

Doctrine of Christian Perfection

1. There is a perfection of which *Scripture* speaks as possible and attainable.
2. God asks and expects His children to be perfect.
 - *Deuteronomy 18:13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.*
 - *Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*
 - *2 Corinthians 13:11 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.*
3. God promises this state of perfection as His own work in time.
 - *2 Samuel 22:33 God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.*
 - *John 17:23 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.*
 - *Hebrews 13:21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*
 - *Psalms 18:32 It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*
 - *Isaiah 42:16-19 And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. 17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods. 18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. 19 Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the LORD's servant?*
4. The Scriptures speak of some specific individuals as having been perfect toward God and having served Him with a perfect heart.
 - Noah. *Genesis 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*
 - Asa. *1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.*
 - Job. *Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. (cp. 1:8; 2:3)*

5. The prayer of Hezekiah was based upon the fact that he had served the Lord with a perfect heart.
 - *2 Kings 20:3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. (cp. Isa 38:3)*
6. Others are exhorted to be perfect.
 - Abraham. *Genesis 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*
 - National Israel. By Moses: *Deuteronomy 18:13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.* By Solomon. *1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.*
7. Specific individuals *without* a perfect heart are noted.
 - Solomon. *1 Kings 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. (cp 15:3)* David had exhorted Solomon to have a perfect heart towards the Lord. *1 Chronicles 28:9 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.* David had even prayed for a perfect heart to be given Solomon. *1 Chronicles 29:19 And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.*
 - Amaziah, king of Judah. *2 Chronicles 25:2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.*
8. To know what biblical perfection is, the Christian must begin by accepting the command and obeying it with a whole heart. The Lord seeks for such souls who will believe Him and take Him at His Word.
 - *2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.*
 - *Job 8:20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:*

- *Psalms 101:6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*
9. Perfection is not an arbitrary demand; in the very nature of things God can ask nothing less for all of His ways are perfect.
- *Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*
 - *2 Samuel 22:31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.*
 - *Psalms 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.*
10. Perfection, as the highest aim of what God in His great power would do for His own, is something so divine, spiritual, and heavenly, that it is only the soul that yields itself very tenderly to the leading of the Holy Spirit that can hope to know its blessedness.
- *Psalms 138:8 The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth forever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*
 - *1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*
11. Biblical perfection does not negate trials and tribulations. Job thought that he was perfect before the Lord, and had the testimony of heaven to that effect. Yet he suffered. The perfect have many enemies.
- *Job 9:20-22 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. 21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life. 22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.*
 - *Psalms 64:4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*
 - *1 Peter 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*
12. The goal of every believer is to live in a perfect way before the Lord.

- *Psalms 101:2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*
 - *Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*
13. One facet of the perfect way is to hate what God hates.
- *Psalms 139:22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*
14. Spiritual rewards await those who are perfect.
15. Personal safety
- *Proverbs 2:21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.*
16. Perpetual peace
- *Psalms 37:37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*
17. Righteousness shall direct the path of those who peruse holiness.
- *Proverbs 11:5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.*
18. Through the perfection of His people, God is glorified.
- *Ezekiel 16:14 And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.*
19. Part of the perfecting process is to be made weak.
- *2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*
20. There is a false and sinful self-assessment of perfection.
- *Ezekiel 27:3 And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord GOD; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. (cp. Ezek. 27:11)*

21. The works of the flesh cannot perfect the believer.

- *Galatians 3:3 Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

22. The distinguishing mark of perfection is to be like the Master and to control the tongue.

- *Luke 6:40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.*
- *James 3:2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

23. The ultimate perfection of the believer awaits the future and the state of glorification.

- *Ephesians 4:13 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 fullness of Christ:*
- *Hebrews 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

24. Paul never claimed for himself sinless perfection.

- *Philippians 3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. And yet Paul did claim for himself a biblical perfection.*
- *Philippians 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

25. Prayers for the perfection of the believer are biblical.

- *Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

26. One facet of pastoral ministry is to move believers towards a more perfect faith.

- *2 Corinthians 13:9 For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.*
- *1 Thessalonians 3:10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?*

- *Ephesians 4:11,12 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

27. The purpose for the giving of the Scriptures is to perfect the saints.

- *2 Timothy 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

28. The salvation of souls has been made perfect through the sufferings of the Savior.

- *Hebrews 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*
- *Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

29. Gospel obedience perfects the love of God in the souls of the saint.

- *1 John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

30. Fear of God will lead to a perfecting of holiness.

- *2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

31. Sin has sought to destroy all perfection.

- *Psalms 119:96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.*
- *Lamentations 2:15 All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?*

32. For those who struggle with sin and living out the ethics of the Christian life, the final exhortation is this: *let us go on to perfection. not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, (Heb. 6:1)*

33. Love is the final form of perfection.

- *Colossians 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*