HOLINESS IS IMPORTANT -

Holiness is important to God
- *It is the thing that primarily defines His character – Isaiah 6:3 (NASB)* - And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."
- *The Scriptures are referred to as holy - Romans 1:1-2 (NASB)* - Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures.
- *The third person of the Trinity is known as The Holy Spirit not the Power Spirit - John 14:26 (NASB)* - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.
- *The church is called a holy temple - Ephesians 2:19-22 (NASB)* - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
- *God calls His followers to be holy - 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NASB)* - but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

Holiness or purity is important to us
In the physical realm we want purity:
- Pure water
- Pure fuel – Jet fuel
- Pure food – not full of additives
- Pure products
- Clean air to breath
- Diamonds with minimum flaws

But it seems we often don’t hold the same standard for moral purity
- What we watch on TV or at the movies
- What we listen to
- What we give ourselves to – drunkenness, drugs, pre-marital sex

Although we will look at other verses, I want us to focus primarily on one verse:

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Take a minute and see if you can memorize 2 Cor 7:1.

WHAT HOLINESS IS

Old Testament words for holiness are:
1. qodesh = apartness, sacredness (6944 - Primary Word)
2. qadosh = sacred, holy (6918)

New Testament words for holiness are:
1. hagios = from the word meaning religious awe
2. hosios = righteous, pious, holy (3741)

So what does it mean to be holy? Implications are:
   Purity
Perfection
Without blemish or flaw
Worthy of God
Free from sin or impurity
Worthy of God's use

Here’s a definition = Purity of body, soul, spirit, and life.

Body
This has to do with keeping our body morally clean. No drugs, no sex out of marriage, no filthy talk or coarse jesting from our mouths. No drunkenness. Nothing that gives control of our bodies to an external substance or influence. Instead we are to be controlled by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Romans 6:12 (NASB)
12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NASB)
19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Job 31:1 (NASB)
1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?

Soul
A person’s soul is composed of this mind (the ability to think), his will (the ability to choose), and his emotions (the ability to feel).
Mind - We need to think on things that are pure and right.

Philippians 4:8 (NASB) - 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NASB)
5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Romans 12:2 (NASB)
2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Will (our choosing mechanism) – We need to choose things that keep us pure. We are faced every day with choices whose outcomes can greatly change our lives.

Joshua 24:15 (NASB)
15 "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Emotions (the ability to feel) – It is easy to let emotions rule our choices. But emotions need to be ruled by the Word of God. When we allow the lust of the flesh to reign in us, we will usually
make unholy choices, just like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they ate the forbidden fruit.

**Proverbs 4:23 (NASB)** states “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”

**Spirit**
In order to be holy, we need to keep our spirit pure. We need to avoid sin first of all, but if we fall into sin we need to be sure we confess our sin, repent of it and receive God’s cleansing so we can be returned to a pure state. We need to be sure we feed our spirit on the word of God on a regular basis.

Regarding our physical bodies someone said, “One day without a shower and you will look like a slob. Two days and you will smell like a slob. Three days and you will be a slob.

Spiritually speaking, every day we live in an unholy world. Getting into the Word and praying, are like taking a spiritual shower. We need God’s Word to wash over us daily in order to be clean.

**Life**
Life is how we live. We need to live holy lives. We need to be sure that our actions our pure, our business dealings are pure, our motives are pure, how we treat people is pure. Purity needs to penetrate every area of our existence.

Last night I walked my prayer hill and worked on this message. I asked the Lord to give me some illustrations regarding holiness. As I got to the place that I had gone high enough on the hill that I could see across the bay all the way to the Carquinez Bridge, I noticed that the air was rather hazy. Impurity in the air not only
obstructed my view but it diminished the beauty of the world God created. In the same way, unholiness in our lives obscures the beauty of a life that was created to be clean before God. Just a few days before when I climbed the hill, the air had been crystal clear and the view was breathtaking.

Holiness gives us an unobstructed view of God’s will in our lives. It allows us to see the beauty of His creation, and the beauty of life itself. As soon as sin enters our lives the beauty is tainted and becomes harder to see. We then begin to lose a clear perspective.

How that we understand what holiness is let’s look at six key principles regarding holiness taken from 2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB)

- 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

PRINCIPLES REGARDING HOLINESS

1. God’s promises should motivate us to be holy

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

To what promises is God referring? To the ones found at the end of the preceding chapter. God had promised the Jews that if they would come out from among sinful society and live separate lives that He would:

- Dwell in them and walk among them (He did this through Jesus and the Spirit)
- Be their God
- Welcome them
- Be a father to them

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (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.

What great promises! Holiness makes God our friend, because we begin to have in us, the quality that most defines who God is. He is Holy. That is what the angels say over and over in His presence.

In the Old Testament Isaiah 6:3 (NASB) - 3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

In the New Testament in the book of Revelation as the writer describes God’s throne room he says,

Revelation 4:8 (NASB) 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come."
It is an amazing and awesome thing to think that Almighty God cares about us. But He does. He has made us His children and His great promises to be with us and be our Father should motivate us to live holy lives.

2. We play a part in our own holiness

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

- Only God can cleanse sin, so why are we told to cleanse ourselves?
- We choose to be holy, by choosing to listen to the Spirit’s promptings in our lives. Therefore we are part of the process!

3. Lack of holiness defiles us

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The word defiled means *stained and soiled*. Our lives are stained and soiled through sin, and God wants to cleanse us. Stains and soiling are a turn off. If I came in here on Sunday as your pastor and my clothes were stained and soiled, you would be concerned. You would wonder what happened to me. Obviously in some jobs it is easy to become dirty, but the fact is we wash our clothes and get cleaned up. God wants us to clean our lives.
4. Holiness is a physical as well as spiritual thing

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - ¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Notice that both flesh and spirit are involved in staying holy! We need to work on both.

5. We are to work toward perfecting holiness

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - ¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We try to perfect many things in our lives like our golf swing, or a sales presentation, but what God wants us to work on and strive for perfection in is our state of holiness.

6. Another motivator for holiness is to be the fear of God

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NASB) - ¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We are not only to have reverence for Him knowing what He says is right, but we are to tremble before Him, knowing that if we choose defilement, the consequences may be very harmful to us. God is serious about His own holiness and that of His followers.
Concluding remarks
I love the praise chorus entitled ‘Holiness.’ The words go;

    Holiness, holiness is what I long for
    Holiness is what I need.
    Holiness, holiness is what You want from me.

    Take my life and form it.
    Take my mind, transform it.
    Take my will, conform it
    To Your’s O Lord, to Your’s.

Is Holiness what you and I long for? It should be. If we want to be used mightily of God we need to choose holiness. If we do we will be seeking the quality that above all others, defines who God is.

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Philippians 4:8 (NASB) - 8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

Ephesians 4:29 (NASB) - 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

1 Timothy 4:7 (NASB) - 7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;

Isaiah 6:3 (NASB) - 3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

1 Timothy 2:8 (NASB) - 8 Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NASB)
5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Luke 18:20 (NASB)
20 "You know the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'"

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2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the
renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.