Question: Can you explain the difference between physical and spiritual impurity, as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 7:1?

> *2 Corinthians 7:1 (NIV): “Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”*

Answer: To fully grasp and receive God’s promises, we must understand that God desires holiness not only in our spirits but in our entire being both in our bodies and in our spirits. The call to holiness is a comprehensive one, affecting both our physical actions and our internal thoughts, attitudes, and desires.

Cleansing the Body:

When Paul speaks about cleansing ourselves from the “filth of the flesh” (or body), he is referring to avoiding all sinful actions that originate from our physical bodies. These actions are sinful because they go against the natural order God intended for human beings. Examples of these sins include:

Sexual immorality (Adultery, fornication) 1 Corinthians 6:18 (NIV):

> *“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.”*

Drunkenness

> *Ephesians 5:18 (NIV): “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”*

Theft, violence, and lying –

> *1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NIV): “Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Idolatry, covetousness –

> *Colossians 3:5 (NIV): “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.”*

The body is designed by God to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and our physical actions should reflect this.

> *1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV): “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom*

> *you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.”*

Cleansing the Spirit:

Spiritual impurity, on the other hand, refers to the inner attitudes, thoughts, and emotions that defile a person. These sins are not necessarily physical actions but are equally harmful because they originate from within the human heart. Examples of these sins include:

Jealousy, hatred, and anger –

> *Matthew 5:21-22 (NIV): “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.”*

Lust and covetousness –

> *Matthew 5:27-28 (NIV): “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

> *Pride and hypocrisy – Proverbs 16:18 (NIV): “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

Unforgiveness and bitterness

> *Matthew 18:21-22 (NIV): “Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or*

> *sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'”*

These sins are not visible on the outside but corrupt the soul and hinder our relationship with God.

> *Mark 7:20-23 (NIV): “He went on: ‘What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.'”*

Holiness in Body and Spirit:

God desires a complete holiness—both physical and spiritual. Many believers think that as long as their spirit is right with God, their actions or their physical body don’t matter. But Scripture teaches us that God looks at both.

> *Romans 12:1 (NIV): “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God this is your true and proper worship.”*

Your body is important to God.

> *1 Corinthians 6:13 (NIV): “You say, ‘Food for the stomach and the stomach for food,’ and God will destroy them both. The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”*

On the last day, not only will our spirits be saved, but our bodies will also be transformed.

> *1 Corinthians 15:52-53 (NIV): “In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.”*

The Role of God’s Word:

It is God’s Word that helps us recognize both physical and spiritual impurity. The Bible is alive and powerful, capable of discerning the deepest parts of our hearts. Hebrews 4:12 (NIV):

> *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

As we strive for holiness in both body and spirit, we must adhere to the truth of God’s Word. It is through this Word that we can discern right from wrong and live lives pleasing to God.

Conclusion:

God desires holiness in all areas of life—physical and spiritual. We must not neglect one over the other. We should honor God with our bodies and our spirits, living according to His Word.

> *1 Peter 1:16 (NIV): “For it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.'”*

Let us therefore purify ourselves, avoiding both physical and spiritual impurity, in reverence for God, and seek to live lives of holiness as we await the fulfillment of God’s promises.

May the Lord bless you.

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