

Spiritual Hygiene



*Spiritual hygiene
is as important as
physical hygiene*



Our physical hygiene has never been greater, especially during this Pandemic.

The constant hand washing, sanitising, social distancing and self-isolating.

**But can we honestly say we are doing all we can to practice good “Spiritual Hygiene”
in our Christian Life?**

Spiritual Defilement Affects us Christians

- Originates from our hearts, including thoughts of evil, murder, adultery, fornication, and being a false witness (Matthew 15:18-20).
- Contaminates our spirit, soul and body (2 Corinthians 7:1).
- Tainted by ungodly counsel or participate in wrongdoing (Psalm 1:1).
- Displeasing behaviour before God (Proverbs 6:16-19).
- Demonic spirits which actively look for unclean areas and to enter our lives and oppress us (1 Peter 5:8).
- Root of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15) which manifest as anger and critical spirit and may lead to stress and mental health issues.

Who doesn't want to be healthy? Of course, we do. There are certain specific daily habits which contribute to good physical health and we call them physical hygiene. Everyone agrees that good hygiene includes eating right, sleeping well, physical exercise, proper shower and, of course, brushing our teeth. The symptoms of neglect for some of these become obvious more quickly than others. For instance, if you miss one night of sleep, your performance on routine tasks may be severely substandard. The neglect of sleep over a period of time will have negative health implications.

A Christian's spiritual health is accomplished likewise – through good spiritual hygiene.

Defilement

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the noun "defilement" as "the action of spoiling something or someone so that thing or person is less beautiful or pure." In Holy Scripture, it means to render something ritually or morally unclean and therefore inadmissible to God's holiness. There are several levels of defilement, from a stain or spot, (Greek: *spiloo*), to being smeared with filth (Greek: *moluno*) or being rendered unholy ceremonially or ritually (Greek: *koinoo*).

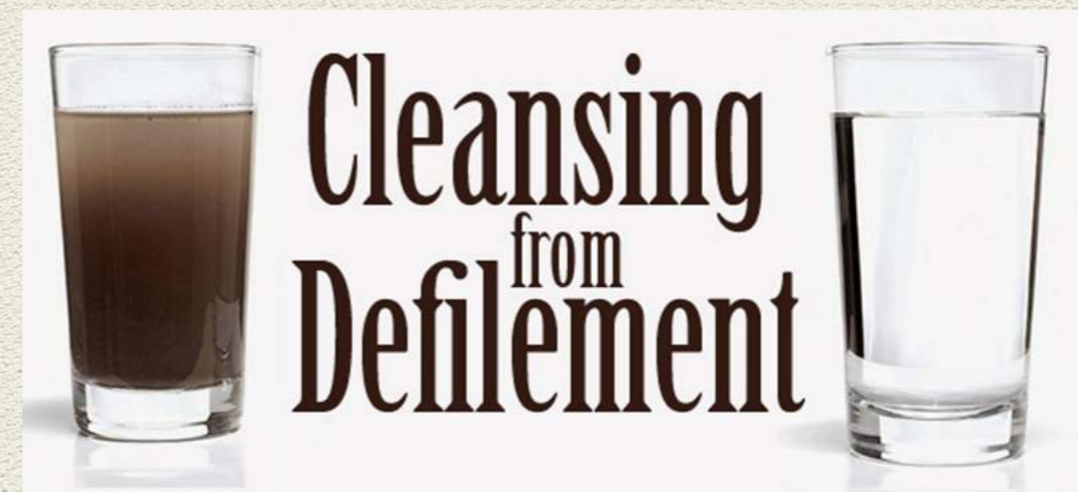
For instance, we leave our home with clean white attire for office. During lunch, we had a bowl of curry chicken and a spot of curry stain lands on our attire. While returning home from work, the speeding bus splashes muddy water all over us. By now our white attire is dirty, stained and must be washed and bleached too.

The dirt and stain represents our sins and they defile our lives, like rubbish left in a garbage heap which attracts rodents, cockroaches and flies and infestation of bacteria and germs.

There are physical objects and practices which causes spiritual defilement. For the reason that they have been dedicated to demonic spirits. The Book of Exodus 20:3-4 specifically highlighted **not to worship other gods and possess carved images or idols**. Today these objects could be new age items that promises health and wealth.

Some of us are the first generation catholic in our family, and our grandparents, parents and ancestors may have worshipped idols or engaged in occult rituals. Unknowingly these defilements are rooted in the spiritual and demonic spirits have been given rights because of what has previously happened to places, objects or people.

The Book of Leviticus says, "You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean" (Leviticus 10:10).



Implications for Us

Unclean things in our lives separate us from God's purpose. They prevent God's graces from flowing to us and His protection to cover us. If we do not stop them, we reap negative consequences which affect our personal lives. On a corporate massive scale, these unclean areas rippled wide and far into the nations of the world, our churches, our communities, our families and marriages. By way of illustration, an alcoholic will reap the personal repercussion of financial loss and even health issues. Corporately, it affects our families and marriages, causing discord and strained relationship and end with separation and divorces.

By way of illustration of spiritual defilement through items dedicated to idols:

A catholic man was struggling with depression and suicidal ideation. Upon further probing it was discovered that this ignorant catholic likes to buy and collect trinkets, souvenirs from online and antique shops from various countries. Over time, he has accumulated a costly private collection. He did not realise that some of these items were used for worship and dedicated to deities and prayed over by shamans or occult practitioners. When it was pointed out – he flatly defended his actions but eventually sees his follies and disposed of these items. He repented and made a solemn act of disownment of infested objects from his private collection and have a good sincere confession and partake an active sacramental catholic life.

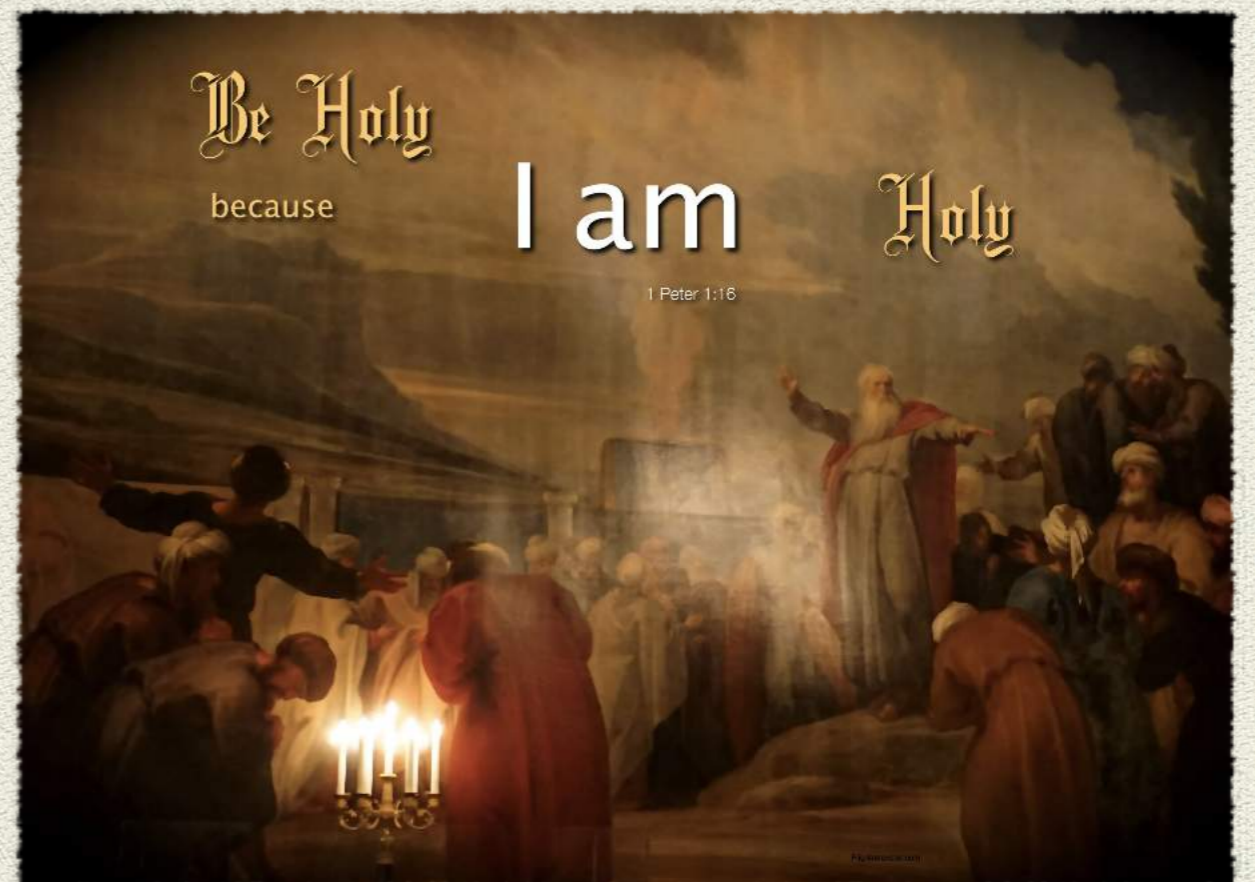
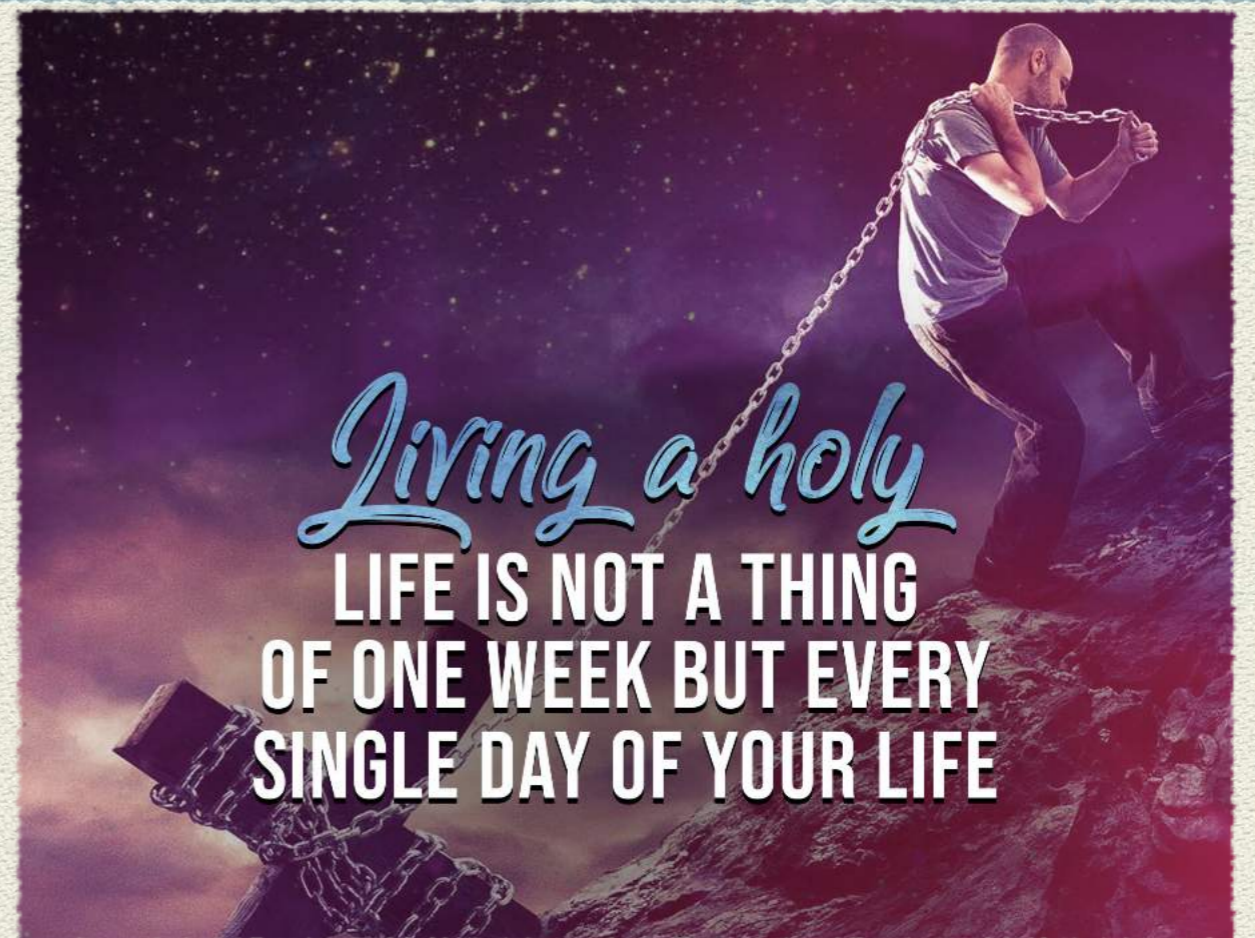
Be Holy For I Am Holy

"Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?" (Habakkuk 1:13). God is all holy. He is set apart from all that He has created and cannot behold evil and wickedness.

To be clean was to be close to life and holiness and uncleanness meant death and separation from God. As God's people, we are called to be holy, *".... for it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1:16).

What is meant to be Holy?

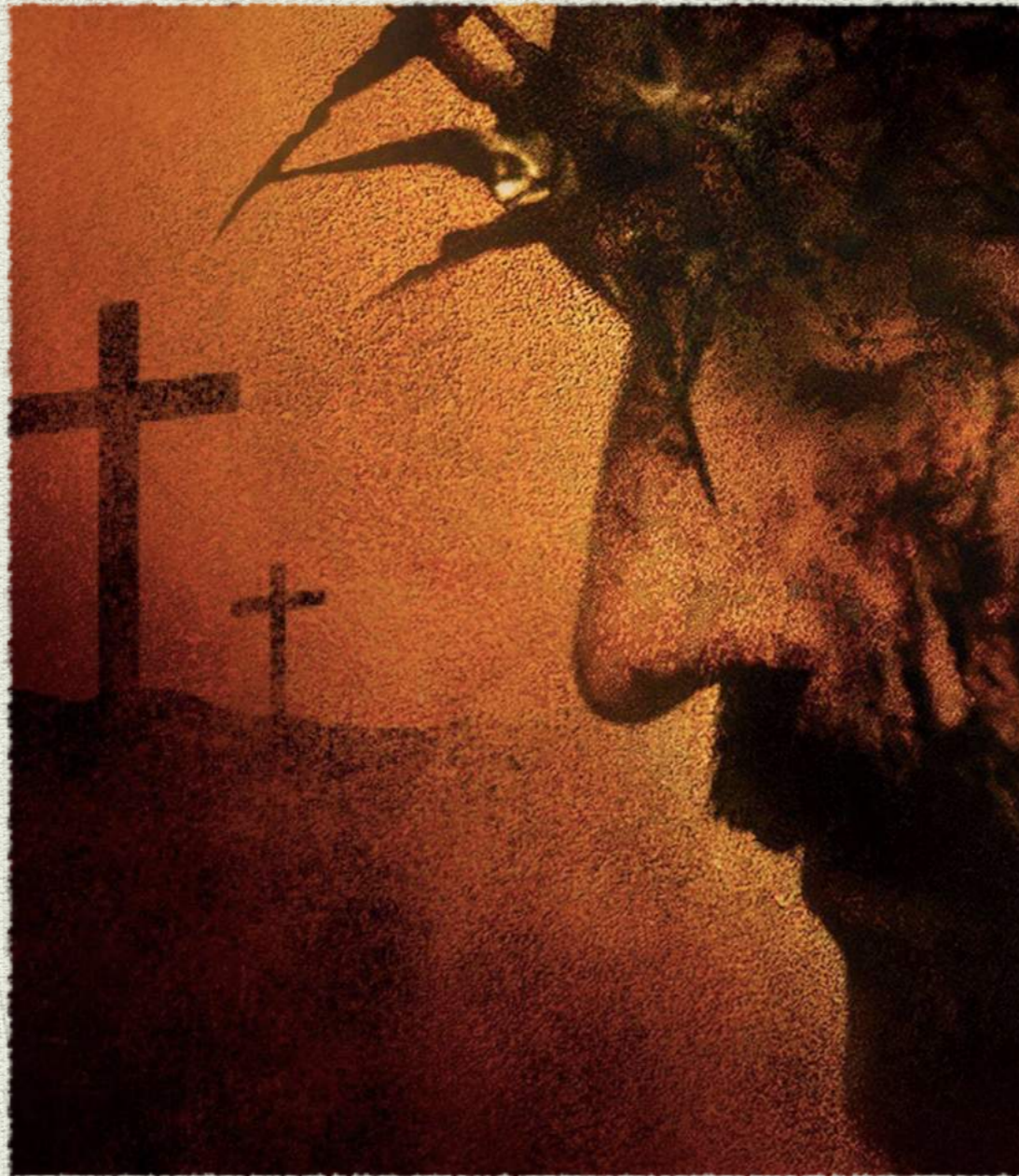
To be holy is to be set apart and celebrate life with God who loves us deeply! *"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be His people, His treasured possession"* (Deuteronomy 7:6).



With Him is Plentiful Redemption (Psalm 130:7)

This quote from the Psalms is the motto not only for St Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists Congregation. It is meant for all Christians for all times and seasons. Christians are to embrace spiritual hygiene and be separated from things that defiles us. *“Blessed are the pure in heart, they will see God”* (Matthew 5:8). Life isn't a bed of roses. When life is not a bed of roses, remember who wore the thorns! This is not an essay on self-introspection. Rather, we pray and ask God to search our hearts and reveal our problem areas.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way of everlasting.*
(Psalm 139:23-24)



1 Peter 7:6 speaks of it beautifully, *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”*

- In this relationship, we consider God in *all decisions* in our lives. Ranging from managing our daily schedules from big, medium and small decisions.
- To be unholy or defiled is to disregard God in our daily lives. The reference point is no longer God, but human reasoning and perception.
- Holiness is personal. But defilement can be transmitted.
- We *intentionally pursue* holiness for a vibrant relationship with the Lord.

There will be the final judgement, where we will be judged for all that we do. Till then, we operate in the Window of Grace! This Grace holds out for every person until our last breath or until the Lord Jesus returns. Hence, we must discern the things, relationships or activities which affects our spiritual walk with the Lord.

*“I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness
but will have the light of life”.*
(John 8:12)

Reflection Questions:

1. What is our understanding of spiritual defilement?
2. What are some Scriptural texts which describes God’s holiness? How do we pursue holiness in our daily life?
3. Identify some personal and corporate consequences of sins which affect our life? How do we deal with these issues?



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