

## Holiness and Self-Denial

July 24, 2016

### HOLINESS IN REVIEW

#### 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 NASB

14 **DO NOT BE BOUND TOGETHER** with unbelievers; for what **PARTNERSHIP** have righteousness and lawlessness, or what **FELLOWSHIP** has light with darkness?

15 Or what **HARMONY** has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer **IN COMMON** with an unbeliever?

16 Or what **AGREEMENT** has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 "Therefore, **COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST** and **BE SEPARATE**," says the Lord. "And **DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; AND I WILL WELCOME YOU.**"

18 "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty.

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM ALL DEFILEMENT OF FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING** (*epiteleo - further fulfill, execute, undergo, perform, accomplish, complete*) **HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD.**

*Holiness is separation for consecration; separate from all that is carnal, sinful and evil, and separate unto God for His exclusive purpose and will.*

*Holiness is required of the Christian by God. To continue in willful sin will impede, retard and eventually destroy your relationship with God; for He is holy and there is no fellowship between light and darkness. There must be enduring and consistent growth in holiness. You may come as you are, but you cannot stay as you are.*

*Holiness is not a physical separation, for we are to be in the world as salt and light, serving and ministering to both the saved and unsaved. Holiness is however, a very defined spiritual separation, as light is separate from darkness.*

*Sanctification is the process by which we become holy or separate. The process of becoming holy is God's work, God's methods, God's agenda and God's timing, performed by His Word, the Holy Spirit and our Father's chastening or pruning*

*The work of sanctification cannot occur without our cooperation with the Holy Spirit. That cooperation is the denying of ourselves. Self-denial is the surrender of our will to do God's will; to live as dead to our will but alive unto God's will.*

### PURSUING SANCTIFICATION

#### Hebrews 12:14 NASB

"**PURSUE** (*dioko - follow after, run after swiftly to catch, to seek eagerly and earnestly*) peace with all men, and **THE SANCTIFICATION WITHOUT WHICH NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD.**"

*Though we will never be sinless nor perfectly holy as long as we occupy this flesh, the STANDARD and the REQUIREMENT for holiness never changes, is never compromised, is never lowered.*

*Pursuing holiness and surrendering to God's sanctification continues until we draw our very last breath on this earth. God's sanctifying process never ceases and never wanes. God is relentless in His pruning and cleansing of your heart and life. We must be relentless to pursue His sanctification.*

**"God wants the whole person and He will not rest till He gets us in entirety. No part of the man will do." — A.W. Tozer - "The Pursuit of God"**

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NASB**

**23 NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU ENTIRELY; AND MAY YOUR SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE PRESERVED COMPLETE, WITHOUT BLAME AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

**24 FAITHFUL IS HE WHO CALLS YOU, AND HE ALSO WILL BRING IT TO PASS.**

*SANCTIFICATION is God's work; not ours. It is impossible for us to finish the work only God could start. It is impossible for us to finish or complete the faith that His Word birthed in us. It is impossible for us to change ourselves. We must surrender to God's schedule, agenda and method of sanctifying us.*

*Yet there is one thing we must do, without which God's process of sanctification cannot proceed.*

*We must surrender to and present ourselves to God's sanctification. We must hunger and thirst for righteousness. We must relentlessly pursue holiness and sanctification through an ever-growing relationship with and abiding in Christ.*

#### **1 Corinthians 15:10 NASB**

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; **BUT I LABORED EVEN MORE THAN ALL OF THEM, YET NOT I, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD WITH ME.**"

### **HOLINESS AND SELF-DENIAL**

*Without the spiritual discipline of denying self, we will never be sanctified, we will never be holy.*

*"Sanctification begins in regeneration...This work, which begins in the new birth, is carried on in two ways - MORTIFICATION, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued and kept under; and VIVIFICATION, by which the life which God has put within us is made to be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." -- Charles Spurgeon*

#### **Matthew 16:24 NASB**

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, **"IF ANYONE WISHES TO COME AFTER ME, HE MUST DENY (aparnomai - to say no, abstain, deny utterly, disown) HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME."**

*There can be no negotiation, no compromise, no toleration for the flesh. It must be denied; not reformed, not redirected, not re-purposed. The denial must be so complete, it is equated to death, the death of the cross.*

*"God's spiritual boot camp...is designed for our development toward maturity, not for our comfort. But self-denial is not a popular virtue in today's culture.*

*A short time before Robert E. Lee passed into his Lord's presence, a young mother brought her tiny infant to him. With tenderness, Lee took the child and held him in his arms, looking deeply into the baby's eyes. He then looked up at the mother and said, "Teach him he must deny himself."*

*Our God is relentless. He never ceases His training regimens. He shaves off our hair, He takes away our comfortable and secure lifestyle, He moves us into cramped and unfamiliar quarters, and He changes our circle of friends—it's like we're in a spiritual boot camp!*

*In the process, He strips us of all our pride! And then He begins to lay the foundation blocks of heroic courage, and a new kind of confidence, if you will—the kind that no longer defends us but defends Him. What a magnificent change that is. And how essential in our journey toward maturity! Again, it's all part of being cut down to size." -- Chuck Swindoll, Insight for Today, "Laying the Foundation of Courage"*

## THE DISCIPLINE OF SELF-DENIAL

### 1. KNOW YOUR ENEMY

*Your worst mortal enemy lives within you and this enemy never stops rebelling, never stops in aggressively opposing all that is of God.*

*"Beware of no man more than yourself; we carry our worst enemies within us."*

— Charles H. Spurgeon

### Romans 7:21-23 NASB

21 I find then the principle that **EVIL IS PRESENT IN ME, THE ONE WHO WANTS TO DO GOOD.**

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

23 **BUT I SEE A DIFFERENT LAW IN THE MEMBERS OF MY BODY, WAGING WAR AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND AND MAKING ME A PRISONER OF THE LAW OF SIN WHICH IS IN MY MEMBERS.**

*The flesh will never change. The flesh will never improve. The flesh will never stop lusting; it is continually restless and ever searching for distraction, amusement and pleasure. You may have been a Christian for 20 or 30 years with consistent and strong spiritual growth, yet your flesh, after all those years, is just as vile, aggressive and unruly as it's always been.*

**Galatians 5:17 NASB**

**"FOR THE FLESH SETS ITS DESIRE (*epithymeo - set the heart upon, long for, covet, desire*) AGAINST THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT AGAINST THE FLESH; FOR THESE ARE IN OPPOSITION (*antikeimai - to set over against, oppose, withstand, be adverse*) TO ONE ANOTHER, SO THAT YOU MAY NOT DO THE THINGS THAT YOU PLEASE."**

## 2. WATCH AND PRAY

Watch for two things: your weaknesses and the enemy's strategy.

*"The most godly Christian is the one who knows himself best, and no one who knows himself will believe that he deserves anything better than hell." — A.W. Tozer*

**Matthew 26:37-41 NASB**

37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.

38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

40 **AND HE CAME TO THE DISCIPLES AND FOUND THEM SLEEPING, AND SAID TO PETER, "SO, YOU MEN COULD NOT KEEP WATCH WITH ME FOR ONE HOUR?"**

41 **"KEEP WATCHING AND PRAYING THAT YOU MAY NOT ENTER INTO TEMPTATION; THE SPIRIT IS WILLING, BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK."**

*Luke 22:45 NASB*

*"When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow."*

**1 Peter 5:8 NASB**

**"BE OF SOBER SPIRIT, BE ON THE ALERT (*gregoreo - to watch, stay awake*). **YOUR ADVERSARY, THE DEVIL, PROWLS AROUND (*peripateo - to walk all around*) LIKE A ROARING LION, SEEKING SOMEONE TO DEVOUR."****

**Proverbs 22:3 KJV**

**"A PRUDENT [MAN] FORESEETH THE EVIL, AND HIDETH HIMSELF: but the simple pass on, and are punished."**

## 3. DEVELOP THE ABILITY AND HABIT OF SAYING "NO"

- *Break through the shock of the flesh being denied.*
- *Longstanding habits can be the hardest to die.*
- *If moderation is not working, abstinence is mandated.*

**1 Corinthians 9:25-27 NASB**

25 Everyone who competes in the games **EXERCISES SELF-CONTROL** (*egkrateuomai - self-controlled, exhibit self-government, temperance*) **IN ALL THINGS**. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

27 **BUT I DISCIPLINE** (*hypopiazō - to beat black and blue, keep under, discipline by hardships*) **MY BODY AND MAKE IT MY SLAVE**, so that, after I have preached to others, **I MYSELF WILL NOT BE DISQUALIFIED**.

**Matthew 5:29 NASB**

29 **IF YOUR RIGHT EYE MAKES YOU STUMBLE, TEAR IT OUT AND THROW IT FROM YOU**; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30 **IF YOUR RIGHT HAND MAKES YOU STUMBLE, CUT IT OFF AND THROW IT FROM YOU**; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

4. **SIMPLIFY...SIMPLIFY...SIMPLIFY**

*The world's distractions, cares, attractions, amusements, technology and entertainment are some of the most potent enemies of your personal holiness.*

*"Modern civilization is so complex as to make the devotional life all but impossible. It wears us out by multiplying distractions and beats us down by destroying our solitude, where otherwise we might drink and renew our strength before going out to face the world again.*

*"Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still" is a wise and healing counsel, but how can it be followed in this day of the newspaper, the telephone, the radio and the television? These modern playthings, like pet tiger cubs, have grown so large and dangerous that they threaten to devour us all. What was intended to be a blessing has become a positive curse. No spot is now safe from the world's intrusion."*

-- A.W. Tozer, "Of God and Men" 1960

**Hebrews 12:1 NASB**

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, **LET US ALSO LAY ASIDE EVERY ENCUMBRANCE** (*ogkos - bulk, burden, load, weight*) **AND THE SIN WHICH SO EASILY ENTANGLES** (*euperistatos - skilfully surrounding, besetting*) **US**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 **FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**2 Timothy 2:3-4 NASB**

3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

4 **NO SOLDIER IN ACTIVE SERVICE ENTANGLES** (*empleko - inweave, entwine, entangle, involve in*) **HIMSELF IN THE AFFAIRS OF EVERYDAY LIFE, SO THAT HE MAY PLEASE THE ONE WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER**.

5. **FOCUS...FOCUS...FOCUS**

*What your mind thinks on, is who you are and what you are becoming.*

*"What we think about when we are free to think about what we will – that is what we are or will soon become." — A.W. Tozer*

**Romans 8:5-6 NASB**

**5 FOR THOSE WHO ARE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH SET THEIR MINDS (*phroneo - to exercise the mind. mentally disposed in a certain direction*) ON THE THINGS OF THE FLESH, BUT THOSE WHO ARE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT, THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.**

**6 FOR THE MIND SET ON (*phronema - the thoughts and purposes, what one has in mind*) THE FLESH IS DEATH, BUT THE MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT IS LIFE AND PEACE.**

**Matthew 6:22-23 NASB**

**22 THE EYE IS THE LAMP OF THE BODY; SO THEN IF YOUR EYE IS CLEAR (*haplous - single, simple, nothing complicated nor confused, without folds*), YOUR WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF LIGHT.**

**23 BUT IF YOUR EYE IS BAD (*poneros - harassed, pressed, full of labors, annoyances, evil, bad*), YOUR WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF DARKNESS. IF THEN THE LIGHT THAT IS IN YOU IS DARKNESS, HOW GREAT IS THE DARKNESS!**

6. **ABIDE IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*It is impossible for us to cleanse, correct or change ourselves by our own efforts or self-discipline. Sanctification is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us.*

*"The man who has struggled to purify himself and has had nothing but repeated failures will experience real relief when he stops tinkering with his soul and looks away to the perfect One. While he looks at Christ the very things he has so long been trying to do will be getting done within him. It will be God working in him to will and to do." — A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God*

**Romans 8:2 NASB**

**"FOR THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS HAS SET YOU FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND OF DEATH."**

**Galatians 5:16-18 NASB**

**16 BUT I SAY, WALK BY THE SPIRIT, AND YOU WILL NOT CARRY OUT THE DESIRE OF THE FLESH.**

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

**18 BUT IF YOU ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT, YOU ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW.**