

“Be Ye Perfect”

Matthew 5:48

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Preface

Matt. 5:48 is far from the only passage teaching us to strive for perfection.

- **Phil. 2:15** – "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be **blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish** in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world."
- **1 Thess. 5:23** – "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and **may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- **Eph. 1:3-4** – "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that **we should be holy and without blame before Him** in love."

Preface

How are we to make application of the command to be perfect and blameless, considering this command appears to contradict passages elsewhere?

- **Rom. 3:23** – "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- **1 John 1:8** – "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

What are we to do with this apparent contradiction?

“Be Ye Perfect”
Does Not Mean . . .

. . . Temptations
Do Not Exist

We Know Satan is Busy:

- “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (**1 Pet. 5:8**).
- “The Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it’” (**Job 1:7; 2:2**).

“Be Ye Perfect”

Does Not Mean . . .

. . . We Can Be
Permanently
Sinless (on
Earth)

In **Heb. 11** we find the “Hall of Faith.” These people were not “permanently sinless.”

- Abraham sinned when he lied to Abimelech (**Gen. 20**).
- Noah’s drunken state in **Gen. 9**.
- Moses struck the rock at Meribah rather than speaking to it (**Num. 20**).
- The Israelites were not able to enter Canaan for their numerous sins.

Yet, all of these were commended for their faith.

“Be Ye Perfect”
Does Not Mean . . .

. . . Christians
Cannot Fall
From Grace

- **Gal. 5:4** – " You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."
- **James 5:19-20** – "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."
- **Heb. 3:12** – "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."
- **Rev. 3:5** – "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."
- **Acts 8:12-23** – Simon's sin.

“Be Ye Perfect”

Does Mean . . .

. . . We Must Strive
For Perfection
(Without Sin)

It may not be easy, but we are not commanded to do anything beyond our capabilities.

- "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (**1 John 5:3**).

It is not easy to always strive for perfection, but Jesus never said obeying Him would be easy.

- "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (**Matt. 7:13-14**).

Though difficult, we must strive for perfection.

We Must Strive For Perfection Because. . .

. . . We Live Under the Perfect Law of Liberty

- Christ's command stems from the fact that we live under an infallible law – the perfect law of liberty.
 - “He who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed” (**Jam. 1:25**).
- The juxtaposition of the two contradictory terms “law” and “liberty” make the point that Christ's new covenant far exceeds what was found under the former covenant (**Rom. 8:3; Heb. 10:1-4; Col. 2:13-14**).
- Obedience to the perfect law of Christ can make us perfect and acceptable to God.
 - “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (**2 Tim. 3:16-17, KJV**).

We Must Strive
For Perfection
Because. . .

. . . We Are Given
the Perfect
Example

- Christ took on flesh when He walked this earth (**John 1:1-14**). In doing so, He suffered the same temptations all humans face, yet He never sinned (**Heb. 4:15; Heb. 2:18**).
- Instead of disobeying God, Christ fulfilled the Father's will by offering Himself as the perfect, sinless sacrifice. The body and blood of Jesus, because He was without sin, made a perfect offering that satisfied God.
 - “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience by the things He suffered; and **having been made perfect, He became the source of salvation**, to all those who obey Him” (**Heb. 5:8-9**).

We Must Strive
For Perfection
Because. . .

. . . We Are Given
the Perfect
Example

It was the “perfect obedience” of Jesus that made Him the perfect sacrifice, and we have been called to imitate His perfect example.

- **1 Pet. 2:21** – “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”
- **1 Cor. 11:1** – “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”
- **1 John 2:5-6** – ““But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”
- **Eph. 5:1-2** – “Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

We Must Strive
For Perfection
Because. . .

. . . We Must
Stand Perfect
and Complete
Before God

Paul spoke of the need to “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (**Col. 4:12**). We become perfect and complete by putting on Christ (**Col. 1:28**), presenting our entire beings as sacrifices to Him:

- “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God**, which is your reasonable service. 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” (**Rom. 12:1-2**).

A sacrifice is an offering made to God as atonement for sin. He who offers the sacrifice releases all claim or right to it and leaves it to be set apart for the honor and service of God. We receive from the Lord everyday the fruits of his mercy. Let us render ourselves – all we are, all we have, and all we can do – unto God as acceptable sacrifices.

Conclusion

- Every person who has ever lived and could discern good from evil has sinned (**1 John 1:8; Ecc. 7:20**), except for Jesus Christ. Yet, we must strive to live as Jesus lived, overcoming temptation and daily striving for perfection.
- The only way we can ever come close to attaining the goal of perfection is by shaping our lives in accordance with the Word of God:
 - “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (**2 Tim. 3:16-17, KJV**).
- Christ has called us to strive for perfection, so let’s do the best we possibly can in striving for perfection so Heaven maybe our home.