

Sermon Topic: The Culture of Holiness by Mr Shawn Tay

Sermon Text: 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 - 2 Corinthians 7:1

### **Introduction**

Holiness applies to all areas of our lives. Today, we zoom in on holiness pertaining to issue of sexuality, and same sex attraction.

### **Holiness is about sanctification. This means:-**

- We have been saved from the penalty (punishment) of sin
- We are being saved from the power of sin on earth
- We will be free from the presence of sin when we meet Christ face to face. For now, we are commanded to flee whenever temptation sets in.

### **To pursue holiness, we need to:-**

1. Engage God. Talk to Him, especially when you are caught in a sin you don't have power over, feeling like you're losing the battle.
2. Agree with God: Admit that you can't do it and let Him show up and give us answers...
3. Move with God: Take action, follow His lead and do something. Fight the power of sin consistently.
4. Engage in the divine exchange: exchange what is not of God for what is of God. The more we say "yes" to God, the more easy the next "yes" becomes.

### ***Personal Testimony of Shawn:-***

- His childhood affected his identity and the way he searches for love.

### **God's healing process (for anyone who wants to walk in freedom too):-**

- Reinstate identity as child of God
- Confess idolatry of men (instead worship God)
- Invite Christ to heal trauma (inner healing)
- Forgive those who have hurt you
- Renounce lies you believed about yourself, others & God
- Renounce and sever ungodly soul ties
- Break inner vows and death wishes

- Seek accountability for inner life
- Confess dependence on God
- Allow God to meet your needs His way
- Find a loving church community that helps one to discover God's better plan
  - Be sensitive in what we do and say to vulnerable groups
  - Don't say "love the sinner hate the sin" because people's action is an outflow of who they are. When you hate their sin, they perceive you hate them too.
  - Walk by faith in the love of Jesus.

**Cell Group Discussion:**

1. According to 2 Corinthians 7:1, what ideas or actions are promoted in our culture that can contaminate body and spirit?
  
2. Paul exhorts us to do our part "to purify ourselves...to perfect holiness out of reverence of God". Why is this necessary?
  
3. Discuss the similarities between ungodly expressions of heterosexuality (eg, extra-marital relationships, cohabitation, viewing pornography, masturbation, etc) and homosexuality. How will this affect your attitude and behavior towards either group?
  
4. In what ways can we make our church a safer place for people with gender or sexuality issues, to share their struggles and find help?

**Tips to Support a Friend who Struggles with Same Sex Attraction:**

- a. Create a safe space for vulnerability.
- b. Honor the person who shares his/her struggles with us. Don't dismiss them.
- c. Love persons as persons, not a mission or project to be tackled.
- d. Avoid taking the moral high ground. Imposing truths before building a relationship only pushes them away.
- e. Listen. Listen attentively and compassionately. They need a friend and not a savior in you.
- f. Don't guilt trip, threaten or dismiss them. That will only push them back into the closet.
- g. Remember, they struggle in purity just like you and me. Their struggle in same-sex attraction, however, means they also experience extreme loneliness, fear of judgement and being ostracised.
- h. Let them fall in love with God. God's kindness leads us to change. Give them space to encounter the kindness and truth of God.

