have passed through this verse before, some of us, as we've studied, but we ask that this teaching would be fresh. That as we read it this time your Holy Spirit would illuminate some new things that we haven't seen before so we might live as different people, that you might change what we believe, change how we act, change our attitudes about things. Lord, we're asking you to do a miracle in our hearts. I know that many people come here today with burdens on our hearts, pressures that we're experiencing at work or at home or in their health or finances or whatever it might be. I ask that you would do a miracle today and reveal your presence and your power in a strategic way. We submit ourselves to you, Lord, to your word, and ask for you to use it today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Would you please stand with me? Let's read our one verse. We're only looking at one verse today in the Bible. I'm going to read this one verse. You can open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 7, if you would like. You might want to do that because I'm going to refer rather quickly to the three previous verses and they're not up here. Oh yeah, they are on the screen too. But you still might want to look at your own Bible as we read. But let me read this one verse that we're going to look at today.

Therefore, 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.

Today we're going to talk about holiness. Now the word 'holy' for many of us is like the word 'nerd'. The idea is if you're a nerd you're kind of into some stuff and nobody wants to be one. Holy in some sense is like that because it's defined as holy as in as ultimate righteousness or something. So sometimes we have a challenge when it comes to holiness, like we do with the word 'nerd'.

I'm going to teach you some things today that I think will spark you in some new ways in this area of holiness that will be really powerful for you. That you'll see holiness in a different light and you'll actually (I'm hoping) desire it in some new ways, *perfecting holiness out of reverence for God*. So in order to do that we have to go to the end of the verse first. So this last part of the

verse says *perfecting holiness out of reverence for God*. In other words, there's something about God that's going to draw us into this idea of holiness. And what is that going to look like?

If we look at the word *holy* in the Bible and try to understand it, we come very quickly to this idea, this sense that God is holy. And when we think about God's holiness, that is like the supreme character quality that God has. All of the other character qualities flow out of God's holiness. It's like this brilliant energy and force of holiness that comes out of God that just erupts.

So when He creates the world on the very first day He says, "*Let there be light.*" It's like out of His very being this light comes out and it's that light that's then taken through the scriptures to be tied together with this idea of holiness.

You know when we get to heaven in the last book of the Bible, we started here in Genesis, but when we get to Revelation we see that there's no sun or moon in heaven. Did you know that? No sun or moon. Why? Because God is there. And His very essence, the very person of God exudes so much light we don't need to have a sun or a moon or light bulbs. We've got God's presence there. The light of God's glory and majesty just fills up all of heaven. Wow. The holiness of God.

When Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, do you remember what happened? There was such a bright, brilliant light it knocked him off of his horse and he fell on the ground, just blinded by the light of seeing God. When you see God in all of His glory, there's this amazing brightness, light.

When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, do you remember that? Jesus was transfigured and three disciples were there. What happened to them? Well first Jesus, bright light all over Him, just exuding the holiness of God. And the three disciples fell on the ground. They just couldn't stand in the presence of God. The holiness of God is just his huge force, fierce, powerful thing about Him.

So when Moses looked across the desert and saw a bush burning, that was probably not unusual in the desert. But the interesting thing about this bush was that it was not consumed. It just kept burning and burning. There's some light going on there. So he was attracted to that. Just like you and I and everybody in the world is attracted to God.

Some people are attracted to God and they try to find Him in different ways. But when I hear that someone is interested in eastern religion or they're interested in some form of religion, I say, "Good. They're being attracted to God. They just need a little bit of the truth to get them steered in the right direction." But they're being attracted to God because that's what happens.

When the light is burning in the bush then we have Moses attracted to that power of holiness that's there. So here's Moses coming close to the burning bush. As he gets close to the burning bush because he's attracted to it, the burning bush speaks and says, "Stop. Don't come any closer. Take off your shoes for where you are standing is holy ground."

You see, we have this problem in our heart and there's a picture of the bush, the holiness of God that what happens is that we are attracted to God, but we can only come so close because of the fierceness of His holiness. It is just so intense. Not because it's bad. But because it's intensely good. So good and powerful we cannot get close to that holiness. That's why God says don't come any closer.

So continually in our world today we're drawn to God. Everyone is drawn to God and when we're drawn to God, we're looking for something, but we can only get so close because of this fierce goodness of God represented in His holiness. That's why we need Jesus Christ who He said of Himself, "*I am the truth, I am the way (the way), I am the life. Anyone who comes to the Father must come through me.*" There's only one way to get into the holiness of God because Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins so that we could have His righteousness imputed on us so that we can come into the presence of a holy God. Wow.

If you're here today and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, I'm just showing you why that's so necessary and why that happens. Yes, we're attracted to God. We cannot get there. Even though we clean ourselves up and look really nice on the outside, we cannot get there without the way of Jesus Christ that brings us into the presence of the holiness of God. That's just so amazing to think about.

Probably the biggest picture of holiness that we see in the Bible is the design of the temple that God had designed. It has kind of these circles that the closer you get the fewer and fewer people are able to get there until finally you get to in the center the Holy of Holies. That's the Most Holy Place. When you get there, only one man can go in once a year. The high priest can go in once a year into that Holy of Holies. There's this picture of separateness. If you think about holiness, you really want to think about separateness. God is unique and separate. That's really the essence of the word *holiness* is the separation from. When we think about it, usually we think about separation from sin. But it really just means separation.

So when God was in the business of creating, He created on six days, each one of the days and all of the creation that took place. On the seventh day He created the Sabbath and He says, "*Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.*" It is a separate day. It is separate than the rest of the days as designed for the Jewish people when they were celebrating their week.

It's interesting in the New Testament if we look at Hebrews 4 and we look at the Sabbath that when Jesus came, something happened to the Sabbath day. Not quite sure what it is, but we enter into Jesus Christ for our Sabbath rest. I would suggest that rest is still a good idea, but we don't observe Saturday as a day of rest like the Hebrew people did with great fervor. Lots of rules about the Sabbath to keep it separate.

Now this idea of being separate then, holiness is quite important because later on in the New Testament in 1 Peter 1 the scripture says – "*Be holy, for I am holy.*" Now He's giving instructions to you and me, saying, "You be holy as I am holy." In the same way that God is separate and separating Himself from any other thing or being, we are to be separate. Separate from sin, separate from other people. If we are blending in, then we probably have a problem. If people can't tell that we're Christians, they don't know that, we probably have a problem.

Because when your distinctness in Jesus Christ is evident to others, not only do you have this internal sense that you're different, but it's reflected to other people.

So when Jesus was here on earth, He says, "*I want you to consider yourself the salt of the earth.*" Not the bland of the earth. If you're blending in then you're the bland of the earth. Okay? But I want you to appear as salt. I want you to season others. You have something that's savory, something that's enjoyable, something that makes it taste good. You're the salt of the earth.

And then he takes the idea of God's holiness and brilliance described as light and he says, "*You are the light of the world.*" Wow. You are this person that can come in and you can shed this light because we have been ordained to be those people that God uses to bring His light and His holiness to other people that's amazing. The holiness of God.

The tabernacle or the temple was built with all of these kind of rings of exclusiveness so when you got to the very center of the Holy of Holies there was actually this huge curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the holy place inside of the temple itself. It was just amazing. This huge curtain. But did you know, the Bible tells us that when Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, all of a sudden the temple curtain was torn in two. Just ripped right in half. When the temple curtain was ripped in half, do you know what that represents? That we now have access into the Most Holy Place. That we have access into the very presence of God. Jesus Christ dying on the cross gave us access to the holiness of God. It's just amazing to think about what holiness is and how it affects our lives and what that looks like.

So in our passage when we look at the words that say in the last part of the verse, *perfecting holiness out of reverence for God*, we have to start there. We have this ultimate respect for God. So much reverence for what He's done and what He's offered us. Then holiness can take place in our lives. But we still haven't defined what that looks like. We're going to see that in the rest of the verse.

If we look at the first part of the verse, it says – *Therefore*. Now that's going to help us see that it's a conclusion to something. So He's building here. We happen to get to chapter 7:1, but there's something going on in previous chapters or verses that he's drawing upon. So when he says *therefore* it's going to take us back. He's asking us to look back into something very specific. He's saying look back at these promises. *Since we have these promises*. What are the promises? Well if we want to know what the promises are, all we have to do is go back to the previous three verses, the last verses of 2 Corinthians 6.

Now I'm going to show you the words that are here. You can look them up in your Bible and see them there. The ones in quotes are the actual promises straight out of the Bible, and then I put a word or a couple words after it to describe what that does for us.

He says – *I will live with them*. Now these are promises. These promises we're going to use to spur us onto holiness, but just see what the promises do first of all in their own context. He says to them – "*I will live with them.*" I will live with them. There's a sense of the presence of God. He's going to live with us. It's not like He's in this distant place up in some cloud somewhere

and we're trying to access Him. He's going to live with us. There's this presence of God that He promises to us.

I will walk among them. I just wonder what it would have been like. I can't even imagine for in the cool of the evening for Adam and Eve to walk in the garden with God in that fellowship. So God promises that He's going to walk among them, with us. He's walking with us in the course of our days. He's not some distant thing out there. He's right there with us and we can experience that closeness with Him.

The third promise (seven promises here): *I will be their God.* There's this personal relationship. He's my God. He says *I will be their God.* There's this personal nature to this. He makes it very personal here. *They will be my people.* When I think about *my people*, there are all these privileges that we have because we're God's people. I'm one of God's people. Because I'm one of God's people I have access and I have privileges of all kinds.

Access is the next word. *I will receive you.* So if you were to come knocking on the door of God's chamber room, it's as if you don't have to do that. You just leave the door open. *I will receive you.* Just come on in. There's this intimacy that we have with God.

And then He says – *I will be a Father to you.* Now He introduces us to this idea of fatherhood that is so meaningful. It's very important, I want to suggest, because fathers produce significant solutions for the heart of their children. I say that because I know that some of you didn't find that in your own home as you were growing up. Some of you either had abusive fathers or absentee fathers or fathers that were not around. So there's a fatherhood deficit inside of your heart, a longing inside of your heart. But I want to suggest something even more powerful than that. I believe that all of us grew up with a fatherhood deficit. Even someone like me who has a great dad. My dad had sin, made mistakes. Sometimes those sins and mistakes affect me. So I believe we all have a fatherhood deficit in our lives. And that's why we need the heavenly Father.

We need that close relationship with Him because He's the one who provides us with the protection that we need that a father provides. He provides us with the guidance that we need that a father provides. He provides us with the care that a father provides. Those are all very important. So God introduces us in this promise to this idea of I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. Ah. I'm home. I belong somewhere.

Now in all of these seven promises, if you put them together what he's saying is there is an intimacy between you and God that's just unbelievable. Again, if you're here just interested in the faith, you haven't made that commitment to Christ, I just want you to know this is the best thing that could happen to your life. So much healing takes place inside of your heart when you come to Christ and you accept God as Father. He just wants to do this thing. He designed you, He created you in a particular way, and when He did then He knows what the solutions are for your heart. So God promises all of these things.

Now you have to get the seven promises because the *therefore* is coming in the first word of the next chapter. So when he says in the next verse – *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear*

friends, we're going to do something about it. We're all about that here at Calvary Chapel Living Hope. We want to take Jesus home, so we're going to do something about it.

So we've got some great theology about God is holy and separate and how He wants us to be separate. We have this great theology about how wants His personal relationship with us that's powerful. And now we're going to do something about it. The word he uses here is *purify ourselves*. It's the word for catharsis. Cleanse ourselves is the idea. To purify ourselves. *Purify ourselves from everything that contaminates*. The word here *katharismos*, which is the catharsis word, *purify*, is the same word used to describe what happened in Jewish culture.

If you were Jewish you would understand this. It's what happens before the Passover. Everybody who is Jewish who celebrates the Passover understands this idea. Because when Passover comes (and this year it starts on March 30th), you have to prepare your house for Passover. You don't just come to Passover and "oh today is Passover?" No, you spend weeks, actually four weeks preparing for Passover by getting rid of all the leaven in your house.

Leaven is yeast. So if there were any breadcrumbs that fell on the floor over the last year, you want to get rid of them. So there's this cleansing activity that takes place before Passover every year. You go on a hunt to find this. It's actually the spring-cleaning of every Jewish home. Designed every year at this time so they would clean.

So what they would do is they would first get all of the leaven out of the house, any breads or anything. Not because it's evil or bad. Because they were allowed to have leaven, the bread, and to have leaven in their house regularly. It's just that this time it's ceremonially unclean to represent the purity between their God.

It comes from the Old Testament story, if you remember the exodus when they had to quickly leave. Moses says, "Come on. Let's get out of here. We're leaving now." They didn't even have time to let their bread rise. So they went out of there and God used that as a symbol of leave the leaven behind idea. So now what they're doing is they're preparing their house. They're looking for the leaven. So you send your kids looking for the leaven. Everyone is looking for the leaven. We're trying to get rid of it.

In a Jewish home today you're going to take your couch apart, take the cushions off, vacuum all in there and throw the bag away. You're going to sweep all around your house looking all around for all the leaven that you can find. They take the food out of the freezer and anything that had leaven in it, they get rid of it. Anything that doesn't have leaven, they can put in after they clean out the freezer. Then they do the same thing with the refrigerator. They clean it all out to get rid of all the leaven. No crumbs of leaven in your house anywhere. No breadcrumbs or anything.

Then you know what they do? They go into the clothes in your closet and check all the pockets to see if while you were eating maybe you dropped some leaven in your pocket. They clean all the clothes and sometimes for Passover they get these special clothes that they'll often wear. Then they have a reading book that they use for Passover. That reading book at the end of Passover is folded in plastic and put away in a special place so no leaven can touch it. They go

on a hunt looking for leaven because they're trying to represent this cleanness before God. Wow. What an amazing picture demonstrated in this idea of purify yourself from all the contaminates.

Go on a hunt in your home looking for things that might contaminate you. In two areas. Do you see the two areas? What are they? You guys are quiet. Are you with me? *Body and spirit*. Two areas. *Contaminates in body and spirit*.

Now it seems to me most of us are trying to be more healthy. Right? We're trying to eat better and we're trying to be careful about the contaminates. We call contaminates in your body toxins. We're aware of that. So we're trying to deal with the toxins that exist in our world. The toxins come in the atmosphere, so what we breathe and what we eat and the water that we drink can all have toxins in it. Many of us will purify our water or buy bottled water in an attempt to not have toxins in the water. Many of us choose not to eat at fast-food places or processed food because of the toxins that are in there because we're trying to purify our bodies. We're trying to help our bodies be clean so they're not irritated.

The men went out to lunch a few weeks ago and Josh orders a gluten-free pasta dish. "Why did you order the gluten-free pasta dish, Josh?" And so Josh goes into this whole thing about why he does this because gluten is one of those irritants in our body. (I know you already know this, but I'm telling you anyway.) The gluten creates these irritants in our body that are responsible for a lot of inflammation that exist. So inflammation, like heart disease or arthritis or digestive issues or all kinds of things, allergies, can be eliminated many times if we can get rid of the toxins in our body. Gluten is an irritant, so it contributes to that. So he's talking health stuff. I'm listening to him and Dan kind of share back and forth about the health, and I'm intrigued by the conversation about that. Many of you are already doing a lot of these things.

Janine, who started coming to the church here, recently had a spiritual awakening in her life and so she's been coming to church every week. She's not here today, but I interviewed her this week. She's a florist, but she has this new dream of a business that she's starting with John and Maria Snee called Farm to Table. What they're going to do is they identified several organic farms, Honey Brook Farms and Resilient Farms, something about beet. Drop The Beet Farm. I never heard of them. But anyway, there's all these organic farms. Do you know what an organic farm is? They don't use all the same pesticides that others use. They're growing organic produce and they're taking that organic produce.

Then they're going to have this four-star chef come because if you think organic you think it tastes terrible. Well they're going to show you how you can have a nice dinner at their Farm to Table restaurant place they're kind of creating. I want to be your first customer. Let me know when it happens. That's going to be really fun. Janine just has this mission to pull all this together. It's fascinating. And why are they doing that? Because there were toxins in our food and if we're not careful, those toxins affect our body.

I would suggest, some of you are doctors that are here and understand this idea. Let me tell you something that we did. I think it must have been about five years ago now that Ed and Joanne and Carrie, my wife, and me, Dave, and Amanda, all six of us heard this idea that toxins are responsible for a lot of the fat in your body. This is how the theory goes. The very core of your

health is cells in your body. If you have toxins that are coming in all the time, where are those toxins going to go? They're going to end up in your cells. But there's this protective thing that the body does that when there's toxins in your cells, the fat that goes in them and surrounds the toxin to protect your body from its damage. So fat is held in your body as a result of these toxins. So the six of us decided to go on a two-week plan to lose weight by implementing this ant-toxin idea.

So we did this fasting two days of each week. So four of the fourteen days we fasted and then we took this product that's supposed to take the toxins out of your body. We lost weight. In two weeks all six of us lost between eight and twelve pounds. That's a lot of weight in two weeks. Especially if you add it all up, that's a lot of weight. But I mean for each of us that's a lot of weight that we lost. Why? Because here's what happens. You got this toxin in your cell and the fat surrounds it and you don't need that fat. But when you got the toxin in there, it kind of keeps the fat in there.

Now take that idea and all the things that you know about toxins and contaminates for the body and let's try to apply that spiritually. Because here's what happens. In your spiritual life if you bring some things in that are toxins then other stuff has to come and surround it and they start complicating your life – making you fat spiritually, not as healthy spiritually, and you got a problem.

So if you bring in too much responsibility that's overweight that your person, your spirit can handle, then what happens? Surrounding that comes stress. So you've got more stress than your body can handle, and so now you've got this stress spiritually that you're trying to manage. What do we need to do? If we could pull out the toxin of too much responsibility, some of that stress would go away. Would it? What if you have a problem dealing with holding a grudge against somebody? Wow, it's in there, so forming around it is this anger that you carry around with you continually. If we get rid of the grudge that we're holding, that would free us up spiritually to be much more healthy.

God has designed so many things that are designed to pull the toxins out of our spirit so that when we fellowship together like this and we gather together, you're talking to people, you're learning, and you go away inspired, there's something that happens in the midst of that. When we fellowship together, when we study God's word together or individually, when we pray, there's something that happens in the midst of that prayer that starts to pull the spiritual fat out of our lives so we can be more healthy. When we give financially, when you give to the Lord financially, you're giving a little bit of your selfishness away. Something happens in that discipline of giving that does something to our hearts that makes us spiritually healthy. It's all of these things that God has designed us to be that is just so powerful.

So what does He say? *Purify yourself from everything that contaminates body and spirit.* I would encourage you to go through your house looking for the leaven in your spiritual person. What is it that's slowing me down? What is it that's causing me to be fat spiritually? What's causing me to not be the person that God wants me to be?

In the Old Testament when we come back to this concept of holiness, we see that God had set up a lot of rituals for the people to demonstrate that they needed to ceremonially be clean. So they couldn't touch a dead body, for example. They couldn't touch a person who was sick. They couldn't touch any bodily fluids. If they did touch any of those things, then they were ceremonially unclean. Because what happened was that the impurities somehow came into the person and they were unclean. So from the impurity of touching a dead body it came into the person and they were unclean until they went through the ceremony to become clean.

But an interesting thing happens in the book of Isaiah. That's the holy, holy, holy passage where the seraphim are around the throne of God and Isaiah says, "*I am a man of unclean lips.*" When you're ever in the presence of God and His holiness, you are just amazed by how much weakness that you have and I have. We are nothing and we've got so much sin. Isaiah says, "*I am a man of unclean lips.*" Here's what happens. One of those little seraphim goes over and picks up a hot coal. The hot coal comes and touches his mouth and something different happens. Instead of the impurity of Isaiah coming into the coal, the coal brings the purity and it purifies Isaiah and makes him someone that's now pure. Really interesting picture that's happening there. What does it mean? Well we don't know what it means until we come to Jesus in the New Testament.

When we come to Jesus in the New Testament, He is this embodiment of holiness in the transfiguration of His glory. He is God. So now Jesus comes and there's a dead body there. He comes, He touches the dead body, and the dead body comes to life. What's happening? It's the purity of Jesus coming the other way and purifying that situation, and the person gets healed. He touches people that are sick with leprosy. You would never do that in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it's flowing the other direction. The purity of God is coming in and now it's cleaning him.

There was a woman who had an issue of blood, bodily fluids. You would be in trouble in the Old Testament. You would be ceremonially unclean. But Jesus touches her and she is healed. The purity and the wholeness of God comes and touches her in a way that's just amazing.

Now that picture of what God does or what Jesus did is the same thing that happens with us. God wants to touch us and purify us. I don't want you to think today as we talk about a verse that's talking about purifying yourself that somehow you earn your way into heaven somehow if you can get yourself clean enough. You can never get clean enough to get close to God because there's only one way, Jesus says. He says, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" Only way to get into that cleanness and that's through Jesus Christ.

Then we become these people, these vehicles, as we've looked at in 2 Corinthians already, jars of clay with a ministry to bring this holiness of God to other people so they can experience it. So in the New Testament we're given a name. The name that we're called as Christians is the name saints. Which means holy ones. The term saint has been convoluted in our culture because in some religious circles there are canonies, someone who's been really good. They're canonized, so they're an official saint, which gives us the impression that we can't be that person. But God says that if you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior that you're a saint. There's Saint Bill, Saint Joe, Saint Sally. We're all saints. God wants to do this work through us because

we're the ones now who hold this light for the rest of the world so that we are the light of the world. We can share that with other people.

This is powerful. When we get a picture of the reverence of God and His holiness, when we understand the promises that God has given to us, those seven promises in particular that talk about personal relationship, then we start moving in our lives. We start doing the hunt to try to deal with the leaven, the sin, the problems that we have in our life. We want to get rid of them so that we can be spiritually healthy. That's what you want. You want to be spiritually healthy so that you can not only feel good, it's not just about you, but it's so that you can bless other people. Other people are looking for that health. They want to be healthy in all of the areas of their lives. And where are they going to get that information? God chooses to use people like you and me to pass that message on to other people. Wow. It's a big picture, but it's something beautiful that God wants.

I hope you're attracted to spiritual health today. Because what that means is you're going to go through your life and you're going to say, what is it that I got hiding in my cupboard or on my computer or in my drawer for a rainy day? It really isn't godly. I need to get rid of it. What is it that I do, that I run to that isn't the best for me? I need to get rid of it. Keep in mind, leaven wasn't an evil thing, it just wasn't appropriate during that time. There are some things in our life that are fine for other people; they're just not appropriate for us right now. We need to do something about it.

So we leave here with an action step. Let's get it right so we can experience spiritual health. Spiritual health individually, but then we come together corporately to enjoy that and to spur one another on to love and good works. It comes from this understanding of who God is, His holiness. It's a powerful understanding of what's so appropriate for our lives personally.

God wants us to be clean. He wants us to be able to enjoy that cleanliness that comes from Him and His relationship with us. That's where the cleanliness starts and then it starts to flow into the other areas of our lives. Let's stand together and pray.

[PRAYER] Lord, take this word 'holy' and make it something so desirable for us that we will long for the spiritual health that you want us to experience. Lord, I pray that you would use your Spirit right now to pinpoint specific areas of each of our lives that need to be addressed and changed. We know that we carry a lot of baggage around in our lives unnecessarily because you freed us. You want us to be clean and to experience the freedom in our lives. So I ask, Lord, that you would help us to know how to respond to you in this area. We thank you for your grace, your power. We thank you for your miracles that you do, and we ask that you would do a miracle in our hearts today. Make us clean. In Jesus' name, amen.