



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study: **CHRIST'S COMMAND FOR CHRISTIANS TO BE PERFECT**
Matthew 5:48

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This command comes as the conclusion of the preceding verses. Since God is loving and kind, good and benevolent, we who are His children should be as loving and kind, giving and helpful as our heavenly Father. God's children are to resemble their Father. ***“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”***

In fact, this is the conclusion of the whole chapter. Be ye therefore righteous, merciful, pure in heart, peace-loving, truthful and loving as children of God. Indeed, it is the goal of the rest of the sermon on the mount. ***“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*** ***“Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are;”*** ***“be not ye therefore like unto them”*** (Matthew 6:5,8). Thou shalt be as thy Father in heaven (Matthew 18:33; John 17:22; Luke 6:35,36; Ephesians 4:32; 5:25; Colossians 3:13; 1 John 2:6; 3:3,7). In reality, it can be said that Matthew 5:48 is the purpose of creation, of redemption and even of divine revelation. This is the reason for Christ's sacrifice and atonement. It is the goal of Christ's mission on earth and the purpose of christian ministry: to ***“present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”*** (Colossians 1:28). ***“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”***

DIVINE PRECEPT AND PERCEPTION OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Matthew 5:48; Genesis 17:1; Leviticus 20:26; Deuteronomy 18:13,14; Job 1:1,8; 2:3; Luke 6:40; Luke 1:73-75; Psalm 37:37.

God used the word ***“perfect”***, calling on Abram, His friend to be perfect. Christ, our Lord and Saviour also commanded His followers to be perfect. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament command us to be holy and perfect (1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Peter 1:15-17). The Apostle Paul speaks of those who are ***“perfect”*** (Philippians 3:15-17).

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” God, Himself, our Creator and Redeemer, is the only pattern of the perfection which He demands of His children. The words are emphatic: we are to be like God whose nature is **love** and whose acts are acts of mercy, kindness and goodness. These words of Christ include both a command and a promise. What He commands, He also provides means to accomplish and fulfil.

As in God's infinite nature there is no sin, nothing but goodness and love, so in our finite nature there shall dwell no sin, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). When God, by His Spirit, lives in, fills and rules our hearts, totally influencing and controlling our hearts, thoughts and actions, neither Satan nor sin can have any part therein. God's power is able to do all things in us and for us.

DIVINE PROMISE AND PROVISION FOR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Matthew 5:48; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31:33,34; Hebrews 10:10-14; John 17:17-23; Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 13:20,21.

There is no doubt about the call to holiness, the call to sanctification, the call to christian perfection. It is on many pages of the Scriptures. The reason for it is in the nature of God. Holiness or christian perfection is not optional, it is imperative. Because it is imperative, it must be possible. He who wills the end must provide the means. If sanctification or christian perfection is His will and command, He must have made it possible; otherwise He would call us to an unequal and unfair task.

It is frankly admitted that the call and demand is beyond our natural ability. We cannot attain unto holiness or christian perfection in our own strength. God provides and gives what we cannot gain by self-effort. We obtain and keep the experience by grace through faith, not of merit by works. God's holiness and perfect love is the pattern and standard of His demand. God's promises are as great and broad as His commandments. He has not commanded more than He has promised. His mighty power is always made available to fulfil His promise. With faith in God Who is always faithful, we are sure of divine support and enablement to be as holy and perfect as He desires us to be.

DISCIPLES' PURSUIT AND PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Matthew 5:48; Hebrews 6:1; Psalm 101:2-7; Romans 12:1,2;2 Corinthians 7:1;1 Thessalonians 5:22-24; James 1:6-8; 1 John 5:14,15; Philippians 3:14-17; 2 Peter 3:11-14.

God's command and promise must stir up desire and passion in the true child of God. Looking at the great demand and knowing that we are helpless in ourselves to fulfil God's will of holiness and christian perfection, we seek His face in prayer and supplication. In our pursuit and prayer, we consecrate ourselves to God and commit ourselves to seeking His glory in all things and at all times. Our consecration includes denying and dethroning self, willingness to do and be whatever and wherever He wants us to do and to be. Our sincere pursuit of holiness and christian perfection will make us to constantly reject and give up whatever hinders or decreases holiness and christian perfection however pleasing to the flesh or appealing to human nature. Our prayer should be from the heart, praying with faith and fervency, as Jacob or Jonah, knowing we are praying for the greatest need on earth and for eternity. God always answers the prayer of faith. What we receive through consecration and prayer, we can only keep and grow in through consecration and prayer.

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