

# Perfect!

By Mary Kane

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*Picture perfect...practice makes perfect...the perfect storm...that's perfect!* Wouldn't it be wonderful to be perfect? I would love to say the perfect thing, give the perfect answer or formulate the perfect solution to a knotty problem, but often I do or say the un-perfect thing. While I am acutely aware of my "un-perfectness" the Bible says that I am perfect—in Christ Jesus.

Before we begin today's study, please take a moment to go before the Lord and ask His forgiveness for any sin you need to confess. Now ask for the filling of His Holy Spirit. Instead of concentrating on one section of Scripture, our study will today will take us to different books of the Bible. We will consider what several verses say about becoming perfect in Christ. Let's begin at the beginning....

Please turn to Genesis 17:1 and write that verse in the space provided:

**Now please highlight or underline the word *perfect* (some version may use the word *blameless*).**

**What did God command Abram to do?**

I wonder how Abram felt when God told him to walk before Him and be *perfect*.

**Please write a definition for the word *perfect* and how it applies to a believer in Christ:**

## **How old was Abram when God told Him to be *perfect*?**

When I was a much younger woman, I may have been naïve enough to believe that I could walk *perfectly* before the Lord. I no longer suffer from that delusion however. I have more than of the forty-nine years worth of struggle and sin behind me to prove otherwise. I am happy if I can make it through a couple of minutes without something to confess. I'm sure that Abram, at the age of ninety-nine years was acutely aware of his *un-perfectness*, so what exactly did God expect of Abram? Let's delve into the original language and see if we can discover any truths that will shed light on this unusual command to be perfect.

The Hebrew word used for *perfect* or *blameless* in this verse is *tamiym*, which means, "complete, whole, entire, sound, safe, secure, healthy." Let's apply this definition to our relationship with God. When we come to a saving relationship with God, by faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit fills our souls and we are made complete in Him; we become who He created us to be. In addition, the filling of the Holy Spirit brings spiritual health. As God has promised in the book of Romans, He uses our wounds and scars for our good and in the process He heals our souls. The emptiness we previously felt is gone as we are perfected in His image. In short, perfection is a process that is accomplished over time as we walk with God.

*Tamiym* also refers to that which is "complete or entirely in accord with truth and fact." Thus, perfection in Christ is accomplished when we decide to take up our cross and follow Him. Perfection is a manner of life or a way of living not an unblemished record. A *tamiym* person is one who continually and obediently pursues God.

Matthew Henry describes the perfection of Genesis 17:1 in the following manner:

*"Walk before me, and be thou perfect, that is, upright and sincere; for herein the covenant of grace is well-ordered that sincerity is our gospel perfection. Observe, that to be religious is to walk before God in our integrity; it is to set God always before us, and to think,*

*and speak, and act, in every thing, as those that are always under his eye. It is to have a constant regard to his word as our rule and to his glory as our end in all our actions, and to be continually in his fear. It is to be inward with him, in all the duties of religious worship, for in them particularly we walk before God (and to be entire for him, in all holy conversation), (emphasis mine)."*<sup>i</sup>

Walking *perfectly* before God does not have so much to do with works, acts or flawlessness as it does the heart—one's attitude, sincerity and faithfulness. Let's examine another word from this verse in the original language, as it will give us a clue as to how we can become perfect in Christ.

**What does God tell Abram to do just before He tells him to be perfect?**

God tells Abram to *walk* before Him. The Hebrew word for *walk* used in this verse is *halak* which means "to walk, to live, to die, a manner of life, to go after, to go forward, to go on adding, to follow, to pursue, to lead a life pleasing to God." Keeping in mind what you learned about *halak*, please answer the following questions:

**What would it look like in your life if you *went after* or *pursued* God? Would anything have to change?**

**How can you *add* more God to your life?**

**What do you need to do to *go forward* with God right now?**

**What do you need to do so your life can be *pleasing to God*?**

Think for a moment about what you just learned concerning *walking before God*.

## **How does *walking before God* affect being *perfect*?**

In order to be perfect in God we must pursue Him, we must want what He wants, we must live for His glory, we must continually seek Him, and then we will become whole, healthy, complete, sound...and perfect.

### **Now please read 2 Kings 20:3.**

In this verse of scripture, a different Hebrew word is used for *perfect*, *shalem*. This word may look familiar to you as *shalem* is derived from the well-known Hebrew word *shalam*, which means, "to be at peace." Often when *shalem* is used in scripture it is in tandem with the word *heart*. King David was said to have a *shalem* heart— an undivided heart. Like David, we will be perfect when the pursuit God is the greatest work, the greatest intention of our heart. 1 Kings 8:61 instructs us to have a *shalem* heart before God and walk in His ways and commandments all of our lives. When we live according to God's ways we shall be *shalem*.

Going back and review the definition of *perfection* that you wrote at the beginning of this lesson. Please write your definition again, adding anything that you learned from our study thus far concerning the concept of *perfection*:

### **Perfection:**

We have looked at two verses from the Old Testament, now we will turn our attention to the New Testament.

### **Please write Matthew 5:48 in the space provided:**

In Matthew 5:48 we are commended to be perfect as God is perfect.

The Greek word used for *perfect* in this text is *teleios* which means, "finished...wanting nothing necessary to completeness...one who has

reached moral maturity...." When this word is applied to man it does not refer to one who is sinless, but to one who has attained all the qualities needed to become the person that God has created him to be.

**What qualities do you need God to bring to maturity in your life so you can be *teleios*?**

**What can you do to cooperate with God to realize these qualities in your life?**

**Now please, revise your definition of *perfect* again if needed at this time in the space below:**

**We will look at one final verse today, 2 Corinthians 13:11. Please write it in the space:**

In his parting words, Paul commands the Corinthians to be *perfect*. This Greek word for *perfect* used in this section of scripture, *katartizo*, means, "to render, to repair, to make one what he ought to be, to mend what has been broken." These definitions bring tears to my eyes as I recall the many ways God has repaired, mended and restored the broken places in my life. Many of these broken places were shattered by my own hands. By His grace and mercy God has mended, restored and repaired my soul and made me what I "ought to be." God gets all the glory.

**What has God repaired or mended in your life? How has He changed you from what you used to be to what you ought to be?**

**Please revise your definition of perfection one final time, adding what you just learned about *katartizo*:**

Over the years I have struggled to understand the concept of being *perfect* in Christ. The other day, as I was looking over my latest knitting project (I am addicted to knitting), I felt the Holy Spirit speak in my spirit the following message:

*This knitting project that you have struggled with over the past few weeks, with all your starting and stopping... casting and ripping...dropping of stitches and weaving of errors...this is what perfection in Christ is like...not that you did it perfectly but that you did it. And in the end, regardless of... in spite of... because of...all your errors and efforts, you have a perfect, complete masterpiece. This is what perfection in Christ is like.*

Perfection in Christ is not about perfection; it's about walking the walk, fighting the good fight, keeping the faith...believing...living...repenting...persevering...growing...weeping...praying...praising...forgiving ...day after day until He calls you home. Then we shall finally hear Him say, "Well done my good and faithful servant."

Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Genesis 17." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2013. 13 Jan 2013.

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