

Become **PERFECT**

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:47).



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God said, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, **for power is perfected in weakness**’ (II Corinthians 12:9a). Power is perfected, it is made complete in weakness. The Apostle Paul understood the power of God for it rests on those who walk in humility, uphold an attitude of servitude, show grace towards their fellow brothers and sisters, and exude love for God and all of mankind. He understood that it takes a complete surrender of the individual’s will to fear and serve God, before He will allow His immense power to flow out through Christ onto mankind. Paul concluded, “Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it [the thorn in his flesh] away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, **I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong**” (II Corinthians 12:8-10).

RELY ON AND TRUST IN GOD

The Apostle Peter too, understood the spiritual growth that comes from suffering. “And the God of all grace, the One having called you to His eternal glory in Christ, of **you having suffered a little while, He Himself will perfect, will confirm, will strengthen, and will establish you**” (I Peter 5:10).

One-third of the creation in heaven fell into wickedness. They grew in pride and arrogance. Humility and servitude became lavish self-glory and cruel dictatorship. Those who still hold their positions are wallowing in the power God has given them and all who are a victim of their sting are left convulsing in pain. God is warning Believers of the dire mistakes the fallen in heaven have made. Mortals who buy the ways of Wickedness will not enter into God’s kingdom. God will not allow Wickedness to prevail. The suffering Believers experience is

designed to bring them under God: to seek Him, trust Him, know Him, love Him and never challenge Him no matter how much power He chooses to give to them. The Father is the source of all power. He will never to abuse His power. He is love. He is perfect.

GOD HAS A PLAN

While living in this evil age, God wants His people to love everyone, even those who persecute them. God has a plan for mankind. Today, we are still living under the rule of man. Suffering, selfishness, corruption, and wickedness reign. God has allotted a time period for the rule of man and it has not yet ended. Christians and Messianic Jews long for the return of their King of kings and Lord of lords who will broadcast the word of God and bring peace, but that time remains still in the future. In the meantime, God asks the Believers to endure patiently.

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, **not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance**” (II Peter 3:9).

Most people on earth are deceived and deception will only increase as Wickedness is given rulership during the Great Tribulation. God has an order within His plan. First, is the preserving and refining of the saints, second is the refining and purging of His people and with them converts from the nations and finally, the refining and purging of the nations of the world. God is not working with everyone at this time. He is giving the basic necessities to everyone, the righteous and the wicked, equally.

“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect**” (Matthew 5:43-47).

BECOMING PERFECT

Stephen understood the deception of this evil age. He was “**a man full of God’s grace and power**, he did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). Members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen began to oppose him and brought false accusations against him. The spirit of opposition and hatred tends to surface where God’s faithful servants work.

Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin to defend himself. He retold their early history when the twelve tribes were led under Moses then Joshua and concluded briefly with King David’s desire to build the God of Israel a house, which was done under the rule of King Solomon. He mentioned that the God of Israel is big, so big that a little house on earth would not be able to hold Him. God said, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?” (Acts 7:49). Yet, God accepted their wish and in Jerusalem

a magnificent temple was built. God's ultimate desire is not a home for Himself, but a people who serve Him willingly with eternal love and faithfulness.

“God has **not given us a spirit of fear and timidity**, but of **power, love, and self-discipline**” (II Timothy 1:7). Stephen knew they needed to hear the truth and if one among them would hear and repent, he knew there would be rejoicing in heaven. He said, “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: **You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One.** And now **you have betrayed and murdered him**—you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it. When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’ At this they covered their ears and yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him... While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit... Lord, **do not hold this sin against them**’” (Acts 7:51-60).

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU

Jesus taught, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:43-45a).

Stephen and Jesus gave us the prayer for those who persecute. “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

LOVING YOUR ENEMY

Peacemakers seek harmony with both those who obey God and those who rebel. They see the big picture—God's plan is still in progress. They understand God's great love for His creation and the importance of unity and supporting the spiritual growth of all of mankind, even the godless who have not yet started to grow. Remember, Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that **you may be sons of your Father in heaven**” (Matthew 5:43-45a).

Jesus said, “**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God**” (Matthew 5:9). A peacemaker serving God is not a chameleon changing their theology to fit the company of the moment. Peacemakers serving God remain loyal and faithful to the word of God under any circumstance. They are staunch supporters of God and they pay a severe price for remaining faithful. As they journey during this evil age, they learn to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16).

They care for their brothers and sisters equally. “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink” (Proverbs 25:21).

They exercise God’s wisdom, knowledge and understanding. “A man's insight gives him patience, and his virtue is to overlook an offense” (Proverbs 19:11).

They do not partake in gossip or character assassination. Instead, they search out the positive qualities of every individual to help them build on what they have and rise up to be a better person. “Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:28).

They strive not to fall into the temptation to strike back. They heed the words of the apostles. “Make sure that no one repays evil for evil. Always pursue what is good for one another and for all people” (I Thessalonians 5:15).

And, when asked to give an answer for what they believe, they are ready. “Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that you have. But respond with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who slander you may be put to shame by your good behavior in Christ” (I Peter 3:15-16).

Within the family of Believers, they strive to live a life worthy of the calling received. They heed the word of God, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:16).

The core of the ways of the peacemaker is the fulfillment of the command from Jesus to “love one another. As I have loved you, so also you must love one another” (John 13:34). God has a salvation plan for all of mankind. Loving mankind is the hope that everyone will repent and the continual effort to help them along the way to accept the sacrifice of Christ and come into the unity of God, even when they lash out. Being at peace with God in perfect unity and oneness is the process of becoming perfect like our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:47).

Mankind is truly not our enemy but family members from every race, people, and nation on earth. God is not yet working with everyone on earth. His plan has three phases and the nations of the world are the last to be called. Being last does not make them the least. Yet, the Apostle Paul urged Believers to suit up and put on the whole armour of God for we do not wrestle against our worldwide family on earth, but rather another enemy—one that is extremely powerful and can only be conquered through power and strength from Almighty God.

THE ENEMY OF MAN

On this earth, mortals are confronted daily with the invisible spirits of Wickedness. The creation in heaven came to life through the power of Almighty God—the Father, by His Son—Jesus Christ. “For by Him [Christ] were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether **they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by Him, and for Him**” (Colossians 1:16).

Thrones, dominions, principalities and powers are associated titles the Apostle Paul warned Judo-Christians about. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers**, against the **authorities**, against the **powers** of this dark world and against the **spiritual forces of evil** in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

The creation in heaven is billions of years older than the creation on earth. Though the earth was created at the same time as the heaven (Genesis 1:1), earth remained formless and void (Genesis 1:2) until the Father decided to complete creation on earth. The creation in heaven is well established with many thrones and dominions.

The highest level of authority in the realm in heaven are the rulers over their vast dominions. These rulers are identified as gods, sons of the Most High God.

King David lived during a time when the understanding of the gods was common place, as common place as the resurrection is for Christians today. “And so, the heavens will praise your wonderful deed, O LORD, even your faithfulness, in the assembly of the holy ones. For **who in the sky is equal to the LORD? Who is like God among the sons of God, a God feared greatly in the council of the holy ones**, and awesome above all surrounding him? O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? **You are mighty, O LORD**, and your faithfulness surrounds you” (Psalm 89:5-8). Yet, in the 21st century, this knowledge is lost, forced into the shadows by educators who have mythicized the true enemy of all of mankind—a devious undertaking by Wickedness.

The God of Israel has written hundreds of scriptures separating Himself from the lesser gods, not because they were mere wooden or stone idols, but because they are gods from the creation in heaven who are not equal to Him. Some of them have gone rogue declaring themselves to be creators; they war against the Almighty God. Loyalty to these fallen gods is a serious matter of treason. If these gods were mere myths or only poorly crafted, man-made idols, then God would not be a jealous God nor would He include in the core of His law, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2) and “Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold” (Exodus 20:23).

21st century Christians often lean on their own understanding rather than humbly leaning on Christ for the interpretation of scriptures. Jesus Christ is our only Teacher with the authority to interpret the scriptures. The mythicization of gods is today’s common thought. Pieter de Waal, author of the article, “Evil Spirits Hierarchy” from his website Spiritual-warfare.gladiatorsforgod.com provides insight into this topic that many have difficulty understanding. There exists a hierarchy among the creation in heaven. Pieter de Waal explains,

“Thrones—top-level of evil spirits, the Kingpins.

These evil spirits are the elohim (gods) that form God’s council. They were appointed by God to rule the gentile nations, whereas God took it upon himself to rule Israel. The elohim were worshipped by the gentile nations as gods beside God Almighty himself. Some of their names are mentioned in the Bible, such as Baal, Marduk, Molech, Astarte and Dagon. (Does “the spirit of Africa” ring a bell?) There were 70 thrones originally, including the good spirits and the evil spirits. Thrones operate on a global scale.

Satan himself is also reckoned under the elohim.

“They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. [2Co 4:4 GNB]

Dominions.

Dominions are evil spirits ruling smaller countries, counties, provinces or states. A dominion probably has jurisdiction over about 10 million people.

Principalities.

Principalities are the evil spirits ruling large cities or small countries. A principality probably has jurisdiction over about 1 million people. They infiltrate municipal governments and influence legislation on that level. Daniel 10 mentions the prince of Persia as one example of a principality.

“The angel said to me, “Daniel, God loves you. Stand up and listen carefully to what I am going to say. I have been sent to you.” When he had said this, I stood up, still trembling. Then he said, “Daniel, don’t be afraid. God has heard your prayers ever since the first day you decided to humble yourself in order to gain understanding. I have come in answer to your prayer. The angel prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief angels, came to help me, because I had been left there alone in Persia.” (Dan 10:11-13 GNB)

Powers.

The powers are the evil spirits ruling towns or suburbs, probably having jurisdiction over about a hundred thousand people.

Rulers of the darkness of this world.

The rulers of darkness are evil spirits ruling smaller areas of control, such as small businesses, school boards and church councils. Others would be involved in the local organised crimes.

Spiritual wickedness in high places.

In the Old Testament High places were the places where worship was carried out. These are the evil spirits targeting ordinary people with the aim of tormenting or possessing them.”

[\(https://spiritual-warfare.gladiatorsforgod.com/evil-spirits-hierarchy/\)](https://spiritual-warfare.gladiatorsforgod.com/evil-spirits-hierarchy/)

John W. Ritenbaugh from the Church of the Great God provides additional insight. “The word ‘powers’ denotes those who aspire to world control, and ancient writers used the term to designate the savior gods of pagan religions.”

The Apostle Paul sympathized with the limited view of Believers into the spiritual realities when he said, “Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely” (I Corinthians 13:12). This limitation should not become an excuse to remain ignorant of these rogue heavenly forces that work relentlessly to steal our eternal life. They know that the creation of mankind was to fill their heavenly positions; they are determined to destroy us. They are well aware of what they are doing; unlike deceived mankind.

The Apostle Paul is fully aware of our powerful enemies and he urged Believers to “therefore **put on the full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13).

John W. Ritenbaugh adds, “It is clear that we are fighting a spiritual war against enemies who are far greater in numbers, intelligence, subtlety, and power than Israel had to wage war against in terms of the Amalekites, the Moabites, and so forth. In addition, our enemy is invisible.

Paul tells us to ‘stand,’ a military term for holding on to a position. In effect, before one can launch an attack, he must first hold the position he is in. In the Phillips translation, the word ‘against’ is used four times, probably to stress the determined hostility that our enemy has. The Christian soldier is confronting something that, as a soldier, he could not overcome except that he himself also has invisible help to draw upon as a resource.

Our warfare, then, has all the trappings of a literal war, but it is something that we cannot see yet happening nonetheless. The qualities that we need to fight this war are not things we have inherently. We have to be given them by God. Our relationship with God is of supreme importance as to whether we are going to have the proper resources to fight this battle. We have to go to Him to get them, and we also need to be on good terms before He gives them to us.” (<https://www.cgg.org>)

The Apostle Paul gave us everything we need to win this war. “Stand firm then, with the belt of **truth** buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of **righteousness** in place, and with **your feet fitted with the readiness** that comes from the **gospel of peace**” (Ephesians 6:14-15). Even fighting against our cruellest enemy who is spiritual and unrelenting, God tells Believers to be quick and ready to bring peace without backing down from truth and righteousness. We are not to hate them. Being perfect is not having the spirit of hatred, but being filled with God’s spirit of love.

Paul added, “In addition to all this, take up the shield of **faith** with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of **salvation** and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:16-17). During the Great Tribulation when Satan is thrown down to earth, these entities will come out of the shadows for God will allow them to rule while he brings His people into a deep repentance. Battles will occur and take a variety of forms, including many false teachings, a false peace and promises of eternal life outside of Christ’s sacrifice. Ultimately, during this time of great delusion, put God foremost in your mind and trust in Him that your salvation is sure. He will not fail to give you what He has promised. Pray always and endure patiently; God does not lie.

It will be as in the days of Noah, there will be celebrating and plans for the future, so will be the day when Christ returns (Matthew 24:37). Satan is thrown down to earth at the mid-point of the last seven years of this evil age. He will give his power to the beast from out of the sea. The whole world will follow the beast and worship Satan. They will also worship the beast and say, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?” (Revelation 13:4) The whole world will be worshipping Satan and the beast. “He [the beast alliance] was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation” (Revelation 13:7b), except for the saints.

“He [the beast from out of the sea] was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them” (Revelation 13:7a). The enemy of mankind is not physical. Satan and the beast from out of the sea and from out of the earth are all spiritual enemies: rulers, powers, principalities and authorities. The nations of the earth will surrender and worship them. They will entice them with supernatural technologies, life-extending medical solutions and they will perform miracles and wonders that will captivate scientists, educators, leaders and the ordinary man and woman. They will invite mankind to buy their theology in exchange for their wares. Babylon will re-open her trading centre as she did in ancient times and mankind will buy, buy, buy.

The Apostle Paul warned Believers, “With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18b).

John W. Ritenbaugh adds, “It is a war to the death. In fact, here in Ephesians 6, this idea is hidden in the Greek. It is a war to the death against supernatural forces. The word ‘powers’ denotes those who aspire to world control, and ancient writers used the term to designate the savior gods of pagan religions. That is who we are fighting against—demons!”

<https://www.cgg.org>

There is no need to fear these rogue gods. Moses recorded in his song the history of the ancient Israelites. He reminded them that when they felt strong and powerful, they turned away from their God and worshipped the gods around them. “They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they had not known, to **newly arrived gods**, which **your fathers did not fear**” (Deuteronomy 32:17). The ancient Israelites did not fear these newly arrived gods because they knew their God was the Almighty God, yet they still rebelled because they desired the ways of

the nations around them that these gods established: superpower status, expanding powerful empires, enormous military might and world-ruling aspirations.

God chose them to be a nation of humble priests, of which, they saw no honor or value. The great honor of being a holy nation of royal priests is yet to be respected and desired. The Apostle Paul revealed this wonder, “For he chose us to him **before the creation of the world** to be **holy and blameless in his sight**. In love **he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ**, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves (Ephesians 1:4-6).

Predestined before the creation of the world, God implemented a plan for a holy nation of twelve tribes who would become royal priests and adopted sons in his glorious eternal family. So, Paul urged Believers to cherish and hold fast onto their predestined calling and stand alert and unmoveable against the rogue heavenly rulers, powers and authorities who seek, like roaring lions to tear away their eternal crown. Put on the full armour of God. Love your enemies by speaking the truth and standing always in righteousness. Be quick and ready to apply God’s wisdom, His knowledge and understanding to deal with evildoers and extend His kindness to achieve peace. Finally, become perfect like our Father in heaven and you will receive power—boundless power to love beyond any human ability.

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich