

Our Firm Foundation on Godly Perfection

Perfection! What a word! We envision total flawlessness; absolute beauty and harmony. Then, when we think of the perfection of Almighty God, and of attempting to be as perfect and flawless as He is, we want to give up in despair. What a hopeless task! We see our weaknesses and flaws every day. And of course Satan keeps us reminded of our failures. But there is hope! We are authorized, nay, commanded to be clothed with the righteousness of our Lord Jesus, who knew no sin.

GOLDEN TEXT:

But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

Genesis 22:7, 8; John 1:29,36,10-14; Ephesians 2:4-9; Romans 6:1,2

GENESIS 22:7, 8

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said; My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering:...

JOHN 1:29,36,10-14

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sins of the world.

36 And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons

of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

EPHESIANS 2:4-9

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love

wherewith He loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

ROMANS 6:1,2

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

INTRODUCTION:

Most of us have been brought up with the thought that we, being human, have got to sin a little bit every day. As a result, it seems impossible that we could live above sin. It seems even more impossible if we take the stricter, but biblical understanding of sin that any missing of the mark of God's perfect plan for our lives is sin. But thanks be to our God, it is NOT impossible!



If we allow ourselves to truly die out to self-will when we repent and are baptized, we come up out of our watery graves as new "Jesus creatures" whose desire is to live in all things pleasing to our Lord Jesus. Although we may occasionally slip into sin, sinning is no longer our nature. We instantly realize we have sinned by the pricking of our consciences by the Holy Spirit and repent with a sincere heart, whereas before we were born again, sinning was our nature and we continually revelled in sin and self-serving.

1. DEFINITIONS OF WORDS TRANSLATED "PERFECT."

a) In the Old Testament

There are three Hebrew words translated *perfect*, but essentially the meaning most

generally used relating to mankind is *wholehearted* or totally committed to God.

The words and meanings in general are: **shâlêm** (*shawlame'*); **tâmîym** (*taw-meem'*); **tâmam** (*taw-mam'*) mean: complete; friendly: full, just, made ready, peaceable, perfect (-ed), quiet, whole, entire, without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely(-ity), sound [*as in "a sound mind" or without decay*], without spot, undefiled, upright (-ly), to *complete*, accomplish, be clean, consume, have done, *to come to, make or have an end*, fail, come to the full, be all gone or be all here, be (in the sense of *make*) perfect, be spent, sum[total], be [show self].

b) In the New Testament

There are six Greek words translated *perfect*, but *mature* or *complete* are the meanings most generally used relating to mankind. The words and meanings in general are: **akribeia** (*ak-ree'-bi-ah*), **artios** (*ar-tee-os*), **katartizo** (*kat-ar-tid'-zo*), **pleroo** (*play-ro'-o*), **teleios** (*tel'-ios*) and **teleioo** (*tel-i-o'-o*), mean: exactness; perfect manner; most exact, straightest; by implication, to complete thoroughly, that is repair or adjust: — fit, frame, mend (*make*) perfect(-ly join together), prepare, restore; to make replete; that is, to cram a net, level up a hollow, satisfy, execute (an office), finish, accomplish, to fulfill, to be complete, perfect; complete (*in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.*); of full age; to complete; accomplish or consummate (*in character*): — consecrate, finish, fulfill.

2. CAN ANY HUMAN ATTAIN FLAWLESS PERFECTION?

a) By our new birth commitment to God's word

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2).

Only by being born again as a new creature in Christ Jesus and thereby heirs of eternal life that we have any hope of ever attaining to godly perfection. We cannot even understand what God sees as perfect until we are filled with His Holy Spirit. Because, as already noted, our nature from birth until the new birth was to sin — to do what we wanted to do instead of wanting to please God and do His perfect will. The new nature that results from the new birth is absolutely necessary if we would be led by the Holy Spirit toward godly perfection (*See Romans 8:6; 1 Corinthians 2:11, 14,*) because, as already noted, our nature before being born-again was to sin and do what we wanted without any regard for God's perfect will. The new nature is absolutely essential for us to be led by the Spirit of God, which is the only way we can please Him perfectly. We might also note that while God would prefer that we not sin, it pleases God if we do happen to sin that we quickly repent and that in and of itself is a form of becoming perfect. *"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,"* (1 John 2:1).

b) Victory over Satan's accusations

It is also from the moment of our new birth that Satan begins to really accuse us of any and every little mistake we make, any flaw he can find in our Christian walk. This is why new converts often feel that they are hopeless and can never be all God wants them to be, so why try? He is "the accuser of the brethren" (*Revelation 12:10*) and attempts to discourage us from walking in our new life in Christ by making godly perfection seem something so far beyond anything we can ever be that it is useless to try. Nothing could be farther from the truth. *"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;"* (Ephesians 4:13). How many of us then are striving to become "a perfect man"? "All."

We each can rest in the confidence of *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”* (Romans 8:1,2).

A perfect, flawless diamond is still perfect and flawless although the person wearing it has gotten it so covered with mud or grease that at the moment it is not at all or is barely distinguishable as even being a diamond. So the new life in Christ that is totally sincere and wholehearted toward Him, sanctified holy unto Him, is perfect in that wholeheartedness and desire to please God. If sin somehow attaches to our lives, covering us like the mud or grease covers the diamond, then like the like the dirty diamond, we must be cleaned, in our case, by the washing of the Word, and the blood of Jesus Christ through wholehearted repentance; sincerely asking God to forgive us. Presto, the purity of heart shines brightly once again!

After He had agonized in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to Peter, *“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* (Matthew 26:41). In other words, be careful so your diamond does not get dirty in the first place. The Apostle Paul said, *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”* (Galatians 5:17)..

*“I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made **perfect** in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me,”* (John 17:23).

3. COMMANDED BY GOD

a) God Speaks

“...I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be perfect,” (Genesis 17:1b).

“Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God,” (Deuteronomy 18:13). (See also Matthew 5:48.)

Being human, God understands, and we should also, that we will make mistakes, but if our hearts are perfectly focused on pleasing God, our failures can be turned into victories which God will view as perfection.

b) The Apostle Paul speaks

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you,” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:” (Colossians 1:28). Teachers and preachers have a responsibility and should have a concern as well to tell people of flaws in their perfection as of telling someone their diamond is dirty, not to condemn nor judge, but in loving compassion to wash the mud, the grease, the dirt off the diamond. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God,”* (Colossians 4:12). *“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught,”* (1 Corinthians 2:6). (Read Ephesians 4:11-14 from Scripture Texts.)

c) Holy Spirit empowerment for perfection

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be this minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you,” (Philippians 3:15). *“It is God that girdeth me with strength and maketh my way perfect,”* (Psalm 18:32). God wants us to be perfect in His eyes, so God, by the Holy Spirit will reveal where we are falling short — not to condemn us but to help us improve and become more nearly perfect.

4. ARE THERE ANY BIBLE EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE GOD CALLED PERFECT?***a) King David***

King David is spoken of both as a “perfect” man and as a “man after God’s own heart,” and yet he committed adultery and tried to hide that sin by murder! He was not a good father to his children. But his real heart’s desire was to please God. He was totally committed to God and when he realized that he had sinned, he repented wholeheartedly in anguish, sackcloth and ashes. You can read his lament for his sins in Psalm 51.

In the New Testament the words translated perfect as relating to mankind all essentially, mean “mature” or “complete”. The perfect factor in David was not that he never made any mistakes but that he was quick to admit his sins and to be fully repentant. The consistent shining of the flawless diamond was so seldom broken by the dirt of sin that though the blackness of that sin was very ugly and great, it was hardly noticeable before it had been washed away by wholehearted repentance. No other person in the Bible, short of Jesus Christ Himself is spoken of as perfect.

***b) The Apostle Paul denies his own perfection***

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3: 12).

SUMMARY:

The key to being perfect in the godly sense is our wholehearted determination to serve God and our willingness to instantly repent when we realize we have sinned. While none of us will ever reach a point in which we never sin, we can and should always be working toward that goal. Along the way, our flaws will be washed, chipped and cleansed so that we become genuinely wholehearted; Perfect in God’s eyes.