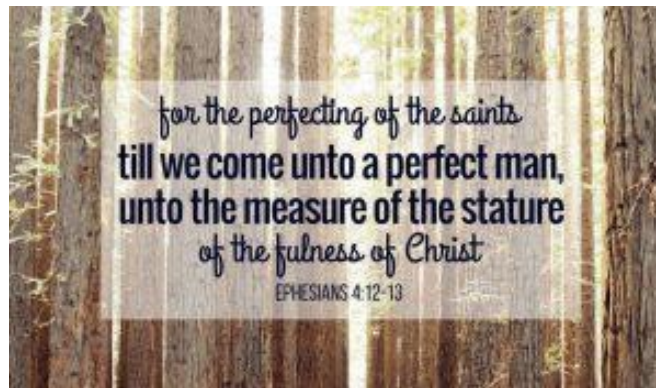


Back to the Father

Your Journey

Growing in Our Relationship

The Call to Perfection



God's desire for mankind was not only that they would come to know his saving grace but that they would also grow and be made perfect. In the very beginning God expressed his desire for mankind to be made into his image, according to his likeness even before he created them. Being made into his image and likeness would be a process that would take place over a period of time. The word "make" in Genesis 1:26 does not only reveal God's desire but also his involvement in bringing it to a completed state.

Too often when individuals read about the high calling of being perfect, they panic or lose heart. The reason for this is they look to themselves to bring this about. We need to take our eyes off of ourselves and look to God who is the one that will bring this to pass.

2 Peter 1:2-4 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ seeing that **his divine power** has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue; ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. WEB

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them. WEB

Phil 2:13 For it is **God** who **works in you** both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. WEB

Heb 13:20-21 Now may the **God** of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, our Lord Jesus, ²¹ **make you complete** 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 the glory forever and ever. Amen. WEB

Phil 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. WEB

If we can believe God for our salvation and are able to experience being born from above and if we can believe him for his holy spirit which he has promised to pour out upon those that believe and if we can believe in his miracle working power to deliver and heal us, is it too much to believe that he will perfect those whom he has called?

If we will believe and embrace it, we can look forward to it being accomplished in our lives.

If we allow his perfecting work to be carried out in our lives, our walk with God will only become more meaningful and richer.

This work will not be done if we are not willing to alienate ourselves with him in this matter. As we allow our relationship to deepen with our Lord, the more we will desire this change to take place and the more God will be able to work on our behalf.

Rom 12:1-2 Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, **holy, acceptable** to God, which is your spiritual service. ² Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what is the **good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God**. WEB

- Conformed outwardly and transform inwardly
- To know the will of God; know what God wants or desires
- Perfect; what could not be better
- Transformed (*metamorphose*)

Eph 3:14-21 For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

¹⁶ that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be strengthened to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God**. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to him be the glory in the assembly and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. WEB

- Here "the fullness of God" can be nothing other than the very nature of God

2 Cor 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ⁸ But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit. WEB

- Since the passage in Ex 34:34 refers to the Lord God, most likely that is the intended meaning here.

God has also called us to encourage and help each other as we travel the road that will lead us to be perfect.

Eph 4:11-16 He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; ¹² for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **full grown man**, to the **measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**; ¹⁴ that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; ¹⁵ but speaking truth in love, we may **grow up in all things** into him, who is the head, Christ; ¹⁶ from whom all the body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the body increase to the building up of itself in love. WEB

- mature suggests both growth and the completion of such a process.
- Reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature; "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ": Eph 4:7; here it means "full measure," that is, "the desired height "a full-grown man," "a mature man."

Rom 8:28-30 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For whom he foreknew, he also predestined (*predetermined*) to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ Whom he predestined, (*predetermined*)

those he also called. Whom he called, those he also justified. Whom he justified, those he also glorified. WEB

- Conformed to the image; an inward and not merely superficial conformity. It is used of Christ as the very image of the Father (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15). See Phil 2:6; Here we have both *morfee* (NT:3444) and *eikoon* (NT:1504) to express the gradual change in us until we acquire the likeness of Christ the Son of God.

God is more than able to do his perfecting work in each of us but we must want it and be willing to travel the road that will lead us to that destination

Col 3:1-17 If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, depraved passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; ⁶ for which things' sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. ⁷ You also once walked in those, when you lived in them; ⁸ but now you also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and shameful speaking out of your mouth. ⁹ Don't lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings, ¹⁰ and have put on the new man, that is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator, ¹¹ where there can't be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondservant, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹² Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, humility, and perseverance; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, if any man has a complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so you also do. ¹⁴ Above all these things, walk in love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord. ¹⁷ Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father, through him. WEB

- God is constantly renewing this new being in his own image.
- In his own image: the renewal process has as its goal the complete restoration in the creature of the likeness of the creator. The creator is, at the same time, the one who renews, and this process restores the divine image which had been effaced by sin
- Greek *eis epignosisin*. Full knowledge
- the Greek term implies "experience of" or "coming into a relationship with."
UBS

We are not called to meet the standards of the world but those that are of God.

Matt 5:46-48 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ If you only greet your friends, what more do you do than others? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be **perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.** WEB (*John 3:16*)

- In the statement “You shall be perfect”, the pronoun You is strongly emphasized.
- Perfect in the Greek has the meaning of having come to completion or wholeness; it can refer to maturity or to moral and ethical integrity, that is, to being flawless.

Seeing that God has granted to us all things pertain to life and godliness by his precious and exceedingly great promises and divine power so that through these we may become partakers of his divine nature we should be faithful to do our part in what he has called us to.

2 Peter 1:5-11 Yes, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence; and in moral excellence, knowledge; ⁶ and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control patience; and in patience godliness; ⁷ and in godliness brotherly affection; and in brotherly affection, love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, **you will never stumble**. ¹¹ For thus will be richly supplied to you the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. WEB

We have been called to a high calling, but we serve a mighty and holy God that delights to work on our behalf to change us from glory to glory. It is a process that takes place over a period of time as we continue in our relationship with our heavenly Father and with Jesus Christ his son.

Phil 3:12-16 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if it is so that I may take hold of that for which also I was taken hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brothers, I don't regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do. Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, think this way. If in anything you think otherwise, God will also reveal that to you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, to the extent that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule. Let us be of the same mind. WEB

Jesus is our example to whom we can look.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
WEB

Heb 5:7-10 He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, ⁸ though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered. ⁹ **Having been made perfect**, he became to all of those who obey him the author of eternal salvation, ¹⁰ named by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. WEB

As Jesus endured and was perfected, we also are called to endure that we may also be perfected.

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers*, when you fall into various temptations, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

⁴ Let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. WEB (1 Cor 10:13)

1 Peter 5:10 But may the **God** of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, **perfect**, establish, strengthen, and settle you. WEB

1 John 4:16-17 We know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and he who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. ¹⁷ In this love has been made perfect among us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, even so are we in this world. WEB

Our relationship with God, which is the means by which we are perfected, is based on us remaining and abiding in him and in his love. God's love for us and our love for God is that which will motivate us to be made perfect.