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HOW TO BE PERFECT

Teaching Notes by Joyce Meyer

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HOW TO BE PERFECT

I. The Desire, The Struggle, And The Guilt

A. Perfection is and must be the sincere desire of every true child of God.

1. **Matthew 5:48** (KJV) – *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*
2. This is not only a command, it is also a promise to those who are **wholeheartedly** serving God.
3. This call of God to perfection manifests itself in our hearts as a strong desire to be so.

B. We must learn that what He commands and promises, He also performs – as we place our faith in Him.

1. **Hebrews: Chapter 4** – He has never required us to struggle but in reality has said, “Those who have believed do enter My rest.”
2. **Matthew 11:28** (KJV) – *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
3. **I Thessalonians 5:22-24** – The command to holiness and perfection is followed by the promise that God Himself will do it.
4. **Galatians 3:1-3** – Don’t be so foolish as to think you can reach perfection by dependence upon the flesh.
5. **Galatians 3:5** (KJV) – *He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

6. **II Corinthians 3:18** (KJV) – *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

It is by the Spirit of the Lord that we are changed from glory to glory.

- C. Living under the Law always produces guilt. The Law says I must “do” something. Grace says Jesus “has done” something; and if I will believe, the Holy Spirit of Jesus will take His finished work and work it in me.
 1. **Galatians 3:10** – Those who live under the Law are doomed to disappointment. They live under the curse of the Law, and part of that curse is guilt and condemnation.

II. Men Whose Hearts Were Perfect With God

- A. **Genesis 6:9** (KJV) – . . . *Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*
 1. It sounds mysteriously wonderful to say **he walked with God**.
- B. **Job 1:8** (KJV) – *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth [abstains from and shuns] evil?*
 1. How many of you would rather that God not call Satan’s attention to you?
- C. **I Kings 11:4** – Solomon’s heart was not perfected with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.
- D. **I Kings 15:14** (KJV) – . . . *Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.*
- E. All of these men were said to have perfect hearts, yet the Scripture also clearly shows us that they were not sinless men.

1. **Genesis 9** – God pronounced a blessing upon Noah and his sons after the flood. He also gave them the sign of the rainbow. By **Verses 20-21**, we see Noah becoming drunk and lying naked in his tent all night.
2. Job had to be humbled before God. He was fearful concerning his children; and although he loved God greatly, he had problems being self-righteous.
3. We know how David sinned. He committed adultery and murder.
4. Asa acted foolishly and relied upon the Syrians when he should have been seeking God. Another time during an illness, he did not seek God and had to be severely dealt with.

F. My heart is right, but what about my performance?

1. God sees the hearts of His children, and His expectations vary according to their “spiritual age” and specific circumstances surrounding their lives.
2. If I have two sons – one being three years old and one, twenty-five years old – and they both love me wholeheartedly, I expect more out of the older than the younger.

G. God also looks at extenuating circumstances.

1. Was a person abused?
2. What kind of training did they have from their parents?
3. What all has transpired in their life “pre-Christ?”
4. It takes time to get de-programmed and re-programmed!

NOTE: There are circumstances that contribute to how quickly a person matures in the Lord.

- H. What if a person has been claiming Jesus as Savior and Lord for thirty years and they are still in the carnal, baby stage of Christianity?
1. They either have not had enough of the right kind of teaching, or they simply need to “die to self” and get on with God’s plan.
 2. We are not excusing sin and carnality, but we are attempting to bring understanding of true biblical perfection.

III. Noah Was A Perfect Man, And He Walked With God.

- A. “Walking with God” does not mean to float around in the heavenlies. It does not mean to read your Bible all day long and quote Scriptures continually.
- B. Walking with God means to have a continual fellowship with Him.
1. Noah was a perfect and just man, who walked with God (in continual fellowship with Him).
- C. **Romans 12:1** (Message Bible) – *So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering.*
- D. Everything I do with a perfect heart is done with love and delight.
1. It is not done out of obligation or intimidation.
 - a. We must stop “doing things for God” because we are afraid He will be angry with us if we don’t. We must also stop doing things out of obligation (legalism) because it takes the life out of them.
 - b. **II Corinthians 3:6** – The Law kills, but the Spirit makes alive.
 2. Things done for God must be done with a proper attitude, or they are useless.

3. **Matthew 6:1-7** – Things done for God must be done with right motives, or they are useless.

Giving, serving, praying and studying, etc. must be done from a heart with a right motive – done for the love of God.

- E. They must be done with a willing mind and with all my strength, with total dependence upon Him and strictly for the purpose of glorifying Him.

1. **Colossians 3:17** – *And whatever you do [no matter what it is] in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in [dependence upon] His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him.*

2. **Colossians 3:23** – *Whatever may be your task, work at it heartily (from the soul), as [something done] for the Lord and not for men.*

- a. Serving God with a perfect heart means I have a definite purpose and make a concentrated effort to do what I do with excellence. I put my whole self into it.

- b. Don't make a halfhearted effort!

3. **Exodus 35:5** – *Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing and generous heart, let him bring the Lord's offering . . .*

4. **Deuteronomy 6:5** – *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being and with all your might.*

- F. **Genesis 5:24** (KJV) – *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

1. Walked (defined/Hebrew) – All along, continually, follow, on, out, up, and down. Greater, grow, lead, march, more and more, travel, walk abroad, on, to and fro, up and down, to places.

G. **Genesis 17:1-3** (KJV) – . . . *the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.*

AND ABRAM FELL ON HIS FACE, AND GOD TALKED WITH HIM.

1. The command to “be perfect” affected Abram the way it does us. It seemed overwhelming. But his response was absolutely correct. He fell on his face before God in absolute humility, submission, and surrender.

THIS ATTITUDE SHOWED HIS PERFECT HEART.

H. **I John 2:6** – *Whoever says he abides in Him ought [as a personal debt] to walk and conduct himself in the same way in which He walked and conducted Himself.*

1. Abiding in Him (continual fellowship) and sinning are incompatible and impossible.
2. **I John 1:6** – If we say we abide in Him and walk in darkness, the Truth is not in us.
3. **I John 1:7** – If we live and walk in the light, as He Himself in the light, we have true fellowship with one another; and the blood of Christ keeps us cleansed from sin in all forms and manifestations.
 - a. When we live in the light, the conviction of the Holy Spirit shows us all sin; and we are free to repent and turn from the sin.

- b. People who live in the darkness also live in deception; and much of the time, even though they live sinful lives, they never face truth concerning their behavior.

- I. Walk (defined/Vine's/Greek) – Signifies the whole round of the activities of the individual life; applies to moral conduct.
 - 1. The believer is to walk as follows:
 - a. **Romans 6:4** – In newness of life
 - b. **Romans 8:4** – After the Spirit
 - c. **Romans 13:13** – In honesty
 - d. **II Corinthians 5:7** – By faith
 - e. **Ephesians 2:10** – In good works
 - f. **Ephesians 5:2** – In love
 - g. **Colossians 4:5** – In wisdom
 - h. **III John: 4** – In Truth
 - i. **II John: 6** – After the commands of God
 - j. **Romans 8:4** – Not after the flesh
 - k. **II Thessalonians 3:6** – Not after the manner of men
 - l. **II Corinthians 4:2** – Not in craftiness
 - m. **II Corinthians 5:7** – Not by sight
 - n. **Ephesians 4:17** – Not in the vanity of the mind

- J. **Galatians 5:16** – Walk with God, and you will not walk after the flesh.
NOT: Try not to walk in the flesh so you can walk with God.

IV. Summary – How Can I Be Perfect?

- A. Have your heart checked regularly!
- B. Gladly correct any attitude that is incorrect!
- C. Joyfully receive the chastisement of the Lord!
- D. Realize **THE PERFECT ONE** lives in you!
- E. Trust Him to work His perfection in you and through you!
- F. Be patient
 - 1. **James 5:7** – See how the farmer waits and keeps up his patient vigil until he receives a full harvest.
 - a. Vigil (defined) – A watch kept during normal sleeping hours, a period or act of observing; surveillance.
 - b. Vigilance – Alert watchfulness
 - c. Vigilant – On the alert, watchful

NOTE: Keep doing relentlessly what you know you should be doing. Do it in the power of the Spirit, not in the flesh.

YOUR HARVEST WILL COME!

