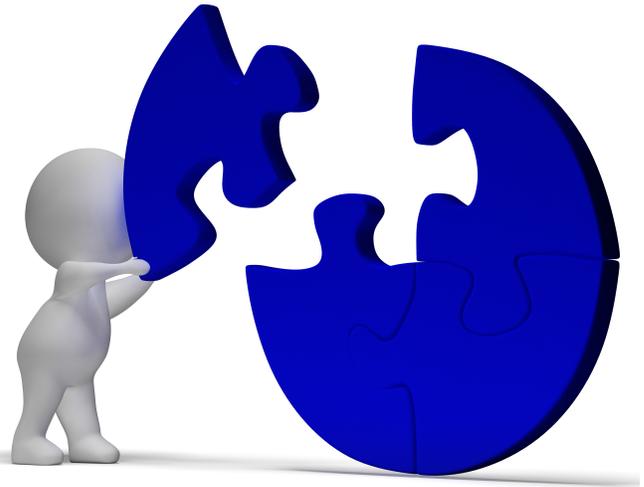


Making Holiness Complete

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



The Corinthians were admonished to perfect holiness in the fear of God. If they, as Christians, needed to do this, Christians today need to do this, also. We can't "perfect holiness" if we know nothing about it. Just what does it mean and what does it entail?

Let's define terms. What is "perfecting"? The word "perfect" means to develop—carrying the idea of making complete. "Holiness" is a word which is much misunderstood and misapplied. It is often made to parallel sinlessness. Actually the words "holy" and "holiness" are parallel with the words "sanctify" and "sanctification." Every time, in Scripture, where the words *sanctify*, *sanctified*, and *sanctification* occur, they are from the original word which is also translated "holiness." So, whatever is said about *sanctification* is true of *holiness*. Please note that being holy is not the same as being without sin. The Corinthians were "holy"—"sanctified" (**1Corinthians 1:2**), yet they were in great sin (**1Corinthians 1:10; 3:1-3**). They needed to "perfect" or "make complete" this holiness.

How is one made holy? God sanctifies—makes holy (**Jude 1**). God does this through the word (**John 17:17**). The Holy Spirit sanctifies—makes holy (**2Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 15:16**). The Spirit does this through the word, also, as the Spirit revealed the word (**1Corinthians 2:9-13**). Christ sanctifies—makes holy (**Hebrews 13:12**). While God does make holy, we must not forget man. Man's actions also make him to be sanctified—made holy. Faith, repentance, confession of faith, and baptism are conditions men must meet to be saved (**Mark 16: 15,16; Acts 2:38**). This makes them, among other things, members of the body, the church (**1Corinthians 12:13**) and the church is comprised of only sanctified—holy people (**Ephesians 5:25**). As we see from our original text, not only is it possible for one to be holy, he must strive to become holier—to bring holiness to completion (**2Corinthians 7:1**).

How is holiness perfected? Since the word brings about sanctification, it follows that following that word more completely will make one holier. Christians are admonished to pursue it. "*Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord*" (**Hebrews 12:14**). Even chastisement works to the end of developing holiness. "*For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness*" (**Hebrews 12:10**).

Why should any Christian be concerned with developing holiness? For one thing, it is commanded in **2Corinthians 7:1** and in **2Peter 1:4-8**, and in **Romans 6:1**. Also, Christians have

been called with a holy calling: "... join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling ..." (**2Timothy 1:8-9**) and Christians are a holy temple: "If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (**1Corinthians 3:17**). Then too, Christians are priests in a holy priesthood, "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (**1Peter 2:5**) and they are a part of a holy nation, "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (**1Peter 2:9**). With all these holy attachments, how we escape the obvious that it is absolutely necessary to make holiness complete. Remember what we saw in **Hebrews 12:14**, developing holiness is necessary to seeing God.

How do we do it? As our text says, it is to be done in the fear of God (**2Corinthians 7:1**). The word "fear" as used here is from the word which means terror or dread. The Christian is to regard God's commandments, His wishes, His name, and even His promises for the One who has made him holy—set him apart to be His—is to be feared if the Christian does not please Him. "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (**Hebrews 10:31**).

Have you been made holy? Are you making holiness complete?