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God is Perfect

Often our tendency is to describe finite man and events as *perfect*. We speak of a perfect performance in various sporting activities or a perfect 10 in gymnastics, yet ultimate perfection is only possible with God. A common definition of something being perfect is “being complete of its kind and without defect or blemish.”⁴¹ Thus, God in His perfection is outside of change. He is unchanging. Creaturely perfection is comparative to creaturely people and events, but perfection as it exists in God is only definable by God. There is no other standard to which God can be compared other than Himself. “Nothing can be conceived to be more perfect than divine perfection.”⁴² His perfection exists objectively in His own essence. God is complete in Himself. He is all that God ought to be. He lacks nothing. He falls short in nothing. In God, His perfection speaks of His *wholeness* or *complete integrity* or *lack of any flaw*. Yet does the Bible support such thinking as it relates to God?

The perfection of God can be noted in John’s statements, “God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that **God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.** (1 John 1:5)

“Light and darkness are used in the Bible to contrast the difference between good and evil. Moral qualities and characteristics of all categories would be included in this vast spectrum.”⁴³ All that is God is light, and all that is not God falls in the non-light category until God makes it light. He is what makes light, light (John 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5).

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. ⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (1 John 1:4-9)

“While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” (John 9:5)

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (John 8:12)

All creaturely perfection is simply an imperfect reflection of His perfection. He is what causes or makes all darkness light and all imperfection perfect.

James addresses the notion of God not having any innate compulsion toward sin. There is nothing in God that moves Him to act wickedly from wrong motives.

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for **God cannot be tempted by evil**, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (James 1:13)

Because there is no darkness in God, He cannot be tempted by evil. His entire being is free from any evil inclination. Evil, imperfection, the lack of light are absent from God.

If God is perfect, what are the direct implications of this? If God is perfect, then nothing coming from Him can be defined as imperfect. God is perfect, and as such all His acts are perfect. There are four notable expressions of God’s perfection assisting the biblical reader in imaging this most excellent quality.

- **First**, His work is perfect (Deut. 32:1-4).

Listen to the song of Moses.

¹“Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth. ²Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb. ³For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴The Rock! **His work is perfect**, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. ⁵They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation. ⁶Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.” (Deut. 32:1-6)

The word *perfect* in Deuteronomy 32:4 means “without blemish, without spot.” It is the same word found in 2 Samuel 22:31 and Psalm 18:30. Similar to Moses in Deuteronomy 32, David breaks forth in powerful statements of thanksgiving to God for His manifold blessings and continued preservation from His enemies (2 Sam. 22:1). Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown give this insightful overview of this grand tribute:

This inspired ode was manifestly the effusion of a mind glowing with the highest fervor of piety and gratitude, and it is full of the noblest imagery that is to be found within the range even of sacred poetry. It is David's grand tribute of thanksgiving for deliverance from his numerous and powerful enemies, and establishing him in the power and glory of the kingdom.⁴⁴

Listen to the Song of David.

As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (2 Sam. 22:31)

As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (Ps. 18:30 [begin reading from 29 and on])

King David penned these words in gratitude for deliverance (2 Sam. 22:1).

And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. (2 Sam. 22:1)

The entire chapter is a grand doxology. He uses the word for blameless four times in his song.

I was also **upright** before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. (2 Sam. 22:24)

With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the **upright** man thou wilt shew thyself **upright**. (2 Sam. 22:26)

As for God, his way is **perfect**; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. (2 Sam. 22:31)

God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way **perfect**. (2 Sam. 22:23)

It is because of who He is that what He does is perfect. Genesis 1:31 testifies to the perfection of God when all He created was assessed as “very good.” In Deuteronomy 32 Moses breaks forth in worship and uses poetic song as the vehicle of proclamation. Listen carefully to the first three verses that set the stage for verse 4.

¹ Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. ² Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as the droplets on the fresh grass and as the showers on the herb. ³ **For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God!** ⁴ The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He (Deut. 32:1-4)

Proclaiming the perfection of God declares His greatness. There is no deficiency in the work of God. His work is perfect because God is perfect. **Perfection begets perfect works.** It is impossible for it to be otherwise.

When we praise God, we are to praise Him for His perfection. The paths of God, His ways, are perfect. This is a strong comfort when we find ourselves confused and hurting in the paths we might presently be traveling. His way is perfect because God is perfect. **Perfection begets perfect ways.**

It should become apparent that there is synonymous parallelism taking place. The various passages speak of His way, His work, His word, and they are often used interchangeably. The truth of the matter is they probably are capable of being interchanged in the references noted. Though this is probably true, it is helpful to note

how all inclusive is the perfection of God. The writer seeks to capture the vast expanse of God’s perfection by using various words, even if they overlap in meaning.

- **Second**, His wisdom is perfect (Job 37:16).

Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, **the wonders of one perfect in knowledge?** (Job 37:16 [vv. 14-20])

God is not lacking in knowledge. There is nothing incomplete in what God knows. In Job 37, Elihu lifts up the wonderful power of God in the celestial bodies. There is nothing in the created order that God does not know. God knows everything about you and your present circumstance. God is fully and completely aware of who you are, where you are at, and what you are currently feeling and experiencing. His wisdom is perfect because God is perfect. **Perfection begets perfect wisdom.**

- **Third**, His Word is perfect (Ps. 19:7).

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. (Ps. 19:7 [vv. 7-11])

It is this perfect, unblemished Word that restores the soul, makes wise the simple (v. 7), rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes (v. 8), warns the servant (v. 11), and protects the tempted (v. 13). There is no deficiency in who God is or in what He has spoken. His Word is the means through which the Holy Spirit empowers His people. It is the written Word through which the living Word reveals Himself to His people. His Word is perfect because God is perfect. **Perfection begets a perfect Word.**

- **Fourth**, His will is perfect (Rom. 12:1, 2).

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** (Rom. 12:1, 2)

The will of God is His all-encompassing plan for everything, everywhere, at all times. It is the *Story* He alone has written. This will is a perfect will. Nothing has been overlooked by God in the outworking of His perfect will. There is no deficiency or neglect. It is a whole and healthy will. Think about this for just a minute and then meditate on it for days. Everything about your life and its surrounding circumstances are a part of His perfect will. We always want something we currently do not possess, yet what we have is what God wants for us, and what He wants for us is a part of His perfect will because God is perfect. His will is perfect. **Perfection begets a perfect will.**

To set the context for the application of perfection, it is necessary to note several passages of Scripture (Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Eph. 1:4; 4:13; 5:27; Phil. 3:15; 1 Thess. 5:23; James 1:4; 3:2; Jude 24; Rev. 14:5).

Therefore you are to **be perfect**, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt. 5:48)

Jesus said to him, “**If you wish to be complete**, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Matt. 19:21)

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that **we would be holy and blameless before Him**. (Eph. 1:4)

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to a mature man**, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:13)

that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, **having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing**; but that she would be holy and blameless. (Eph. 5:27)

¹⁵ Let us therefore, **as many as are perfect**, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; ¹⁶ however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. (Phil. 3:15, 16)

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and **may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1 Thess. 5:23, 24)

And let endurance have its perfect result, so that **you may be perfect and complete**, lacking in nothing. (James 1:4)

For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, **he is a perfect man**, able to bridle the whole body as well. (James 3:2)

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and **to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy**, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24, 25)

And no lie was found in their mouth; **they are blameless**. (Rev. 14:5)

In every one of these passages the believer is exhorted or assumed to be ultimately “perfected.” How can we be perfect? What does it mean for us to be perfect? **God's out-workings are perfect acts**. His out-workings are tools assisting us toward perfection. As we rest in His finished work and pray for the Spirit's enablement, we are obeying the Lord and thus following His will and way. In so doing, we take upon ourselves the Lord Jesus and thus reflect His perfection in our earthen vessels. **God's perfection is man's ideal**. Our complete sufficiency and satisfaction are to be found in God alone.

To conclude that Jesus is not enough is to directly or indirectly assault His perfection. There are no deficiencies in Him, thus He must be enough. “Hence our faith has a firm foundation because it leans on God, the possessor and author of all perfection, blessedness and glory.”⁴⁵ Whatever deficiencies appear to exist are only due to our inability to process the enormity of who He is. If our minds could bend around the perfection of God, we would consistently conclude that **Jesus is enough in this life and in the life to come.**

It is for this reason we must regularly ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our heart so we might see who Christ is, what He has done, and who we are in Him (Eph. 1:18, 19).

¹⁸ **I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might. (Eph. 1:18, 19)