

I. Introduction to 2 Corinthians and the Nature of Promises

If you have your Bibles this morning, let's turn back to 2 Corinthians chapter 7. Last week, we gave you an introduction to chapter 7. If you're just showing up today and visiting in our church or have been out for a while, we have been coming through the book of 2 Corinthians, which really is the book of how to minister in the Bible, truly the handbook of ministry. We've been coming through chapter by chapter, looking at each chapter and how it relates to how we want to be better ministers for the Lord. That's what our church is really about; it's about ministry. The ministry is people taking the Word of God. That's why we do what we do, go where we go, and help people learn the Word of God. God just keeps blessing us, keeps giving us more opportunities, and keeps training up men and women who understand it. That's really part of the people ministry when we start here after the first of the year, getting the men and women of this church up to speed where they really have the ability to work with almost any given situation that you find and get it into the Bible and knowing how to deal with it.

Our first lesson, when we got into chapter 7, we saw the practical side of the verse and how the promises apply to you and me from a practical standpoint. As a young guy growing up in churches, even when I was in the ministry, I heard this all the time, and it was kind of like a talking point for pastors. They always talked about how, to get people into the Bible, they always talked about how reading the Bible will solve your problems. Now, I understand what they were saying, and I agree with what they're saying, but it's not 100% true in its statement alone, and its statement really doesn't stand by itself to solve your problem. Obviously, the Bible will solve your problems, and obviously, reading the Bible will solve your problem, but reading the Bible alone will not solve your problems. What you have to do is read the Bible, take what you read, and then apply the Bible to your life. That's how you solve your problems in life, and that's what the promises do.

We define the promises and how to apply them. We now know that promises come in two different formats.

1. We have general promises that the Bible has that talk about, that we can all just look at in a general sense: the Lord coming back, for one, the tribulation, and how God is never going to cast off the nation of Israel. Those are general promises. Those are promises that are true, that are across the board true.
2. We also saw that there's the personal aspect of promises, the things that you go through in your life, the things that you need at the time you need them. God, when you get into the Word of God, brings those promises up and puts those promises in your life. As I said last week, they mean nothing to somebody else, but they mean everything to you.

Remember, I showed you last week the little aspect of promises being like money in the bank, having on the account of your heart, hiding the Word of God in your heart, having the principles there that when your life begins to fall apart, when you begin to have issues or something

unexpectedly walks into your life, you have the ability to just maybe cash in those promises that you put into your heart and God brings them through. I don't know how many times I've been faced with a scenario or a situation, and as I pondered it in my own mind, what I was going to do, almost like the verse would come into my mind, something that I had read, something that I had memorized, something that I had used in a sermon, and that's the answer that I needed.

We now know that it's a lot like the jewelry box concept. I told you how every woman has a special place where she keeps the special items that someone special in her life has given her, and it's true with the things that God gives us, and that would be our heart. We also came away last week understanding the promises of God are really the fundamental baseline on which we build our relationship with Christ because we can only build a relationship with Christ if we trust Him, and that produces the right fellowship and the right relationship and all the things that go along with it.

I gave you some great key verses to get you started last week, and I hope that you wrote them down, and they would be great verses for you to apply in your own life about learning.

- Titus 1:2
- 1 John 2:25
- Hebrews 11:11
- Deuteronomy 29:29
- 2 Peter 1:4
- 2 Corinthians 1:20

Remember, I showed you the difference between a promise and a principle. I told you that all the promises are principles, but not all the principles are promises, and we kind of went through that. So I wanted to give you last week a very clear, clean introduction to understand the promises of God because they are absolutely key in your life, and you should have now more than enough to get yourself started. As always, I'll help you. I have people come over every week, asking me, "How do I do this?" or "How do I do that?" or "Help me with this?" Some of you are going through books of the Bible. Some of you are going through aspects of your counseling and dealing with people or whatever you need. It's what I'm here for, to help you to get that all together.

II. The Bible as a Spiritual Bank Account and Jewelry Box

In a lot of ways, your own Bible is a picture of your own spiritual bank account and your own jewelry box. I heard a preacher say years and years ago, I don't remember who said it, but I never forgot it. Just a simple thing. It was funny at the time, but it's so true. He talked about studying your Bible, learning your Bible, and he made a pointed statement by saying, "You cannot go to heaven without a red pencil." In other words, without marking your Bible. Now we know you can, but he was making his point. His point was that when God gives you things, you want to have them in a book that's always at your fingertips.

I'm toying with the idea on New Year's Eve of doing something that I've never done before, to help so many of you that are new people. You probably got a million friends that wanted to, in

one setting, get a good grasp of the Bible. Well, I have painstakingly worked at putting together a process to do that. I think if I can get it done in time, I'm working on it a little bit every day. I want to bring you through and tell you the story of the whole Bible. It'll probably take me four hours to do it on New Year's Eve. We'll start and we'll come through. But it'll put everything in the Bible in a crystal clear concept that if you're just a young Christian or you're someone, even an old Christian, it will give you everything that you need to understand the format and the context of how the Bible flows from beginning to end. In doing that, I'm going to, I've already come up with an idea for you to have your own syllabus that you're going to put together before we get there that night. Then you're going to use it that night and then use it probably the rest of your life, and it'll be your open flowing syllabus of what the Word of God is. It's something you can keep all the time.

Those things are important. In time, your Bible needs to be exactly the most important book in your life. You want to be able to go to it. People think that on Thursday night, I basically take any question you want to ask about the Bible. People think that I'm some kind of genius who just memorized the Bible and everything in it. Well, if you only knew, I lose my car keys four times a day. But what I was smart enough to do is to put in my Bible everything that God showed me. In that Bible, I have every note, I have probably over 400,000 notes in that Bible. I have every major subject. Somebody asked me a question a couple of weeks ago on music and the seven stages of music or whatever it was. Do you think I remember all that stuff? I have it all back in my Bible. Every major subject that I need is right there. In time, you need to build that. I say that, I talk about the jewelry box concept or talk about the special things that God gives you. Not only do you put them in your heart, but you put them in the Bible because this Bible should never be separate from you. It should always be one with you.

III. The Bible as One with You: A Personal Anecdote

I remember years ago, I was preaching somewhere. I don't know, it was up east someplace up in New England. I forget where it was now, but it's been years ago. It was a little church that there were not a lot of motels, and there weren't any motels in the town. So many times I would stay with people in the church. I stayed with this couple that were probably in their 60s or 70s or 80s. They were an older couple. They probably would be gone home to be with the Lord now. Sweetest couple you ever met in your life. A real fun time was I'd go preach at night and then we'd come back and we'd just sit around until midnight or one o'clock in the morning talking about the Bible. They were really avid Bible people. It was one of the funnest times I ever did in my life.

I'll never forget, I was sitting there during the day one day, they were gone someplace. I like to look at people's Bibles. Maybe I shouldn't, but I do. I think you can tell a lot about a person by looking at their Bible. I mean, you take a person's Bible, when you open it, it squeaks, you know it hasn't been used very much. You take somebody that's got no notes in it, you know, they're not doing much with it. I know young Christians are in the process, but I watch some of you. Some of you, you know, you don't really care if it's bad notes or don't make any sense. You're just so fired up for God, you want to put notes in your Bible. I made a lot of dumb mistakes when I was

a young Christian. I used, I had a wide margin Bible that Barb gave me for Christmas years ago. I made a lot of dumb mistakes because I was young. I mean, I, and I had to get a bottle of white out. So you got to have a red pencil, but then you got to have some white out.

I remember over in the story of Adam and Eve over there in Genesis 2, in my wide margin. I was so happy to have a wide margin Bible and I wanted to put notes in it so bad, but I wasn't far enough along to really know what kind of notes. So I did stupid things. I remember putting in my margin, the first note I put in my Bible was big letters, "Adam and Eve." Well, who didn't know that? I mean, it's right there in the story. That was my first note. I left that one in my old original Bible. You can still see it takes up six pages. It was so big. But that was my first note.

I remember looking through this lady's Bible and she was, they were gone and it was laying on a table there and I just wanted to brief through it. She had a lot of notes. This lady had really studied her Bible. I got over into Song of Solomon and I noticed in Song of Solomon down along the margins, she had some circles. I looked at those and I couldn't figure out what it was. I said, "You know, it makes some secret hieroglyphics." I didn't know what it was. It really didn't bother me, but it really got my attention. I waited two more days before I asked her. In fact, the last day I said, "I was looking through your Bible," and I said, "Boy, you got some great notes. But," I said, "you don't mind. Remember in the Song of Solomon, I saw these circles in the margin." I said, "I wasn't sure what there was, nothing written in them." There were about eight or nine of them down there and I didn't know what those circles were. She kind of smiled and I got somewhat embarrassed. She said, "Oh, Bob," she says, "I got to tell you," she says, "there's been times in my life when things were so hard and I loved the Lord and He came through with me so many times. I was praying over that Bible." She says, "I was crying and the tears fell down and stained my Bible." She says, "God came through and did so much for me." She says, "I circled those tear stains in my Bible because I knew that in time they would dry and you'd never be able to see them again. I never wanted to forget what God did for me. So I marked the tears in my Bible." Now I'll tell you something, that's going to go some way. That's some things in your jewelry box right there. I'm just telling it. Most of God's people don't even know where their Bible's at, the rest of them don't read it, and here's a lady that's marking her tears in it. That's pretty special.

Making your Bible one with you. There's a great story back in the Old Testament. I don't know if you ever read it or not back there in 2 Samuel chapter 23 about David's mighty men of valor. There's a guy back there named Eleazar. Eleazar was a great fighter in a great battle. The Bible says that he gets into a war with the Philistines and he starts just cutting them to pieces. I mean, he's hacking them in half and he's just wading through them all by himself.

He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.

The Bible says he was hacking with that sword and cutting with that sword so much and never let go of it in such an intense battle that when he was done, his muscles had clamped around that sword and he had literally become one with that sword and couldn't drop it down. That's how you ought to be with your Bible. The Bible's a sharp two-edged sword. You ought to be in the

ministry and in the things of God so much and in this battle so much that you just can't let this book drop out of your hands. That's the key. That's what we're talking about, about one with a book.

IV. The Doctrinal Side of Cleansing

As we get into today's lesson, you'll see that chapter 7, we've been talking about in chapter 6 the five different areas of fellowship. You're going to see in chapter 6 that it's a continuation of that. Chapter 7 now shows how the promise of God fits into our fellowship, and it's a great study. Verse 1, I want to read it here and we'll pray and we'll get going here.

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.

Now Father, help us today to come to Your Word, to learn from it, to grow through it and help give us what we need today. Lord, there's a lot of people here that love You and love Your Word and yet I'm sure there's people here today that have a need in their life that are unfulfilled and don't have what You want to have for them. Today could be the day when they come to the realization of what Christ has not only done for them but also given them. So we ask You today Father to bless us, give us what we need and we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

Last week I gave you the practical and I told you that. I told you last week that we were going to split this verse into two different messages. Today I want to look at the doctrinal side of this. You know that the word doctrine means to teach. This is the specific teaching that this verse gives us in relationship to the Word of God. The first aspect of this from a doctrinal standpoint is that the promises of God cleanse us from all filthiness of the things of this world. He says, "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."

There's the idea of being clean in your flesh and clean in your spirit from the Word of God. You know how much you know about the Bible. There's a great example of this back in the Old Testament. Most of the stuff in the Old Testament that you read that actually happened will be a beautiful picture of what in a spiritual sense of what you and I have to deal with. I'll give you a great example back in the Old Testament. If you go into the book of Joshua, you'll find that that's where they fight all their major battles when they go across over Jordan. There are some great battles there. Those battles are literal battles. The guy Eleazar went in and fought those Philistines. That was a literal battle. You say, "How do you make the application to my life out of something like that?" Well, the Bible says in the book of Ephesians, it says this:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

You see, we don't fight literal battles with swords. We fight spiritual battles with the Word of God, which is likened to a sword. So when you see back there in Joshua, they're going through there and fighting those, or Eleazar fighting those, those are literal back there, but it's a spiritual

picture of us fighting the battles with the Word of God that we have today. All of those stories back there, they're for some kind of example.

V. Leprosy as a Picture of Sin

Take Leviticus chapter 13 and 14, us talking about the filthiness of the flesh and the spirit. This is a great story. In this story, in these two chapters, God tells Moses about the sin of leprosy and how it affects the body. Then He tells him how to deal with it. It's a great picture of our sin because in the Bible, leprosy is a picture of sin. In the story here that we've got today, we see a picture of our sin in the flesh and the spirit and how it affects us as God's people in a spiritual way.

I don't know if you've ever studied leprosy in the Bible. It's a great study. Leviticus chapter 13 and 14 will be your two definitive chapters on it. But leprosy, if you ever notice the characteristics of leprosy, leprosy puts a mark on a man or a woman. Just like sin, sin will mark us. I mean, you look at a woman who was 40 or 50 years old and she's lived a clean life and loved the Lord and kept away from the world as best as she could. I mean, I've seen some women that are that age that are downright look like they're 35, 40 years old. Then you see some that are 35 and their face looks like a road map of St. Louis. The world marks us. I've seen men because of the alcohol that they've drank that they could give Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer a run for his money anytime. And they couldn't run, but they could give him a good walk for it. But sin marks us. I always tell you, sin never leaves a person any better than it finds him, and it never does. You got people that's got lung cancer, emphysema because they smoke cigarettes all their life. Sin marks us. Of course, leprosy put a mark on a man or a woman.

The second characteristic is that leprosy came from prolonged uncleanness. It came from being unclean physically, living in filth, your body unclean. In the process of time, that prolonged uncleanness turns into what we called in the Bible leprosy. But it's a picture of our sin, and that's what happens. We get into the message, and I've met some people in my life, and most of you, if not all of you, we all have our issues in life, but we don't have absolutely major megaton issues. But I want to tell you something. I've met some people in my life and worked with some people whose lives were absolutely beyond fixable. They're in a place in their life where I don't care what you do, I don't care what you give them to do, I don't care how many people you put with them, they are not going to make it. You know why? Because a whole lifestyle of uncleanness, a whole lifestyle of 20, 30, 40 years doing it your way. That prolonged uncleanness puts you in a position much like the leprosy did in the Old Testament.

You know what leprosy does. You know the standard joke. A leprosy, you know you're about as funny as a Perry Como walking through a leper colony saying, "What's eating you?" I mean, it's a thing where that's what leprosy does. It's a thing where leprosy eats your flesh, it devours your flesh. It devours your flesh till you die. Your fingers fall off, your nose falls off, your ears fall off. It keeps eating at your flesh and consuming your flesh till you're all consumed up and you die. That's what sin does. That's exactly what sin does. Sin comes to the place where it just keeps devouring you. You start out with a little sins in life and don't deal with them, they graduate to

the next level. Then bigger sins, and then bigger sins, and then bigger sins, and then bigger sins. Pretty soon what started out as just a little thing over here, it winds up and controls you.

There's a verse in Proverbs that says a three-fold cord is not easily broken. I've always thought of that, and I know what that means from a doctrinal standpoint, but I've always thought of that in a practical way. You take a little piece of thread your wife sews with and you can wrap your fingers around both ends of that and snap that. You take that same little piece of thread and you put these two fingers and you wrap it around a hundred times, you will die before you will break that. You know what that's a picture of? That's a picture of our sin. Yeah, you can wrap it around your life one time, two times, three times, maybe a year when you're younger and you can walk away from it. You spend 20, 30 years wrapping yourself in that kind of sin and you'll die trying to get out of it. That's the way it works.

The only way that they got rid of leprosy was to go to a priest. Now, I'm not talking about Father shenanigans. I'm talking about in the context of a New Testament church. They went to the priest. The priest gave them a process for them to get clean. Now leprosy, I don't know if you know this about leprosy. Leprosy comes in three stages just like our sin does. You go over there in Leviticus chapter 13. Now, see, I'm trying to show you here an Old Testament example of how that something in the Old Testament that's literal is a picture of what you and I have to go through and deal with as in a spiritual sense as Christians. When the Bible talks about having the promises to cleanse ourselves from the flesh and the spirit, I'm showing you this thing. This is a great model. This is what you learn.

I don't know if you know this or not.

3. In Leviticus 13:38, there's a leprosy of the skin or the body. That'll represent for you and for man's inward sin. That's where it all starts for you and for me. You see, sin starts where nobody sees it. It starts in your spirit and in your heart and nobody sees that. But that's where it all starts. You just don't wake up one day and become a drunk. You don't wake up one day and become a womanizer. You don't wake up one day and become a drug addict. No, no, no, no, no. Sin goes way back and it starts in the body where nobody sees it and in time it manifests itself outwardly. So the first type of leprosy we have in Leviticus 13:38, if you want to mark in your body, you want to look at it, it's the leprosy in this person's skin or the body. That's the picture of a man's sin inside him. Nobody sees it. He hides it in his heart. He cultivates it. He puts it in there. He keeps it.
4. The second type of leprosy is in Leviticus 13:47, it's talked about leprosy of the garments. That's a picture when your sin makes the transition from being inward in your spirit to outward in everybody's sight. It'll always get there. It's like filling a container up with water. You may take five, 10, 15 hours to fill up your swimming pool. Maybe it'd take two days to fill it up. But you know what? There's coming a point that if you don't turn the water off, it's going to overflow, get into your house, get into your neighbor's yard and get into your neighbor's house. Theoretically, if you never shut it off, it'll flood the whole world. That's the way sin is. Sin starts in our bodies inwardly like leprosy inside. Then as it goes and it grows, it gets outward and everybody then sees it by your outward lifestyles. You know as well as I do that, he said, garments here. I think that's very fitting. Garments, you can almost tell, if

you look at a picture, you can almost date the picture by the clothes that people are wearing. People wear, I remember when guys wore leisure suits. A leisure suit, now, there's probably one in the Smithsonian Institute, but where are they? Who even knows what they are? I know what they are. I'll sell you a couple of them if you want. I have seersucker suits. Those were always good suits. Who wears them today? Seersucker suits. Sears had a sale and you were the sucker. That's how you got them, you see. But styles change. You can almost date something by looking at the clothes people wear. That's why the Bible says the leprosy, the garments. That's your lifestyle. It's what you wear. It's how you dress. Your dress is, how you dress out is an outward picture, a reflection of what's going on inside you.

5. Then there's the third leprosy and that's a leprosy in the house. That'll be Leviticus 14:35. You see, that's how sin works. Sin starts in your heart, mom and dad. You don't deal with it. You don't do right with it. It comes out and everybody sees it. Your kids see it and pretty soon that leprosy now spreads into your home and now it affects your wife, it affects your kids and now you're in trouble. Now the priest pronounces you unclean. That's what he did. He yelled it out, "Unclean!" I kind of do that every Sunday morning. I just don't call your name out. I just preach the word of God and let the word of God come down and the Holy Spirit of God gets you in your heart and he tells you you're unclean. Same process, same process.

In Leviticus chapter 15, you learn this. The only way to keep from getting leprosy is to wash your clothes and wash yourself daily. That's how you stop it. Now that's in a physical sense, see? But I'll show you how that fits in a practical sense. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 7:1, we get unclean and need to cleanse ourselves with all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. We do that by the promises of the word of God.

Now let me give you some good verses that go along with that.

John 15:3

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

You see that? The word of God cleanses you. In the Old Testament of Leviticus chapter 15, they had to take a bath every day and wash their clothes every day. I suggest to you on a regular basis, day by day, all day long, every 15 minutes whenever you need it, you bathe yourself in the light of the word of God.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Ephesians 5:26

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

You see, the word of God is the washing and the cleansing power. That's what it does.

VI. The Church as a Washing Machine

This fundamentally is what's wrong with Christianity today. This is what's wrong with churches. People don't like hard preaching today. It's a thing of the past with most people. You will never have to worry about this church having to build a mega auditorium with 60,000 people in it. It will never happen. Because my style of preaching, which is the biblical style of preaching, is simply that. It's preaching and nobody wants to hear preaching anymore. They want to be edified. They want to be told how nice they are. Nobody wants to hear what's wrong with them. We've got all of us have plenty that's wrong with us we need to hear about. Because when you hear about it from the word of God, then you do something about it. Every church needs a preacher, a priest, every Sunday that stands up, a preacher, and pronounces people unclean. Now that doesn't mean you go down and say, "You're clean, you're not, you're clean, you're not, you're clean." You just preach the word of God. The Holy Spirit of God will do the talking of who's clean and unclean. You can't sit through a hard line message where somebody just takes the paint off the wall and not walk out of that church not knowing where you're at in your spiritual relationship with God. Impossible if you're saved. If you're saved.

You see the water, God's likened to water. You're likened to, you and me are likened to time when we get dirty and we need to be washed. Now I've never understood this and I've told you this before but there's always new people around here. I understand every woman sitting here would know what I'm talking about. Because you wash clothes and you know that when you wash clothes, thank God you got a washing machine. Believe it or not, I remember as a kid growing up when they didn't have washing machines like you have. When I first was saved up to I was probably 10 or 15 years old, we still had a coal furnace. The coal man came every six months, dumped in two ton of coal. Every house back then down along the foundation had a little door, a metal door. That door is where you dump the coal, one of the coal saw. I know you're looking at me like I'm prehistoric. I'm telling you, it wasn't that long ago. I remember my mom and dad going down and taking the clunkers out of the furnace and hauling the ashes and getting a big old poker in there knocking around and putting the coal in and banking the fire so it would stay warm all night. We just set the thermostat now. But I remember when they didn't have washing machine. I remember my mom washing them on a washing board and then I remember we got our first one. Big tub here and a big tub here. Your Washington one, you had a ringer, you had to ring everything through. So that was modern back then. We never had air conditioning in our home back then. There was no air conditioning in the cars. You put the windows down. But then finally they came up with the greatest invention the world has ever seen and that is the washing machine. The thing where you put your clothes in and the water comes in. You just push the button, you dump your clothes in, you put your soaps in and the water comes up.

Now ladies you know how it works. You know how you get when your husband comes home and he's got grimy dirty clothes and your kids have been out playing in the mud and they got all kinds of clothes and you just say give me those things and you put them right in the washer. Now I know you know better than this. You put it in there, the water fills up, you push the button, you put the soap in and it fills up. And you know what? Doesn't just fill up and then go down and then you pull out your clothes and they're dry? No. Something has to beat the dirt out of those clothes. Something has to kick those clothes six ways from Sunday to knock the dirt out of them. In a church that's what you got to have. In your washing machine it's called an agitator. In a

church it's called a Bible believing preacher. You come in, your clothes are dirty. We've been hanging out in the world all week long. You got dirt on you and you come in, we open up the water and then the agitator kicks you six ways from Sunday and you know what? Show me you get clean.

But you do know if you wash clothes ladies, and I know, I'm going to wash my clothes. You're looking at a guy that years ago spent \$40 to learn that you had to put the lid down on the washing machine before it would start. My mom and dad, my step dad, they got married and moved out. I was in the home all by myself. I went down to wash my clothes. I put the thing up there, put my clothes in, pushed the button, nothing happened. Called the Maytag repairman. He don't do nothing anyhow. \$40. He came over, back then that was a lot of money. He came over, come down there and he said, "I don't know what's wrong, it won't work." He put the lid down and pushed the button and started to fill up with water. He said, "Well, I said, my, it's working now. It must have been a reset button on that someplace." I felt stupid. I was stupid. But that's me. I told you, I don't know how to deal with those things.

But you know how to wash clothes. You know when you wash clothes, sometimes you get some grass stains or you get some stains that don't just come out. It's the same way in churches. There's some stains in some of you that are harder to get out than others. So you got to wash them again. Sometimes you need to get that dirt stuff out where you actually rub it on this thing and work it in. Sometimes for some of God's people just coming to church ain't enough. You need to come over and sit down and let me smear some on you and rub it in. But the water will get the stains out.

I remember years ago, I think it was you Kelly that wanted to be a cheerleader. You were going high school or someplace, you're just a young gal back then and she commented at the thing, everybody wants to be cheerleader. Well you know we didn't want her to be a cheerleader because we just didn't want her to be one. I remember sitting down with her like it was yesterday. I explained to her why that it wasn't a good idea if she would be a cheerleader. I remember, you probably remember, I used the example in a flour mill. I said, "You know what? I said, you go to work in a flour mill, you may try to stay as clean as you can because you got somewhere to go other way afterwards. But you work eight hours in a flour mill and try to stay as clean as you can. You know what's going to happen? At the end of the day, you're going to have flour all over you." Because going through life folks, you can try to stay as clean as you want, but you're going to get dirt all over you because that's what this world is. That's why the Bible says you may clean through the Word. That's why the Bible says by washing of regeneration. That's why when you come in on Sunday, you ought to be pleased as pink that somebody's going to preach to you. You ought to demand it. You ought to get enraged and incensed if you don't get your hide taken off. You know why? Because that's how you get clean, man. That's how you get clean.

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

That's how you got saved. A child of God, you should bathe daily all day long if you need to. Every 20 minutes you ought to take a bath because the prolonged uncleanness and leprosy brought the disease to a stage that was incurable and the longer you let it go without getting clean the worse off you're going to be. That's just the way it works.

VII. Filthiness of the Flesh vs. Filthiness of the Spirit

Now look at this and you want to understand this. This is our, in our verse here, I want to talk about this. There are two types of filthiness or uncleanness that we need to understand here and see today. Two different types. You probably have no idea. You just read through that and just think it's all the same. It's not. You need to understand the difference, especially if you're going to help people. But you can't help people until you help yourself.

6. The first one is the filthiness of the flesh.
7. The second one is the filthiness of the spirit.

Those are two different things. I want to define those for you today and I want you to go out of here understanding it. I want to show you something. But before I do that, I want to show you something else. Notice it doesn't say, it says body and spirit. Doesn't say anything about your soul. Another great verse that goes along with this in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 19, which says what?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Notice he says glorify God in your body and your spirit. Again, he does not say one word about your soul. Now you need to understand why that is. No mention of your soul here. You know why? Now this stuff is doctrinal. You see this is Bible doctrine built on solid Bible principles. When the day you got saved your soul was separated from your flesh and from your spirit. We now know that the Bible says your soul was sealed. We now know your Bible, the Bible says your soul is saved. We now know the Bible says your soul is sinless. But your flesh and your spirit are not. You need to understand it. It's the great doctrine of spiritual circumcision we've talked about many, many times. That the doctrine of your standing in state which we've talked about many times.

1 John 3:9

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Now your flesh and your spirit has not been born of God so it can get filthy. Your soul was born of God, it's sinless. Got to see that. That's a good piece of theological teaching there. He says the filthiness of the flesh, the filthiness of the spirit but not your soul because your soul is sinless. If

you're saved here today it's not your soul you got to worry about, it's your flesh and your spirit that's going to get filthy.

Now let's look at those two areas here. I think it's very important we see these. Let's talk about the filthiness of our flesh. The sins of the flesh are outward and like the sins of leprosy that get into the garments and then into your house and everybody sees it, that's the sins of the filthiness of the flesh. The filthiness of the flesh are the things that we do. It's the things that people see. They're laid out for us and you want to get this verse down. They're laid out for us in Galatians chapter 5 verse 19 where he says,

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

You see that thing? The works of the flesh are manifest. They start in your heart, they start in your spirit and then they manifest themselves into your flesh and everybody sees it. Then he lists them: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, that's evil living, idolatry, witchcraft or evil thoughts, I'm sorry idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such the like of which I tell you before as I have also told you in time past, they which do these things, see that thing? Do these things. Do these things. This is outward. Do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Notice I've heard people say all the time, "You see it says you're going to go to hell if you do that." Where did you read salvation in the verse? The word wasn't salvation, the word was inherit. The word is inheritance. You do those things and you will not receive the inheritance of the millennial reign of Christ that God has for you when he establishes the kingdom of God. You will not get it. That's what it's talking about. But these things are outward. These are the sins of the flesh are the things that we do outwardly. People see them, they manifest themselves. They see it in our garments as I said before, our lifestyle and it affects our household.

You know parents, I said this last week and it's such a true statement. It takes about 20 years for our kids to reveal to the world how unspiritual we really are. It's just that simple and I know parents don't like to hear that. I don't like to hear that. I don't think any parent does but it's the truth. If you're saved this morning and you got kids this morning and you ask yourself where are they this morning? That's the bottom line because when it gets into your garments, it gets into your house and parents always reproduce their own spirituality or the lack of it in their children. They do it two ways. It's a process. They do it first of all by the outward things that they do that their kids see. In time it gets out of the garments and then it gets into the house. When it gets into the house, you got some problems.

You know what? I hear it all the time. I see it all the time. I've seen it all my life. I don't know why God's people who believe everything else about the Bible always become selective when it

comes to their own families. You know what? Your kids this morning and I'm speaking to you young Christians here that got little kids. They grow up and be exactly what you are so you better cross your T's and dot your I's now. That simple. I don't know what to tell you. It gets into our flesh. It gets into our garments and then it gets into the household. These are the filthiness of the flesh. I don't mean it. You know, that doesn't mean that somebody's out there, you know, drunk and drinking or doing this or fornicating and all that. No, no. And just little things like the normal little things that you don't pay attention to. The little things like gossip, the little things like backbiting or the bad attitude that we can all have or this or that. Your kids pick up on those things. It may be the fact that you didn't discipline them right. You didn't hold them accountable. I know parents today that, you know, that I've seen it all my ministry that they just refuse to hold their kids accountable. I know what the standard is. "Well, when they're 20 or 30 years old, you can't do it." You're out of your mind. You can do it. You may not be able to do it like you did when they were 9 or 10, but you can do it. The question is, you don't want to do it. But that's where it's at. Those are the works of the flesh. The works of the flesh have to do with the outward things. It goes through a process. It gets into your, it starts in your heart. And then it gets, we'll talk about that in a minute. And then it gets into your garments. And then it gets into your house. And it affects everything. Should never leave the man any better than to find him. That's why I try to get you young couples who have kids to understand that you got to have the model life for them. I'm not saying you're perfect. You can't be, but brother, you better send the right signals to them so they understand.

Now the second aspect is the filthiness of the spirit. That's the leprosy inside your skin, inside you. Where the last one we looked at, the flesh was outward, this is the sin that's internal. This is the sins of the flesh, excuse me, sins of the spirit that's internal. When this, and in time they manifest themselves to the flesh and outwardly. Now this starts out only affecting you. It starts out by you having secret sins in your life that you don't confess to God. It starts in your life by not doing what's right with the word of God. It starts in your life by not getting the principles done. It starts in your life by on the outward everything looks fine, but inside you want your way instead of God's way. Something crosses you up. You don't get what you want the way you think you should. That's where it starts. Sin always starts here. It always does. It always starts inside us and it always starts in the spirit.

Now the greatest example I can give you, and I like to give you a Bible of examples to illustrate what I'm saying. I think it's really important. Besides that it helps fill up your Bible a little bit because you get to put some notes in it. But the greatest example is in the Bible and the New Testament will be described the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They were the religious leaders in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that showed up when Jesus at the first coming of Christ. This is when I talk about someone who outwardly pretends but inwardly is dirty, this is the crowd right here. We even use it. I never might use it much, but I've heard many, many pastors talk about people and say, "Boy, they're real, they're real bunch of Pharisees." The Pharisees and the scribes and the Sadducees were religious people who outwardly pretended they had it all together, but this was rotten and black as the side of the bottle of spit on the inside. You see they were clean on the outside, but they were dirty on the inside.

Jesus, well, Matthew chapter 23, you had to read that chapter sometime. Matthew chapter 23 down there in verse 27, you know what Jesus called them? He called them white and sepulchres. You know what a sepulchre is? You go to the graveyard, they mostly bury people on underground if you don't have any money, but if you have a lot of money, they put you up a little building. That's called a sepulchre. Somebody, you don't see them much anymore in a new cemetery, but you go back to the old cemeteries and go back around the turn of the century, boy, they're all over the place called Muslims. They're little buildings that they put maybe a whole family in. They're called sepulchres. He says that he called them white and sepulchres. He called them white and sepulchres because they were all beautiful on the outside. He says,

Matthew 23:27

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Boy, that was true. That was true. See, a lot of God's people through my years into ministry like that. You see, the sins of the spirit are the sins inside that nobody sees until they manifest themselves. Unless you know how to read, like I told you last week, read character.

Now what are the sins of the spirit? Well, here they are.

- Envy. Envy is a thing on the inside. You don't have a shirt that has a name tag on it that says, "I'm envious of you." Who would wear something like that? But if you watch people, you don't need to know. All you got to do is tell them. Do you rejoice when somebody tells you that they just got something, then you really want it, but you don't have it? You know how hard that is? How many fake? "Well, praise the Lord, brother." Envy is on the inside.
- Hatred. You don't see many people wear a shirt that says, "I'm a hater." I better take that back. You do see some people wearing that, but you know what I mean. Hatred's on the inside. It starts in your spirit. It starts in your heart. It starts deep down inside where nobody sees it. When you don't do what's right in getting clean every day, it starts in your spirit. You maybe have a situation in your life that you hate somebody. I say never. I don't like to ever say never. I don't think I've ever hated anybody in my life. I don't think, to me, it goes two ways. This will always even a thing out on hatred because I don't, in my life, I can't speak for you. In my life, I don't have any reason to hate anybody because here it is. Bottom line, it's only one of two things. In most cases, I've done something really stupid. So I look at my own self and I say to myself, look at the dumb things that I've done. God doesn't hate me. I can't think of anything anybody would ever do to me that I haven't done to God on the same plane. The fact that God still loves me, I may not love the person. I may not be able to get there yet, but I'm certainly not going to let myself go and hate them. You know why? Because you hate them on the inside. It festers on the inside and it grows and it grows and it grows and you hate that person so desperately. You know what? That person's just going on with the time of their life. You know what? They never know that you hate them. You say to yourself, "Oh, I'll fix him." No you won't. You're just fixing yourself because it's an inside thing. I just, you know, and then I, you know, somebody said, "I can't, somebody does something to me." I can't really hate them because how do you hate someone when you really understand that all

things work together for good to them they love God. Maybe God allowed that to happen in your life. But you see, when it's all centered around you and you made a mess out of your family and your kids won't listen to you and they're all screwed up and they're doing all the thing they're doing and you made your own mistakes there and it's all mistakes in your life. It's easy when somebody else does something to you that you want to hate them. I got some great news for you. Why don't you just hate yourself? We are the worst source of our own problems anyhow. In most cases, I'm speaking to me now.

- Emulations
- Lasciviousness
- Evil passions
- Evil thoughts
- Malice
- Lust
- Jealousy
- Self-righteousness. Ever see self-righteous God people? I mean, they walk around like they're the most spiritual thing in the world and they're worthless.
- Stubbornness
- Indifference

You see, those are the sins, the filthiness of the spirit. Now you get an envious spirit in you, you get a spirit of hatred in you, you get a spirit of malice or lust or jealousy, you get a spirit of self-righteousness, those things don't come from God.

There's a great example again of this in the Matthew chapter 12 and I love showing you these great comparisons. This one's over in Matthew chapter 12 verse 43 dealing with the spirit and it's a picture of Israel's spiritual condition at the time of Christ's coming which is very important because they are the classic example of being outwardly nice but inwardly filthy. They had Israel at this point in time with the first coming of Christ, they've got themselves in such a mess yet they're still going to church, they're still talking about God, they're still doing the law, they're still doing this, they're still doing that. All the outward things are there, a lot like churches and Christians today but inside, boy, there are some problems. Here's what he said, here's how he classified it.

Matthew 12:43-45

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 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. 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.

Now that man there is the nation of Israel, you should know that. When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he walketh through the dry places seeking rest and findeth not. Then he sayeth I will return into my house, the man's body, from whence I came out and when he is come, look at it, look at it, when he shows back up he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

And if he did, the guy just cleaned his life up. The guy garnished it. Garnish is always a word used for religious things. He garnished it, he swept it out, he got rid of some junk. It's a lot like your garage and my garage and by the way if some of you really want a mission project I need to clean my garage out and I really need some help with it but it's the same thing. I take everything out of my garage, set it out on a deal, hose it down, get a squeegee and scrape it out. It looks really good. Boy I'm good, I put it over here, put all the stuff back, stack it really nice and you know what? I look up there and there's spiderwebs and cobwebs that's still as dirty as it was. I just got some of it out. That's the way our lives are. It would take a nuclear holocaust to clean my garage out completely or a zombie apocalypse but you never know that may be coming. It's one of those things where that's the way we are. We clean ourselves up on the outside and this man here who's the nation of Israel but in reality in a practical sense it's any man or woman who has the internal filth of the spirit who won't deal with it that are clean on the outside as it appears but they're dirty on the inside and all he did was sweep himself out, garnished himself with some religious hypocrisy but I want you to notice the key word is he's still empty. No Holy Spirit. No Holy Spirit. Then he, the unclean spirit, taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself and he enter in and dwell there and the last state of the man is worse than the first. Now here's how you know what the nation of Israel, even so shall it be also under this wicked generation. See? That's a picture of a nation right there and yet that's the same picture that's wrong with God's people today. It's a great example, empty, swept and garnished, all cleaned up religiously but it's all the wrong spirit, all the wrong spirit.

Now I told you last week that you ought to be careful who you hang out with and this is where 1 John 4:1 is a great verse. It says, "Try the spirits." That means put your spirit tester on them. You want to find out how much battery life you get, you put a little tester on a negative positive and the little needle shows you what you got. You want to find out the spirit, put the spirit tester on somebody and if it goes into the red stay away from them. I mean it's really simple, really simple.

VIII. What Affects the Flesh and Spirit

Now you want to get this. Take this thing a little further on the flesh and the spirit and we're going to see this. He talks about the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Let's talk about the flesh first. You know what affects your flesh? What you look at. What you put in front of your face.

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

What affects your flesh is what you look at. What you put in front of your face and what you look at and what you see affects your flesh. Yeah, it's just that simple.

There's another great story in the Bible back in the Old Testament in Joshua chapter 7 and it's when they're fighting their great battles back there and this is the story of a man by the name of Achan and there's a great message here we call it sin in the camp and Achan was an Israeli soldier. He was fighting the enemies of Israel and they're attacked a city down there, Ai and

they're down there and they're fighting through that thing and they're going through the tents and they're massacring everybody like they're supposed to and shooting people and he goes through a tent there and he's firing away and he runs out of ammo and his Uzi and he pulls out the clip and throws it down there, pulls it out of his bag and snaps it in there. There's a tent there. He swings around there and shoots a guy in the tent. He walks in there and wow, right down there on the tent floor. Right in that guy's tent. He saw some things. He saw some things. He saw a goodly Babylonian garment. All he had on was old camouflage fatigues. He saw it. He saw Babylonian garment. He saw silver, 200 shekels of silver laying right on the cot and then he saw a wedge of gold. Oh man, he saw them. That's what it says.

Joshua 7:21

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

And I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonian garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels of weight. Then I, here it comes, I coveted them. He didn't covet it until he saw them. So it went like this. I saw them. I covet them and I took them. And behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it. You know what that sucker did? He put that stuff in his knapsack and he put it out through that. Now he knows he was not supposed to take it into the spoils. The reason why, just in case we put the story together, in this first battle, this is the first big battle, in this battle the spoils belong to the Lord. After this battle you can keep whatever you want. All this stuff goes into the Lord's house. I'm not sure what God was going to do with a Babylonian garment but he wanted it anyhow. Probably wax his cherry with it and he did some wax rags, I don't know. But not Achan. No, no. You know what he does? He does what so many of God's people do. He saw it, he covet it, he took it. Then he hides it. He goes back to his tent. Oh, I've seen this a thousand times. He goes back to his tent in his barracks, in his area with all his buddies. The battle, been a great battle. He gets his little trench shovel out and he digs this stuff down there looking around and he knows he's not supposed to have it. He puts it all down there and cover it all back up. Washed it around with his thing out there, puts a shovel over here and then walks out and says, "Hey John, praise the Lord. We had a great battle today, didn't we? God was good. Oh, God is great. Boy, I'll tell you what, it's good to be a Christian. Ah, praise God. Yeah, we didn't lose many today or we sure beat the fire out of them. Holy is God. Praise God of Israel." Why, you rotten, dirty snake. But you see, it started in here with what he saw. Sin always, the flesh always starts with what we see. But then it moved itself outward.

I'll tell you another one. We can go back to Genesis chapter 3 with Eve in the Garden of Eden. When the old friend of the family showed up and tried to throw the world into sin and mess everybody up, he presented her with a tree. The Bible says before she ever sinned, the Bible says that when she saw, see that thing?

Genesis 3:6

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Genesis 3 says, when the woman saw that the fruit was good for food, pleasant to the eyes and desired to make one wife, she did eat. And then she gave it to her husband who was stupider than she was and he ate. Sin always, the flesh always starts with what we see.

Now here's the three point process in Achan's case. I saw, I coveted and I took them and he buries it in his foot. That's a picture. That's a picture of you and me hiding things inside of us instead of getting them right with God. Ah, but it manifested itself. I want you to see how it manifested itself because it always does. Sin always starts in the heart, but it always manifests itself to your garments and to your family. His sin that started in his spirit and his heart inwardly in time manifested itself outward at everybody. Here's what happened. Now if you read the story, I'm giving you a short explanation. The first thing that happened was with the nation of Israel itself. They couldn't win any more battles. They were getting a fire kicked at them every time they went up to fight. They're starting to say, "Somebody has done something wrong here. There's got to be sin in the camp somewhere." Then the second thing that happened was Moses who was the leader, he loses faith because of what took place. When it all comes out and the guy finally festers up, the man's family gets killed. So his sin affected his family and then he got killed, it all to me affected him. See, what you look at affects your flesh. It starts in here, but then it manifests itself.

Now let's talk about the filthiness of your spirit. Yeah, it's true. What you look at affects your flesh, but when it comes to your spirit, it's not what you look at, what you listen to. What you listen to. Now your spirit is like a rudder of a ship, best way on how to explain it. You see a big ship, that's your big body. You got that little rudder on the back. That big ship goes left or right by which way you turn that rudder. That rudder is a picture of your spirit and whatever other spirits you lend your spirit to will determine which way your ship goes. And with his four spirits in this world, three of them were affected, man directly. Of course, the first one is an animal spirit and that can't affect us one way or the other, but you have a human spirit. You're going to be around people all the time. If you're saved, you're going to be around people all the time that have a human spirit. You still got a human spirit. That's what gives man the ability to survive in great catastrophes or climb Mount Everest or do great things. It's what gets people through cancer or this or that when they're not saved. Then you have the Holy Spirit of God. Then as we've already saw from Matthew 12, we have an unclean spirit. Whatever one you lend your own spirit up to is going to direct your ship.

In Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, when it talks about the world system and lining yourself up to the things in the world, it's called vexation of spirit. You vex your spirit. You vex your spirit. Now, your spirit is what determines how you look at things in life. You see people who have a problem with depression. Bible says he had no rule over his own spirit like a city broken down without walls. A person who is severely depressed or has chronic depression or manic depression, whatever you want to call it. Somebody who has no control over their own spirit. They have got their own spirit is out of control by lining it up to something else. What happens now is it could be the

most beautiful day on the planet and they want to stay in bed and can't get out of bed because they're depressed. See they're lost control of their spirit. That's your emotion. Now it's controlling them. There's a way to get that back. We'll talk about that when we get into the counseling side of things. But that's what happens. It's exactly what happens. And you get that spirit by what you listen to.

I love the new commercial about the insurance company where the guy's doing the thing over here and a girl comes up and she says, she heard something on the internet and the guy says, "Well you got to be careful what you hear on the internet." And she says, "Yeah," she says, "they can't put anything on the internet that's not true." And he says, "Did you get that off the internet?" She says, "Yes. I'm getting ready to meet my guy. I met him on the internet and he's a French model." And he's the biggest ugliest dude you ever saw in your life who walks up and says, "Bonjour jour," you know, put the damn router and walks away. That's exactly what happens to most people. They hear the wrong things. They believe the wrong thing because they don't have the Bible and they get their spirit vexed. It's a thing where I gave you last week a great verse in Proverbs chapter 11 verse 13 that you want to hang out with people who have a faithful spirit. That's faithful to the things of God. Try the spirits.

Now, you know, flesh is what you see. Your spirit is affected by what you hear. This is why a woman is so susceptible to be taken advantage of because a guy will tell her he's smart enough to tell her what she wants to hear. When he tells her what she wants to hear, then her spirit goes that way. Nine times out of ten, if it's not based on a biblical relationship, it's a lie. He just wants what he wants. He wants to get whatever he needs to get. That's all it's about. But the woman, because she has no rule over her own spirit, she listens to what he says. She believes what he says. She doesn't prove out all things. Then she winds up in the absolute biggest god-awful-less mess you ever saw in your life. But take hope. It will always be somebody else's fault. But that's the way it works.

Now, music speaks to your spirit. That's why you got to be careful. Of course, the great passage on this is 1 Samuel chapter 16 verse 23 with David and Saul. David, Saul's got an evil spirit who's disrupting him. David comes in and plays music. The evil spirit leaves and the Lord of spirit comes in. See? Music is your spirit. Your spirit is affected by what you hear. Music. This is why music plays such an important part. A couple of Thursday nights ago, somebody asked a question. I gave you the breakdown of music in the Bible. Christian music today for the most part is like most preaching, very effeminate, very warm, very fuzzy. Just like the most preaching today doesn't turn out any men or any women that can stand for God, the music won't either. It's Christian nightclub music. It's nice things that you like to hear. It doesn't get any blood boiling. It's not about going to war and fighting the thing. It's about you getting that old hymnal down there, brother, and you get some of those songs out of the Philadelphia church age and you compare them to what you got today. You can close your eyes and listen to some Christian singer today and you might as well be in a bar someplace. They talk about, "I love him, I love him, oh I love him, I love him, I love him, oh I love him. He's a lover. I love him, I love him." Never says the word Jesus. He can be talking about anybody.

A bad spirit getting into your world can really hurt you. I'll tell you what. I'm a good worker of God too. I've had over the years, I've had situations in preaching where I've had people that were there that their spirit was so bad it just felt like standing in front of an open furnace. It's that bad. A spirit's a powerful thing. When you put yourself into that position to be a party to that, as the Bible says, "Even communication corrupts good manners." It's going to mess you up. I said it a couple of weeks ago and I don't understand. I don't understand why people who believe what they're supposed to believe about the Bible would stay in a situation where, and listen to somebody who just continually brings a bad spirit to everything. I would tell them where to head in so fast that they wouldn't know what hit them. But for whatever reason, we like to talk about how big and strong we are for the Lord. We just don't come through with it when we need to. Your spirit is based on what or whose spirit you blend it with. That's why the Bible says you try the spirits. You override that spirit with the biblical principles and the promises.

Let me give you another great verse. I love this one. If you want a message to preach, a little three-point outline, boy, this is a good one.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Now your mother and my mother were both mothers. Even though we lived many, many miles apart, my mother probably never met your mother and your mother never met my mother. I bet your mother probably said the same thing because this was in a mother's manual that they gave out to mothers back when. How many times have you heard your mother say, "If you can't say nice about something about somebody, don't say nothing?" My mother used to tell me that all the time. "If you can't say anything good about somebody, don't say nothing." We all should have listened more to our mothers. This is kid Sunday. Kids, listen, tell you, listen to your mothers. Listen to your Uncle Bob, but listen to your mothers too. When they tell you something, they got your best interest at heart. When they whip you, which is quite often in many cases I'm sure, it's because they do love you. Your mother and dad have got the verse that says, "Sparing off the rod for his crying." So you're not going to get a break. I just thought I'd throw that in because it's kid Sunday. But you know what? That's good advice.

Out of our mouths as Christians should come three things. If you have the right spirit, then this is what will come out. It's real simple. If you don't have the right spirit, then something other than this will come out and it makes it real easy. Why you continue to hang out to people that don't do this? I have no clue. Yeah, I do. I do have a clue. It's the second thing my old mother said. You know why you hang out with people like that and continue to hang out with people like that after these things don't come out of their mouth and all the wrong things do and you still hang out with them? I'll tell you why. I just came to my head. My mother said it when I was four years old on the front porch holding me in her arms while she was singing Amazing Grace. She said this to me between the two stanzas. "Birds of a feather flock together." That's why you don't. That's why you don't. That of our mouth should come three things. That which is good to the use of edifying that what we say may minister to the here. Boy, that pretty well sums it up. You limit your

friendships and your relationships to somebody and nobody's 100% perfect. You know what I'm saying. But come on. I mean some of God's people open their mouth and a deafenbaum truck drives out. This is what you want to look for. Does your friend do that? No, they don't. Then find some new friends. Find some new friends.

IX. Perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God

Then the verse says perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Now you know by now I'm sure that that's not talking about sinless perfection. But rather a daily work of perfecting ourselves as we get closer to the day of Christ's coming. We see this process in the great passages on the job that the church. He says in Ephesians 4 that He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12-15

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

To we all come in the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man and under the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ that we henceforth from this point on be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay and wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things which is ahead even to Christ.

Now this is great, this is a great passage and it goes right along here and it shows you the process. Verse 12 says the perfecting of the saints. You're perfecting yourself every day for the work of the ministry, for edifying of the body of Christ. That's a day by day process. You don't get saved and you're perfect sinlessly. Your soul is but you still got to deal with your flesh and your spirit. That's why you use the promises to stay clean and when you stay clean in your spirit and your flesh as clean as you can then you build a process in your life. That's a day by day being more like Christ. Mel used to say at the end of every new year he used to say you ought to be more like Christ this year than you were last year and that's a good statement. We ought to be more like Christ this month than we were last month, this year than we were last year, this week than last week.

Now he says till verse 13, in other words we're to do this until this happens. Verse 13, we all come in the unity of faith, there's the rapture, under the knowledge of the Son of God, there's your complete knowledge, under a perfect man, that's Christ, under the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, there's your glorified body. So in other words our life should be a daily process, day by day, perfecting ourselves for the work of the ministry as we get to the place closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. You ought to be closer the day you meet Christ and more like

Him than the day you were the day you got saved. But if you don't and you get the wrong spirit and you don't cleanse yourself from your flesh and your spirit, here's what happened. Verse 14, and this is where so many of God's people are at today. That we henceforth be no more children. Christianity today is like a bunch of junior high kids on the playground. I mean it really is. They fight about everything. They whine about everything. They complain about everything. They have no sense of understanding that the world is going to hell around them. All they can see is like most junior high kids is what's right in front of my face and what I want today. He says henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro. Some of you would be a great poster child for a salad. I mean you just are tossed to and fro, carried off by every wind of doctrine, slight of men, cunning craftiness, laying in wait to deceive. Your indicators of what's real and not real, right and wrong, what's good and not good has been busted and broken and your antennas are bent. You got to get back to the principles.

Verse 15 says, "But speaking the truth in love." Now you know what? That's a great verse because there's times you have to say things to people. It's not just what you say but the spirit and how you say it. I can preach a message like I preached today and maybe your visitors don't pick up on it but my people know that I love them. They know what I'm telling today is the truth in love because of where we're at and what God has called us to do. They signed up on this roster and this little piece of this war before Jesus Christ comes back to get a little bit of action in and get some things for Him. Let me know there's got to be some tough time we got to go through. Verse 15 says, speaking the truth in love that you may grow up. There it is. Grow up. But I want you to see, look at verse 15. It's not growing up to be like Him. It's not growing up under Him. It says growing up into Him. You're in a process some day when the rest of these verses take place that we've already read that you're going to turn into Jesus Christ every day of your life by cleansing your filthy and other flesh and your spirit you grow up under Him. This perfecting holiness is not some charismatic thing. It's not some holiness preacher thing. It's a process that day after day you build in your life everything that you need to be more like Jesus Christ every day of your life. You realize that the promises that God were given to you to cleanse you from the two things are going to mess you up. Your soul is taken care of if you're saved. But brother you and I got two problems that we got to work on. The only way we work on them is to wash them. Wash them daily 10 times a day, 20 times a day. That is to cleanse ourselves with the promise of the God from the filthiness of the flesh and the spirit.

Now you know what they know now. You know the flesh is what's inside you that manifests itself out. The spirit starts in your heart and then manifests itself into your flesh. You know now that one is what you look at, one is what you hear and you know that your spirit lined up to the wrong spirit whether it's a saved person or not. Saved people can get an unclean spirit and get under that influence just like a lost person can. All of you know people can, you could write the name in a blank. Those are the ones that you got to stay away from. Those are the ones that you're not kindred spirits with. You try the spirits. You prove all things. You look and see what comes out of their mouth to the edifying, to the glory of God and to the three things that I gave you. Those are the things that you look for. Well now you've had both sides of this verse. You've had the practical side last week. We explained what promises are. Now you got the doctrinal side. You see how they work into your life. For those of you that down the line who want to get

into this people ministry, these are the kind of things that are vital. These are the things you need. We will work on. We will deal with. We will see it. Everybody else is going to just hang in there and do what you're doing. Let me tell you something. That is the key and the secret to building your Christian life.

Let's have a word of prayer and we'll be dismissed. Father.