

Heart and Home Harmony

Aiming for hearts, homes, and lives in harmony with:
God and His Church, and the rest of His creation through the Holy Spirit.

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CAN WE BE PERFECT?

BY LUKE MARTIN

Jesus said, **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.** Matthew 5:48.

Paul said he wanted to present every man perfect in Jesus Christ, Col. 1:28.

What is meant by the thought “be perfect even as God is perfect”? Are we to be like God? How is this humanly possible? Don’t we all have faults?

Does Jesus ask us to be something we can’t be? God said that Job (a man like the rest of us) was perfect. (Job 1:1&8; 2:3) So, we know that it is possible. For if God says someone is perfect that person surely is perfect.

The Old Testament Hebrew word translated “perfect” in Job means the same as the New Testament Greek word translated “perfect” in Matthew. It means: complete, totality. It is one who does the whole will of God, with an undivided heart in obedience to God.

So many who say they are Christian, do not believe that it is possible to live a life where one, by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, overcomes the sin that so easily ensnares

us. Some say we can overcome some sins but not all sins. Romans 7:5-24 is the experience these folks have. When we walk after the sins of the flesh this will be true; however, if one considers the context of Romans chapter 7, he will realize that Paul did not expect that the Christian would remain in a state of doing that which he would not do. Going to the end of the chapter and into Romans 8 we see that if a man has the Spirit of God dwelling in him, that the Spirit of God will quicken his mortal body so that he does not need to live after the flesh, but can mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body and live the abundant life Jesus promised.

It is a good idea to read the whole message to properly understand what the writer is communicating. To understand the book of Romans you ought to read the whole book. While you are reading chapter 7, remember what you read in chapter 6, that we should not live in sin if indeed we are in the grace of God. So now, we come to an important point. What is meant by the grace of God?

The greatest manifestation of the grace of God is the fact that God gave his son Jesus to redeem us to

himself, to give us his Spirit and Life. It isn't the grace of God when we say we will do our best and let Christ do the rest. It isn't the grace of God when we try to crucify ourselves or die daily because our fleshly desires to sin are showing up every day. It doesn't help to try harder to kill our desires and be good.

We need to recognize that we have been crucified with Christ. Romans 6:11 tells us that we should reckon ourselves dead to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. This means that through Christ we reign over our desires instead of trying to kill them. God gave us our desires for a good purpose and if we are alive with Christ, our desires become a blessing instead of a curse. We must believe that Jesus died to take away the curse of sin, by dying to pay the ransom for our sins, and, by His Spirit, give us victory over sin. **For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.** Romans 6:14

If any man sin, remember we have an advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous. He whom Jesus sets free is free indeed. If you are trying harder to do right to gain favor with God, think about Abraham. Was, he justified by works? What does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3) In verse 8 we find God saying, **Blessed is the man to whom the lord will not impute sin.**

Faith (believing) in God is a

must. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Without faith in God (who we can't see) it is impossible to please God, it is impossible to be perfect, or to have a life of the Spirit.

To have victory over our fleshly desires we must see God by the eye of faith; we must believe that Jesus died to set us free, yes free indeed. If we expect to overcome the sins and shortcomings we experience, we must rejoice and be full of joy unspeakable, because of our thankfulness that God, through Jesus' death on the cross, has set us free. **For the joy of the LORD is your strength.** Nehemiah 8:10

The book of Job (42:10) tells us that when Job prayed for his miserable friends, God turned his captivity (his suffering and troubles) and blessed Job's latter end more than his beginning. The epistle of John tells us that if a man doesn't love his brother (fellowman) but says he loves God that he is a liar and abides in death without eternal life. Jesus taught that if a person does not keep (obey) His teachings, he does not love God and he will

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not make his abode with such an individual. (John 15) So, if you don't believe in Jesus and obey him; if you don't love God, (the evidence being of your hatred for a fellow-man,) then surely I can understand why you haven't experienced or believed that a human can be perfect before God.

God gives his Spirit to those who obey him. All others have no promise of having his Spirit and or of having him abiding in them. "They are without God," even though their lips might profess to know Him.

1 John 5: 1-5 Whosoever be-

lieveth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this, we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? ♥



The Six Phases of a Project

Phase one:
ENTHUSIASM

Phase two:
DISILLUSIONMENT

Phase three:
PANIC

Phase four:
THE SEARCH FOR THE GUILTY

Phase five:
PUNISHMENT OF THE INNOCENT

Phase six:
**PRAISE AND HONOR FOR
THE NONPARTICIPANTS**

YES, THANK YOU!

BY RACHEL MARTIN

The Bible says, **God loves a cheerful giver.** (2 Corinthians 9:7) Jesus said **it is more blessed to give than to receive.** (Acts 20:35.) It is important that we learn the grace of giving. But we cannot be a giver unless there is someone to receive. So, it is also important that we learn the grace of receiving.

Learn the grace of receiving? Don't we all like to receive—in fact, don't we tend to be too greedy and selfish? Yes, but we also tend to be proud and independent. We would rather be a giver than be needy.

But we are needy—whether or not we admit it.

For who makes you to differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability nor shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

We need to realize that God gave us everything we have.

When He created us and everything else, He saw that it was very good. But mankind has disobeyed Him and, as a result, brought death and much trouble in this world. He loves us and wants to bring us back to His goodness. Since we are com-

pletely helpless to pay for our sins, He sent His Son, who died to pay for our sin and rose again so we too can live. We can have this life by receiving Christ into our hearts. It is the greatest gift ever given—forgiveness for our sins, plus His Spirit to live in our hearts. Jesus said, **I have come so that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.** (John 10:10) **The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.** (Galatians 5:22-23)

Please, believe what the Bible says. Don't be too proud to accept this marvelous gift. We need His help.

Jesus wants to give us living water. (John 4:10) In nature, water that continually flows will support life and stay fresh. Water with no inlet and outlet gets stagnant. That is how it is with the blessings of life in Christ. We must share Him or the blessings will stagnate and die. As we pass them on, God's rewards keep coming. **Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.** (John 4:14) **He who believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living wa-**

ter." (John 7:38)

If we only seek after temporal things, we will remain too poor to give anything of lasting value to another. **Therefore be careful how you hear. For whoever has, to him shall be given; and whoever has not, from him shall be taken even that which he seems to have.** (Luke 8:18)

Many times God's blessings come to us through people. What happens if we are too proud to receive them?

When we were children, most likely we were taught to say, "Thank you," when someone gave us a gift. Now that we are older, are we gracious receivers? What is our response? "No thanks, I'm fine." Or do we complain about the gift? "The color is wrong." "It's not what I want." "It was said in the wrong tone." "The time was wrong." "The way was wrong." "It wasn't enough."

Do we humbly say, "Thanks for the compliment. I'm thankful to God for the gifts He gives me." or do we belittle ourselves?

If we feel incompetent or inferior because someone wants to give us help or advice, or other gifts and services, we should check our hearts. It is pride that makes us want to appear better than others. It takes humility to receive help, advice, correction, rebuke, and criticism. If we constructively use what people give us, we will be richer.

Of course, not everything that people offer to us can be used constructively. Sometimes we must respectfully but firmly say, "No, thank

you."

God has always been the perfect giver. We have not always been. We haven't always submitted enough to God to receive the humility, the love, the grace, the instruction, the knowledge, and the wisdom to give good gifts. Even when we have good intentions, what we give sometimes proves to be harmful. We must be as merciful toward others as we want them to be toward us.

When we receive something nasty, we should check to see if there is any good or truth in it that might benefit us. If it is indeed harmful, let us realize that the giver is lean in his soul and is giving what he has. If his intentions were good, appreciate his efforts. Everywhere he did succeed in loving, receive it and be sure to thank him.

If we are ungrateful and do not receive the gifts of love from God and others, we will tend to be complainers that demand more and hang onto the failures of others. The bitterness inside will be all we have to pass on. We must let go of gripes and everything else that is useless. Then we are free to receive what God sends.

It is of utmost importance that we learn to be thankful receivers. If we aren't, we will never be one of those blessed, cheerful givers.

Know that Jehovah, He is God. He has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise; be thankful to Him, and bless His name. (Psalms 100:3-4) ♥

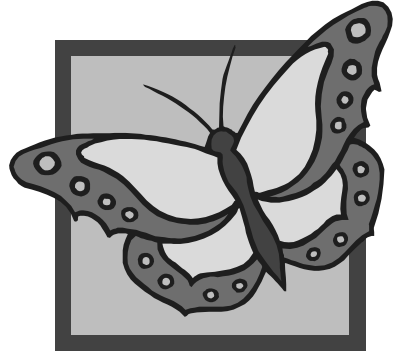
Who are you? Who am I? Probably all of us ask those questions, sometime or other, in our lives. We may think we know the answer.

The truth is we are God's creation—very good, no mistakes. But our beauty has been marred by sin. So, we blindly stumble in the dark, searching for the peace, the beauty, and the order that we innately know should be ours. We have each been placed in different places. Our search has led us to different places. But fundamentally, our search is the same—until we find it forever in Christ.

Whoever you are, take a moment, and listen to the heartbeat of this poet.

Do I really know who you are? Do I really know who and what I am? —Ed.

Who Are You?
Who Am I?



How can you judge me?
What does it feel like to pin a label on someone's identity?
What's it like to be filled with "I'm holier than thee?"
Tell me please, I'm stumbling in my fog, words do hurt
Often worse than any physical blow,
The pain stays and stings and won't go
Have you ever walked a mile in those shoes?
Just because someone's sunk to the lowest they can be
Doesn't mean they haven't anymore to give, can't you see?
Have you ever been hungry, afraid and alone
Till the hunger eats away at your bones...
Ever been cold, and afraid,
slowly losing all hope that someone will aid,
Letting the silent darkness close over you, beginning to fade....
Have you ever grieved, to the point of despair,
Despair that eats at you
Till only a shadow's left there?
If you have, than I'm sure you can see,
no one, no one, can judge another till he's
Walked in his shoes, his whole life through,

Been wronged his wrongs, fought his fights,
Felt his joys, his peace, his grief, his freedom, his despair
You can't judge another person till you've lived his life.
Which of course you can't, my point exactly.
If you can't live his life,
you've no business to say how well he's lived it.
How can one person judge and condemn another?
Who are you, perfect and blemish free
To judge another, and place anyone in a lower degree?
I believe a person is who they prove themselves to be
But first, they must be given a chance, you agree?
How can you say, he's evil, wicked, someone you don't even know?
So what if there's dirt on his face or a ring in his nose
So what if he's homeless or raggedly clothed
Is it possible that he hides a heart of pure gold,
Beneath all the dirt and raggedy clothes?
If he swears and talks loud, swaggers, and makes threats
Perhaps he's trying to hide the beauty within
Who am I you ask, to be saying all this?
I am, my friend, just this, a person, a human with a heart and a soul,
I am just me, no better or worse,
but I tell you now I don't live life as a curse
I take it one day at a time, living for the present,
remembering the past, and dreaming the future
I stop to talk to whom ever talks to me, offer a smile,
A friendly word to anyone who looks as though they might need it
I have been pretty low in my life,
Gone where few, if any, venture to dare
I have slept on cold basement floors,
Listened to rats scuttle across the doors
Watched drug dealers haunt our front porch in the dark
Eaten meals and laughed with the homeless, talked with the lonely,
Seen houses blown up, gang fights in the streets,
Heard the wail of sirens pierce the air,
Many a time I've been on the run, cold, hungry, and afraid,
Seen men hauled to jail,
Women and children threatened and beaten,
I have learned many things in my few years. Experienced much,
The things that I have learned and seen and witnessed and feared.
Have taught me that life is precious,
Too short to spend in anger, pain, and doubt.
Only by changing within, can we change the out. ♥

Here in the North Country

Dear Readers,

Greetings from the North Country. We had a few good runs of maple sap so far this spring. The bedding plant greenhouse has tomato plants growing in it that are meant to plant in the other greenhouses a little later.

Besides all the usual spring work, we are busy getting ready for Dawn and Luke Rosenbarker's wedding, March 27. That is, if we aren't sick or coughing. Thankfully, those that got the flu are OK again or are better. I don't remember ever having flu in our family that lasted so long and with such high fevers.

Daniel's shot up to 106.3! Mendy quickly sponged him down! The groom-to-be is still recuperating. With the wedding one-week away, we hope the bride doesn't get it, or the rest of us.

We are looking forward to about 300 guests, with some family and friends staying for the week-end. We've been busy planning, preparing, and baking. Others are helping. We plan to keep things simple and thoroughly enjoy the occasion.

Luke is a neighbor. It will be nice that he and Dawn will be living nearby.

Blessings to all,
Luke and Rachel Martin

Cottage Cheese and Carrot Salad

1 cup orange or diluted lemon juice

1 cup pineapple juice

1 tablespoon plain gelatin

1 cup crushed pineapple, drained

¼ cup honey, (amount optional)

1 cup grated carrots

1 cup cottage cheese

½ cup chopped walnuts

Soak gelatin in ½ cup juice. Heat while stirring until melted. Stir in remaining ingredients and chill.

Variations: substitute other fruit juices, such as apple, pear, or syrup from canned fruit. Add 1 drop of lemon essential oil or some extract or plain lemon juice to taste, to total 2 cups fruit juice. Adjust sweetener to taste. Substi-

tute finely chopped pears or other fruit for pineapple. Use other nuts.

Strawberry Yogurt Cream

Dawn created this recipe and decided to make lots of it (about 20 gal.) for the wedding.

2-4 cups thick strawberry sauce

1 qt. yogurt

1 cup cream, whipped

1 teaspoon vanilla

0-½ cup honey, depending on how sweet the sauce is.

Make sauce by cooking sweetened strawberries and thickening with cornstarch or tapioca. Cool. Gently fold all ingredients together. Chill. Serve with fresh or partially thawed strawberries, if desired.