

How to Be Perfect

by Walter Wilson

Perfection is not about being sinless, but about being perfect in something we can do, such as being perfect in business, forgiveness, devotion, union, stewardship, maturity, knowledge, comforting, and preparation.

Duration: 31:51

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1, James 1:19

Topics: "Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a church service where the pianist played a hymn in a different time signature than the congregation was used to. This resulted in confusion and a messy performance. The speaker then emphasizes the importance of being perfect in purpose of heart and always striving to learn and grow in our faith. He encourages listeners to study and understand the Bible, to learn how to play instruments properly, and to develop effective communication skills. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the need to take action and not waste time on unproductive activities.

Transcript

Thank you, Brother Beck. We're going to talk about how to be perfect. How many of you would like to be perfect? Jesse, put your hand up.

Well, I see that some of you don't want to be. Remember, beloved, that perfection is never connected with sinlessness. Put that down in your notebook.

Perfection is never connected with sinlessness. It's always connected with something we can be perfect in. I made a list of 16 different ways of being perfect.

Now, listen. God said to Abraham, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." Now, he wasn't talking about sin. Remember, mere sinlessness.

A man came into my office one time to sell a book on how to be sinless, and he stopped at the first desk, and this dear man of God said, "Say, that's what I've been wanting for a long time, being sinless." "Does this book tell me how?" He said, "Yes, sir." "Have you obtained that?" He said, "Yes, sir. I haven't sinned for many years." Mr. Baker said, "If that happened to me, I'd be proud of it." He said, "I am." Pride's the worst sin in the book. The very first thing that God says he hates.

"Walk before me and be perfect." Dr. Ironside, I knew for 40 years. He feels that. Never once did I see him for one day walking anywhere else but with God.

He never took excursions into the world. Not in the 40 years I knew him. My father-in-law, who lived with me for 12 years, walked before God and was perfect.

Never once did he get off into anything of any kind. His whole heart was for God all day long and all the time. You can be that.

Some folks walk with God on Sunday. Some are full of the things of God on Monday. And then take an excursion on holidays on Fourth of July.

Remember, brother, you can be perfect in walking with God all the time. And he wants us to do it. Then Job.

Job 1, verse 8. God said he's perfect. Evidently he's talking about business affairs, as the context would indicate that. And you can be perfect in business.

Absolutely honest. Absolutely right. Absolutely kind to those that work with you and work for you.

Always giving the customer the benefit of the doubt. I was in the laundry business one time. I had six businesses, I learned, so my wife would never have to stand on the street corner with a tin cup.

And one of them was a laundry business. I had a sign made, Cry your duds in our suds, and I put it all over town. I've got lots of business.

Many a woman said, I lost a pair of stockings. I gave her the dollar and a half. I knew they cost her about thirty-five, but if she said they cost a dollar and a half, I gave it to her.

If we lost her shirt, which she said cost her six dollars and eighty-nine cents, I gave her six eighty-nine. I didn't fuss with her about it. The result is, I got all the business in town.

I chased my competitor out of business by being honest. You can be that. Absolutely perfect in business.

And then there's perfect in forgiveness. Matthew 5, verse 48. Forgiving your enemies.

Be ye perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect. He's talking about something you can do. Forgive everybody, forgive everybody, and jump at the chance.

Have you noticed the stewardship in the Bible is never connected with money? Don't be shocked now, you preachers. I know you have stewardship departments, but unfortunately, you miss the very thing he's talking about. We read in 1 Corinthians 4, verse 1, we are stewards of the mysteries of God.

Stewards of the mysteries of God. You get something from your Bible, beloved, you owe it to everybody you can find to give out that message that you got from your Bible. Some new truth, some new vision of Christ, some new understanding of God, you owe that to pass it on to others.

You're a steward of that. Then in 1 Peter, we are stewards of the manifold grace of God. There are nine graces mentioned in the Fifth of Galatians.

And you're stewards of those, beloved, give them out to everybody. Forgive everybody you can, love everybody you can, be patient with everybody you can, spend all those graces on others. We are stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Well, that's what you get in Matthew 5, verse 48. Matthew 19, verse 21. It's devotion.

In devotion to our lovely Lord, we should be, always loving Him, always worshiping Him, always adoring Him. And there's no reason why we shouldn't. He's worthy of it, isn't He? The trouble is, we let other things... By the way, you know what makes you cross when you get crossed? You didn't get your own way.

That's right. Every time you get crossed, because somebody didn't do what you want them to, or say what you want them to say, or walk the way you want them to walk, or sit the way you want them to sit, or do what you want them to do, and they don't do what you want, so you get crossed. God bless you.

It's wonderful to be nothing. Sing that song, to be nothing, nothing, and then nobody ever hurts your feelings. John 17, 23.

We are to be perfect in divine union. Father, that they may be one, perfect in one. John 17, 23.

Perfect in your union with the Lord. He brings that about. The Holy Spirit brings that about, and makes us part of Him.

So whenever you meet a Christian of that kind, you know right away that person belongs to the Lord. There's a union there that is marvelous and wonderful. United to Christ, with the Holy Spirit filling your heart and life and soul, all the time, all the time.

You know, a husband and wife... I've been to homes where the husband would say it's green, and she said it wasn't either, it was blue. And she said it was quarter after twelve, he said it wasn't any time, it was half past twelve. Did you ever hear anything like that? The baloney.

Everybody knows you're not in union with the Lord. What a joy it is to have, being perfect in union with Him. So if you walk with Him, you're like the branch, you know, in the tree.

It's one with the tree. It bears the kind of fruit. In the Old Testament, six times Christ is called the branch.

And each time it's for a different reason. And in the New Testament, we are called the branches of the vine. And for all those six reasons, you look it up, you'll be shouting somebody.

Then 2 Corinthians 13, 11. In kindness. Perfect in kindness.

And you can be that. Kind to everybody. If somebody talks against you, invite them home for chicken dinner.

Fill them up with pumpkin pie, whipped cream on it, and then see what he's got against me. That's right. That's the way you get rid of your enemies.

You can be kind to everybody. In my home, when two of my children fussed, I made them kiss each other. They'd rather drink lye.

Class! The Lord wants us to be perfect in that. I've known two, three people in my life who are exactly like that. Never carried a grudge against anybody.

My sweet wife was one of them. Never did she carry... One day I said to her, why don't you carry a grudge against anybody, sweetheart? She said, I can't bother with it. It's too much trouble.

If they're coming in the church ahead of you, go around the block hoping she'll get in before you get there. I don't want to waste my time going around the block. Some of you are looking so sad at me and kind of mad at me.

You don't want to be like that. It's a lovely thing. The hunger and thirst after having your own way.

What does the verse say? After what? Righteousness. Being right with your fellow men, right with God, that's the path of joy. Then you don't care who you meet.

And when you meet them, say, I'm so glad to see you. We had a neighbor when I was a boy named Webster. I don't mind telling you because she's gone to heaven or somewhere.

And so she always came into our house at five minutes before twelve every day. And my mother would see her coming through the lace curtain. She'd look out and see her coming.

There comes the old hag. She knows I had to keep her for dinner. Then she'd go out the door and say, oh, I'm so glad to see you, Ms. Webster.

Come in. You know, soft soap is mostly a lie. Then Ephesians 4, 13.

We can be perfect in maturity. When I bring a baby into the world, and I brought lots of them, I brought one baby into the world that was part animal. Think of it.

Had a dear face and bare feet. And I always look over the baby to see whether it's perfect or not. I remember bringing one baby into the world and the mother, the first thing the mother said when it was born is, is it perfect, Dr. Wilson? Well, I saw it wasn't, but I didn't say so to her.

I said, I'll tell you later. I've got to take it out. It was a home delivery.

I'll take her out in the kitchen, fix it up, and then I'll bring it back to you. And when I took it out in the kitchen, I took off the extra finger. It had an extra finger on one side of the hand.

And I took it off and bandaged it up. And when I brought it in, she saw that bandage. She just burst into tears.

She said, Dr. Wilson, I've had three other babies and they all had an extra finger. Isn't that strange? You can't explain that. Ask some evolutionist, he'll tell you.

The baby wasn't perfect. But most of them have been perfect. Now, they don't have as much of it as you do, but they had everything you have.

Absolutely perfect. All the glands, all the muscles, all the toenails, and all the fingers, and all the ears, and everything. It's a perfect baby, but not as much of it.

The Lord wants us to be, in Ephesians 4, 13, perfect in maturity. Growing to be a perfect human being with all the parts. Not blind, not crippled.

A Christian that's a Christian all over. Not going to cede on anything. Don't go to cede on anything.

Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or the coming of the Lord, or anything else. Don't go to cede. Don't get lopsided on any truth.

Hold all the things of God in equal balance. That's what he's talking about. And you can be perfect in that.

You see, everything he's talking about, being perfect in, is something we can do. Then Colossians 1, 28, no, Philippians 3, 15. Perfect in purpose of heart.

Having one purpose, to grow in grace. I wonder how many of us would like, really, to put our souls and hearts into being as near like Christ as possible. You could study your Bible if you want to.

But we don't. You could control that temper if you want to. Let the other fellow have his own way.

We have to be willing to be defeated. You'll never be a happy person unless you're willing to be defeated. Of course, you're willing to.

If somebody spits on you, turn around and say, do it again. Somebody talks against you, you can say, say, brother. If you knew the truth about me, you can say worse things than you did say.

Philippians 3, 15. Being perfect in the purpose of heart. Paul's telling them about it in that passage.

I haven't time to read these passages to you because I only have just a few minutes. Perfect in purpose of heart. You get up in the morning intending to get somewhere for God that day.

You're going to study some subject. Personally, I adopted the plan when I was 17 years old of always keeping three days work ahead of me. I've kept that up ever since.

Three days work. There's something I want to learn today and I know what it is and so I dig into my books and find out what it is. Or go and see some Christian that knows.

Learn something every day. Learn how to do something different every day. For God.

If you're going to play the piano, learn how to play it. Don't fool around with it and miss all the black notes. Take your songbook, beloved, and start in at the first song and learn to play it until you can play it without any mistakes.

I was in a church one time in the lower section to address the young people's meeting. The girl that was leading the music gave out a hymn, one of the old hymns written in 4-4 time. The girl with the piano played in 3-4 time.

That's all she ever learned. Tum-tum-tum-tum-tum-tum. That's all she knew.

So she played it in 3-4 time and we tried to sing it in 4-4 time and it was one mess. And so the girl leading, she said, I don't know what's wrong. I thought you all knew that song.

Don't you all know that song? Everyone knows that song, hand up. All hands went up. Well, let's try the second stanza.

Well, that's just too much for me. So I went over to the piano where this beautiful girl was playing and I said to her as sweetly as an old bald-headed man could, I said, Sister, you're playing the piece in 3-4 time and it's written in 4-4 time and if you'll play it in 4-4 time, it'll go nicely. And she tossed her pretty curls at me turned her pretty nose up at me and said, play it yourself.

So I did. I said, I'll play it. Now that girl didn't want to be perfect.

Perfect and willing to make a mess of the thing. I didn't say, thank you, Doctor. I knew there was something wrong and I see what it is.

The Lord wants us to be absolutely like that. And you can be that. All you have to do is learn how.

My father-in-law wanted to be a preacher and he was a good preacher but he got a paralysis on one side of his face and he heard him speaking. Do you know what he did? For five years that dear man went down in his cellar and preached to the stones until he could control his face and control his voice so he could speak well. I have a brother and every time he stood up his mind sat down.

And he wanted to teach class and he wanted to preach and my brother went down on the bank of the Mississippi River at St. Louis and talked every Sunday to the fellows that lived in these shanties and shacks along the riverside trying to, he learned how to stand up and talk and he became a good messenger of God. He went at it. You know, you can't get anywhere sitting around doing nothing.

Paganini didn't learn to play the violin by playing chess and checkers and baseball and fooling around. Paderewski learned how to play the piano before he practiced at it and practiced at it. None of us who preached ever had that when we were born.

We have to learn how. I wonder if you really put your soul to anything for God. I would urge you to, beloved.

Well, that's the next thing. Colossians 128 is being perfect in knowledge. Colossians 128.

Perfect in knowledge. Know what your Bible says so you can understand the difference between justification and forgiveness. Or the five kinds of forgiveness.

Learn the difference between our Lord's first coming, second coming, third coming. What hell is like. I saw, I was in Keswick in England and a friend took my wife and I around to show us the beautiful little town.

We went by a church that had a, it was covered with ivy and it had a place cut out in the ivy for the announcement board. On the announcement board it said, Subject for today's message, what is hell like? Underneath it said, Here are our male quartet. Perfect in knowledge.

So you know what you read and why you read it. Now you can't get that just reading a chapter every morning. A man, a preacher in Kansas City called me up and said, Will you come out and give us two weeks meetings on the book of Revelation? I read through that book and I can't understand it.

I said, Al, I read through a cookbook once and I didn't understand that either. You learn things by study. I didn't learn how to take out an appendix by reading in the book.

I studied how to do it and I watched Dr. Frick do it and Dr. Claude Hunt do it and Dr. Murphy. I learned how to do it. You have to study, beloved, to know something.

I hope you will. Don't be an ignoramus. One time our covered washerwoman, a fine godly woman, was sitting in the kitchen eating supper and I said to her, Jack, if people knew the truth about you and me wouldn't they think we were two big ignoramuses? And she looked up at me in such a quizzical way and said, Dr. Walter, you might be one of them.

I don't think I've had enough education to be one of them. Colossians 4.12 Perfect in comforting others. Oh, how sweet that is.

Perfect in comforting others. I say to you, beloved, that's one of the sweetest ministries we can have. Drying the tears and not causing any.

Healing the broken hearts and not breaking any. There's nothing so sweet in the world. We read in Proverbs, a brother is born for adversity.

If you have some sorrow and trouble, God has a brother for you, some sister or brother that can be just what you want in that hour of sorrow and trouble. I was preaching in the church one time. I had quite a lot of trouble.

I had been trying to save the life of a man that was in the lake. And I threw my back out of joint doing it. And I was standing, leaning over the pulpit preaching, and I turned around to the pastor and I said, we must be prepared for any eventuality.

We don't know what's going to happen. We must be prepared for it. I couldn't stand up straight.

I had such pain in my back. I went home with him to lunch. And as we went in the door, the telephone rang.

And there was a man on the phone saying, your sister was down this morning at quarter after eleven. That's exactly the moment I said to the preacher, we must be prepared for any eventuality. He didn't know he was going to lose that sister that morning.

On two, he went to the funeral some miles away. When he came back, Tuesday, just as he came back, his leading deacon in his church fell dead of a heart attack. That was the second blow.

And Friday, his wife was driving downtown and a man came through a red light in a truck and hit his car and sent his wife to the hospital and the car to the junkyard. Three things in one week. I said to him, Jack, here's a good shoulder for you.

A brother's born for adversity and I'm the brother for your adversity. Weep it out. And we had a lovely sweet time of fellowship together.

Beloved, you can be perfect in that. And then 2 Timothy 3, 17. Perfect in preparation.

Preparing for things. I learned the necessity of that in the operating room. I have to go in the aggression room, scrub my hands for 10 minutes, see that all the dirt's gone.

Some people's fingernails are in mourning all the time. I had to clean them up. Put on a garment out of the sterilizer, put on rubber gloves, cover my face, cover my head.

It takes about 25 minutes to prepare for an operation for the surgeon. We prepare for weddings. I had a wedding one time and we were all ready.

I was staying where I should be and the four bridesmaids had come in. The four fellows had come in. We were all there and the girl was playing whatever it is they play.

No bride! And she played it frontwards and backwards and upside down. No bride! And I said to my wife, sweetheart, go and see if you can find the bride because she's in a home. You know what she found? This woman was sitting on the edge of the bed up in the aggression room and she had a run in her stock.

And she was trying to mend that run. Nobody would know she had a run in her. Her dress went down to the floor.

Nobody would know she had stockings on. And she was just trembling, trying to mend that stocking. She wasn't ready for the wedding.

So my wife mended for it. We get ready for everything else except God's service and to know God, walk with God. We can be ready in preparation, if you will.

You can be perfect in that. Do you know when Livingston decided to go to Africa as a missionary, he studied 17 subjects? He studied botany, so he'd know what was poisonous, what wasn't. He studied astronomy, so he'd know where he was.

He studied bridge building, so he'd know how to get across a river. He studied navigation, so he'd know how to build a boat and go across the lake. He studied medicine.

He studied dentistry. 17 subjects that dear boy studied before he went to Africa. Have you done any preparing for anything in the things of God? Oh, I urge you to.

I want to tell you, the nearer you get to the end of the journey, like I am, I'm not going to be here very long, I thank God, over and over again, for the men and women that helped me to prepare for something. I love them. When my grandmother raised me after my mother died, and my uncle was a music teacher, and he made me practice four hours a day.

Woo! And the kids outside, come on out Walter, we need you to play first base. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But I want to tell you something.

I've thanked God over and over again. She made me do it. Because I've been in many churches where they had no musicians.

I had to sit down and play my own music. And I'll tell you a secret, I learned to play in Spanish. I was having a missionary conference in the heart of Cuba before Castro came on the scene, and there was nobody to play.

And the place was crowded with people. And the leader said, who will play the piano? In Spanish of course. And nobody said, and my interpreter said, Dr. Wilson will play.

So he showed me the book. And I saw the tune, I knew all these things by heart. I handed him back the book and went over and played it in Spanish.

I had the crowd in my hand right away. Did you ever try to play in Spanish? It's wonderful. Prepare to do something.

Learn how to do something and do it well. And then Hebrews 13, 21 is perfect in purpose of heart. Deciding who you're going to love more than all the world.

That lovely Lord. My son, give me thy heart. You've read that, haven't you? Or do you really love him? You can be perfect in that.

Did you tell him this morning you loved him? My Jesus, I love thee. I know thy heart and mine. For he is so precious to me.

Is he? You can be perfect in that. Absolutely in love with Christ. I've known lots of folks like that.

Almost every town I go to I find somebody like that. Just love that Savior and live for him and would die for him. You can be perfect in that if you want to.

And then James 1, 4 Perfect in patience. Oh, say, would you like that? I was testing on that once in Milwaukee. I was sitting in the front seat waiting, two of us were speaking and my associate, he was speaking and I was sitting there listening to him and right behind me was a man about 55 or 60 chewing gum with no teeth.

He was gumming it. Oh, boy. It was terrible.

And I thought, I'm going to test myself and see if I have any patience. I stood there for 12 or 15 minutes and then I got up and moved to the other part of the church. Oh, it was awful.

Would you like to be perfect in patience? It's awful, it's agonizing. But we may be. James 1, 4 Then James 3 and 2 is perfect in controlling our temper together with James 1, 19 and 20.

Listen to this. Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. And that verse cured me of my temper.

I'm not boasting, you know I'm telling you something that God did which is a miracle because I had plenty. And one day sitting at the telephone when a woman was cursing me out, and I mean cursing me, she didn't like what I was doing and it wasn't my fault but she was suffering from something. And the Holy Spirit brought that verse before me.

The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. And then she cursed me some more and the Lord would say to me, remember the order, the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Now that morning I had told my wife if that woman calls me up this morning I'm going to tell her something she will not forget in a hurry.

And my sweetheart was so cruel she put her arm around me and said remember Walter you're a Christian. I didn't want her to say that. I wanted to tell that woman what I thought of her.

And when she called me that verse just before me in great big red flaming letters the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. So I said yes, yes, yes. Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

S-S-S for the blood. Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. You can be perfect in that.

Then in 1 Peter 5, 10 perfect in suffering. Oh I see that as a doctor. I have friends in Kansas City I never say how are you they'll tell me for three hours.

If they have a headache and they tell me about that awful headache I say you ought to be proud of it. You have to have something in there to ache. Empty headed people don't have headaches.

Perfect in suffering. My precious secretary is dying now. She was here last year with me came and got my wife and I into this home.

She's dying of leukemia. Three weeks ago she was stricken down with it. And she is a model to everybody in the hospital.

Such sweet confidence in God. She tells them Lord Jesus bought me with his precious blood this body belongs to him. He wants me to have leukemia it's alright.

He wants to take me home this way it's alright. I'm going to see him face to face soon. She's a model of absolute faith and sweet trust.

You can be that. And then in Psalm 37, 37 perfect in death. Dying with Christ.

There's Psalm 37, 37. Dying with your heart and soul resting in the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

The thing that breaks our hearts is precious to him. Because the sorrowing days are over. The suffering days are over.

The training days are over. Walking by faith is over and we get to see him face to face. The whipping days are too.

They're over. He doesn't have to train us anymore. Spank us anymore.

Take us home to be with him. And then isn't it wonderful he presents you and me to God the Father absolutely perfect. What glory brings to him when he takes those who sin has wrecked and presents them to the Father absolutely perfect.

Isn't that wonderful? He's going to do that someday. Let me urge you, beloved, get acquainted with the Holy Spirit personally. Get to know him individually, personally.

Get that little message over there at the bookstore on the Holy Spirit in you. If it does to you what that message did to me, you will thank God you ever spent a dime. He's the one that makes us what the Lord wants us to be.

He's the one that transforms the life. He's the one that fills all the craving of your heart to know Jesus Christ. He reveals the Savior to your soul.

Let us pray. We look to thee with thanksgiving, our Lord, because we're thine. We thank the Holy Spirit for saving thy word for us through the centuries.

From the ignorance and carelessness of its friends and from the hatred of its enemies until we have these precious truths now. Make thy word effective in all our hearts.

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