

Perfectionism

PERFECTIONISM]

DEFINITION: Perfectionism is the rigorous rejection of anything that is less than perfect, a driving demand to be absolutely flawless in every area.

FACTS ABOUT PERFECTIONISM:]

We live in an imperfect world. We are created in God's image, and as He desires perfection so do we. But there is nothing absolutely perfect in this world other than God. That is why a relationship with Him is the only thing that satisfies the need for perfection. Even the great Apostle Paul described a less than perfect missions outreach: "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life" (1 Corinthians 1:8). The Apostle James pointed out that "...we all stumble" (James 3:2).

Perfectionism is a form of pride. You cannot admit to yourself or others that you are less than perfect. You take pride in everything you do being absolutely flawless. Perfectionism is performance-based rather than faith-based conduct.

Extreme perfectionism leads to and results from other problems. These include fear of failure and feelings of rejection because you are less than perfect. A poor self-image and an attitude of defeatism may result because nothing is ever good enough. An obsessive compulsive disorder can also develop, a driving force that dictates that everything has to be flawless and causes you to repeat actions excessively to be sure things are absolutely perfect.

Perfectionism is not the same as maturity in Christ. The Bible has many commands for believers to be "perfect" When the Bible speaks of being perfect in Christ it means to be complete in Christ and spiritually mature. It does not mean you will never sin or make mistakes.

We all fall short of being perfect. A major purpose of the Word is to confirm that we fall short of perfection: "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:22-24).

DEALING WITH PERFECTIONISM:]

Admit that you are not perfect. We have all sinned and we all make mistakes (Romans 3:22-24).

Forget the past and focus on the future. The Apostle Paul, who made many mistakes in his past, declared: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

Accept God's gift of grace. God's grace covers your past, present, and future sins and mistakes. Accept His gift of grace to cover your sins and imperfections: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Accept that Jesus bore your sins. All of your sins, imperfections, and mistakes were taken by Jesus to the cross. He bore them so that you do not have to bear them: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

Rely on God's perfection instead of your own. God and His Word are perfect. Rely on these instead of your own effort. "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless" (Psalm 18:30). It is God who will make your way--all that you do and say--perfect (Psalm 18:32). Instead of relying on your perfectionism, focus on His Presence.

Focus on spiritual growth. Focus on eternal values rather than emphasizing temporal performance. Many of the imperfections that you fret over are temporal things of the world which will pass away (1 John 2:15). Keep your focus on eternal things "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT PERFECTIONISM:]

As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. (Psalm 18:30)

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. (Psalm 18:32)

There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins. (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:22-24)

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

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All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

...we all stumble...(James 3:2)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (1 John 1:8-10)