PERFECTING HOLINESS Part 2

2 Corinthians 7:1
1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Paul is here reminding the Corinthians that they have a duty to ***perfect holiness***. In other words, they mustn't allow themselves to become so satisfied with their own sanctification that they stop trying to bring it to its fullest expression!

Now, we said to you that there are TWO SIDES to holiness that must be met in order to *perfect* holiness (or sanctification):

1. We must CLEANSE OURSELVES of everything that defiles.
2. We must SEPARATE OURSELVES from everything that defiles.

It's this SECOND part of sanctification (separating from everything/everyone that defiles) that we oftentimes forget about.

2 Corinthians 6:17
17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

When Paul says, "Come out from among THEM" he doesn't just mean separate from sinners. He ALSO means separate from everyone who *acts* like a sinner!

> ***2 Thessalonians 3:6***
> ***6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.***
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> To walk **disorderly** means *TO REFUSE TO OBEY OR SUBMIT TO ORDER*. The "order" Paul was most concerned with here was the rule that no one was to eat or live at another man's expense.
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> ***2 Thessalonians 3:7, 8, 10***
> ***7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.***
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> Paul was not so much saying they were not to be kind (generous) to one another. He was saying they were not to take advantage of other people's generosity, OR allow anyone else to do so!

2 Thessalonians 3:14
14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Notice, they were to "note" that man (identify him publicly) AND they were to have "no company with him" that he might be ashamed and, hopefully, repent.

There's *another* aspect of sanctification that we haven't yet mentioned.

2 Corinthians 7:1
1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Notice, they were instructed to cleanse themselves, not only from flesh, but ALSO from spirit. By spirit Paul means from *evil spirits*!

This may come as a surprise to some, but it's possible for Christians to be defiled and even inhabited by evil spirits. You might be wondering, "How can this be, particularly if the Holy Spirit is dwelling in me?"

We assume that because we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, this protects us from being defiled or even *inhabited* by evil spirits. But, that's not true!

Matthew 12:43–45
43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Notice, the reason the evil spirit was able to re-enter the house was because the house was EMPTY. The next question is, "Empty of what?" We might think that the reason the evil spirit was able to re-enter is because it was empty of the presence of God (or Holy Spirit). But, that WASN'T the reason.

Matthew 12:46–50
46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

The reason the evil spirit was able to re-enter the house was because it (house) was not filled with OBEDIENCE (i.e. no one who "did the will of the Father"). Thus, it's our lack of obedience that gives "space" (room) for the devil!

Ephesians 4:25–27
25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.

Notice what gives "place" (room) for the devil to enter in—DISOBEDIENCE. Therefore, these passages teach us that when we refuse to obey God (walk disorderly), we give opportunity to the devil to enter and defile us. Also, casting out devils (or deliverance ministry) is not a substitute for obedience!

Matthew 12:28–29
28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

Here Jesus gives us the purpose of casting out (or binding) the devil—to SPOIL HIS GOODS.

Matthew 12:30
30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

Notice, we're suppose to be "gathering (the spoils)" WITH Jesus! This means, we're suppose to be taking the things that were once held captive by the devil and making them OBEDIENT TO CHRIST!

2 Corinthians 10:5
5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Anyone NOT gathering WITH Christ is working AGAINST Him (is anti–Christ)!

Matthew 16:21
21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Notice, Jesus told His disciples that He had to go to the Jerusalem to suffer. Peter, on this day, chose to oppose His work!

Matthew 16:22–23
22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

When Peter chose to oppose the work that Christ was doing, Jesus addressed him as SATAN. This teaches us that whenever oppose (or go against) what Christ is doing, AT THAT MOMENT we are being influenced by the devil!

(We should add that Jesus spoke directly to Peter when he addressed Satan. This proves that Peter was being influenced/inhabited by the devil!)