

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 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. (Study Job 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.*
 - *Isaiah 38:3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, 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.*

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. Men of Israel with a perfect or a *united* heart came to make David king of Israel.
 - *1 Chronicles 12:38 All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.*

9. When the Temple was to be built the people of Israel had a perfect heart in the matter.
 - *1 Chronicles 29:9 Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.*
10. The gold that was used to construct the Temple was perfect gold.
 - *2 Chronicles 4:21 And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, made he of gold, and that perfect gold;*
11. The Jews were to have perfect sacrifices in the sense that the offerings were to be without blemish.
 - *Leviticus 22:21 And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein.*
12. The Jews were required to have perfect or just weights.
 - *Deuteronomy 25:15 But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*
13. King Artaxerxes wished perfect peace upon Ezra as he sent him back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city.
 - *Ezra 7:12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time.*
14. 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.*
15. 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.*

16. As the ways of God are perfect, so is His knowledge.

- *Job 36:4 For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*
- *Job 37:16 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?*

17. The Law of God is perfect.

- *Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

18. 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.*

19. 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.*

20. The end of the perfect man is peace.

- *Psalms 37:37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

21. 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:*

22. 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.*

23. Spiritual rewards await those who are perfect.

- *Proverbs 2:21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.*

24. The righteous look forward to the perfect day.

- *Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

25. 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.*

26. Several things are said to be perfect in Scripture.

❖ There is a perfect time for harvest.

- *Isaiah 18:5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.*
- *Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

- ❖ There is a perfect peace.
 - *Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*
- ❖ There is a perfect state of health.
 - *Matthew 14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*
 - *Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.*
- ❖ There is a perfect will of God.
 - *Romans 12:1,2 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. 2 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.*
- ❖ There is a positional state of perfection in Christ that is even now ascribed to believers.
 - *1 Corinthians 2:6 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 nought:*
 - *Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*
- ❖ There is a perfect work of patience.
 - *James 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*
- ❖ There is a perfect love.
 - *1 John 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. In perfect love there is no fear. 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*
- ❖ There is a perfect harmony of the heart, which should be sought in the Church.

- ◆ *1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*
 - ❖ There is a perfect praise which babies can offer to God.
 - *Matthew 21:16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?*
 - ❖ There is a place of perfection.
 - *Psalms 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined*
 - ❖ There are perfect gifts from God.
 - *James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*
27. In the early Church, there was something to come, which was to be perfect.
- *1 Corinthians 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Some believe this perfect gift to be the complete canon of Scriptures as per James 1:25: But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*
28. Concerning the Word of God, it is possible to have a more perfect knowledge of it.
- *Acts 18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*
29. 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.*
30. 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.*
31. 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)*

32. 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?*

33. Satan was once the quintessence of beauty and perfection.

- *Ezekiel 28:12, 15 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty...28:15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.*

34. Some people have come close to biblical perfection only to fall short of that and ultimate salvation.

- *Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

35. It is possible to have a perfect understanding of the gospel and the life of Christ.

- *Luke 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,*

36. It is possible to have a perfect understanding of the gospel and the life of Christ—and be lost forever.

- *Acts 24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.*

37. 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.*

38. Concerning the Law, Paul said that he was taught it perfectly.

- *Acts 22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.*

39. Despite perfect knowledge of the Law, the Law could not save for the Law made nothing intrinsically perfect. Neither the priesthood, nor the letter of the Law, nor all the bloody sacrifices could effect salvation for a single soul.

- *Hebrews 7:11* If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?
- *Hebrews 7:19* For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.
- *Hebrews 9:9* Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;
- *Hebrews 10:1* For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

40. 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,

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. 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 laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

44. 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:*

45. 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.*

46. 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;*

47. Christ is a more perfect Tabernacle than the Jews had in the wilderness.

- *Hebrews 9:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;*

48. The Old Testament church is not perfect or complete without the New Testament Church.

- *Hebrews 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

52. Good works makes faith perfect.

- *James 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*

53. The Church must be careful to maintain perfect works before God.

- *Revelation 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.*

54. The message and ministry of the Messiah was perfected on the third day after His crucifixion.
- *Luke 13:32 And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.*
55. Gospel obedience perfects the love of God in the souls of the saints.
- *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.*
56. 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.*
57. The perfection of God Himself can never be fully fathomed.
- *Job 11:7 Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*
58. 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?*
59. 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)
60. Love is the final form of perfection.
- *Colossians 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*