

LESSON TEN

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

A. THE DEFINITION OF PERFECTION.

Scriptural References:

"Be ye therefore perfect; even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after..." (Philippians 3:12).

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1).

The New Testament holds up a high standard of practical holiness, and affirms the possibility of deliverance from the power of sin. It is the Christian's duty to strive after perfection.

It is very important that we have an understanding of the true meaning of perfection as given in the Bible. There are two kinds of perfection:

1. **ABSOLUTE PERFECTION:** Absolute perfection cannot be improved upon. This kind of perfection belongs only to God. We might attempt to illustrate this kind of perfection by referring to an addition problem in arithmetic. The sum of ten and ten is twenty. This is perfect and needs no improvement.
2. **RELATIVE PERFECTION:** Relative perfection fulfills the end for which it is designed. This is possible for man to attain to. This kind of perfection may be improved. We might attempt to illustrate this by referring to a child practicing a piano lesson. The lesson may be learned perfectly but yet the student has much learning and practicing ahead of him.

B. OLD TESTAMENT PERFECTION.

Scriptural References:

"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation" (Genesis 6:9).

"...And that man was perfect and upright..." (Job 1:1).

Perfection in the Old Testament is the wholehearted desire and determination to do the will of God. Regardless of the sins that mar the record, David may be truly called a perfect man, or a "man after God's own heart," because the supreme aim of his life was to do God's will.

C. NEW TESTAMENT PERFECTION.

Perfection is more difficult to understand in the New Testament owing to the fact that there are various Greek words used to convey the idea of perfection. We shall note five of these different meanings here.

1. One word means being complete in the sense of being apt or fit for a certain task or end, completely equipped. *"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:17).*
2. Another word denotes a certain end attained through growth. *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48).* *"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect" (Matthew 19:21).* Further references: Colossians 1:28; Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 11:40.
3. The Greek word for perfection in the following Scriptures means equipment. *"And this also we wish, even your perfection." (II Corinthians 13:9).* *"For the perfecting of the saints..." (Ephesians 4:12).* *"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will" (Hebrews 13:21).*
4. The word in II Corinthians 7:1 means to "complete, to terminate," *"...Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1).*
5. The word in Revelation 3:2 signified to "fulfill, to cram, to level, to meet the requirements of." *"...For I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Revelation 3:2).*

D. MEANING OF PERFECTION.

The thought of perfection has various meanings. It is possible to be perfect in one way and imperfect regarding another matter. Some of the meanings of perfection are expressed as follows:

1. Positional perfection in Christ - the result of Christ's work for us (Hebrews 10:14).
2. Spiritual maturity and understanding as opposed to spiritual childhood (I Corinthians 2:6; II Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 3:15; and II Timothy 3:17).
3. Progressive perfection (Galatians 3:3).
4. Perfection in certain particulars: the will of God, the love of man, etc. (Colossians 4:12; Matthew 5:48; and Hebrews 13:21).
5. The ultimate perfection of the church or the corporate body of saints (Ephesians 4:13, John 17:23).

E. TWO GENERAL ASPECTS OF PERFECTION.

1. A gift of grace which is perfect position or standing. A person is either saved or not saved. If he is born again, he cannot be more born again. His standing in Christ is perfect.
2. Another aspect is the perfection as actually wrought in the saint's character. This involves growth and maturity. A Christian may be perfectly walking in all the light and knowledge that he has and yet in many ways be imperfect. He may be blameless and yet at the same time not faultless.

LESSON TEN

SELF HELP TEST

A. Write out the definitions of the words below showing the difference between these two terms:

1. Absolute Perfection -

2. Relative Perfection -

B. Write a paragraph on each of the following explaining the statement:

1. If a man is born again, he cannot be more born again.
2. A man may be blameless and yet at the same time not faultless.

C. Quote a Scripture with reference to show that holiness may be perfected.