

Be Ye Perfect

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Be Ye Perfect

Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:50

At some instance in their life, the reader has undoubtedly heard the phrase, “No one is perfect,” in response to a mistake or to a sin. It appears as though the vast majority of people today, including the Christian world, have accepted the belief or the thought that no one can be perfect, and by looking at the standards of the world it is easy to see the reason why. Although there are many individuals who endeavor to master different skills, talents, or even behaviors, how many are able to do so without ever making a mistake? The idea of perfection seems to be almost impossible and yet Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, commanded the disciples, in the fifth chapter of Matthew, to be perfect even as God is perfect.

For centuries people have debated whether mankind can attain perfection while in this life, with many saying, “There has only been one perfect person on this earth, and that was Christ.” However, if it is truly impossible to be perfect, then why did Jesus command us to do so? We have read previously in **Chapter Four**, “For I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them... And thus we see that the commandments of God must be fulfilled. And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God, he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them.¹”

While many people have stated that only Jesus was perfect, the Scriptures actually tell a different story as both Noah and Job were described as being perfect [read Genesis 8:16 and Job 1:1] and King Asa and King Hezekiah were described as having a perfect heart [read 1 Kings 15:14 and 2 Kings 20:3]. Although the Scriptures defined these four men as perfect, it is important that we do not confuse their perfection with what Jesus accomplished while He abided in a tabernacle of clay, for He was innocent and without sin from birth. In Hebrews, chapter seven, we read that Jesus was a high priest “who is holy, harmless, undefiled, *separate* from sinners, and made ruler over the heavens; and not as those high priests who offered up sacrifice daily, first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for he needeth not offer sacrifice for his own sins, for he knew no sins; but for the sins of the people. And this he did once, when he offered up himself.²”

Unfortunately, it appears that the Church has often confused the term “perfect” with the term “innocent.” After Judas had betrayed Jesus, he attempted to return the thirty pieces of silver that he had received from the chief priests, saying, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,³”

¹ 1 Nephi 1:65 and 1 Nephi 5:58-59

² Hebrews 7:25-26

³ Matthew 27:4

referring of course to the Lord Jesus. According to the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, to be innocent means to be "free from guilt; not having done wrong or violated any law; not tainted with sin; pure; upright." In contrast, the word perfect means to be "finished; complete; consummate;⁴ not defective; having all that is *requisite* to its nature and kind; as a perfect statue; a perfect likeness; a perfect work; a perfect system," and as a verb, perfect is "to finish or complete so as to leave nothing wanting; to give to any thing all that is requisite to its nature and kind; as, to perfect a picture or statue."

The Scriptures testify that not only was Jesus pure and innocent from birth, but that He was also perfect because He sought the will of His Father and was obedient even unto death. While Jesus was innocent in order to fulfill the ends of the law and to be the Mediator of the new covenant, mankind has been commanded to be perfect so that the blood of Christ might purge us from all sin. It is only through following the example of Jesus that the children of men are able to be perfected by Him and in Him. Thus we know that the four men described in the Scriptures as being perfect, were only able to do so by exercising their faith in the Lord and by doing all that was required to enter into the Kingdom of God. Throughout this chapter, we will discuss whether it is truly possible for those who have entered into a covenant with God to be made perfect in this life and thereby become whole and clean without spot.

Be Perfect even as God is Perfect

In Matthew, chapter five, Jesus told the disciples, "Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, *even as your Father* who is in heaven is perfect.⁵" What does it mean to be perfect, and how can we, a group of sinners, become perfect even as God, the Almighty, is perfect? Webster defined perfection in part by stating that in order for someone to be perfect they must first do all that is requisite to its nature and kind. Moreover, the word "consummate," which was also included in the definition of perfection, is "to finish by completing what was intended." For example, in order for a baseball pitcher to have a complete game, they must pitch all nine innings, if they do not, then they did not accomplish everything requisite or intended to fulfill the definition of a complete game. In the Scriptures, we are required to live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God so that we might become His sons and daughters and inherit eternal life. Otherwise we cannot be made perfect according to the laws of the Celestial Kingdom, or in other words the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as Jesus Himself gave the children of men the complete example for us to follow.

It is imperative to understand that no man can become perfected in and of himself, but rather we can only be made perfect through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and through true repentance [For more on repentance please read **Chapter Nine**], which is ceasing to do evil, learning to do well, and enduring to the end. Jesus established the standard for perfection by saying "What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, *Even as I am.*⁶" While we often celebrate the birth, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of our Redeemer, we sadly seem to forget the reason that Jesus was sent, which was to teach all things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

⁴ Consummate means "to end; to finish by completing what was intended."

⁵ Matthew 5:50

⁶ 3 Nephi 13:5

Early in Christ's ministry, we read that when He departed from Capernaum "and went into a solitary place; and the people sought him, and came unto him, and desired him that he should not depart from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, *for therefore am I sent*. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee."⁷ By preaching the mysteries of the Kingdom, Jesus gave the disciples, as well as the Church today, the commandments that we must live by if we want to obtain eternal life with our Heavenly Father. The Lord told Adam in the beginning of the world, "I have given unto you another law and commandment; wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can *in no wise* inherit the kingdom of God. For *no unclean thing can dwell there*, or dwell in his presence."⁸ Without the teachings and example of the Kingdom of God that Christ gave, how would we know the way to be made clean, to be born into the Kingdom, and to endure to the end?

In the seventeenth chapter of John, Jesus prayed for the disciples while in the upper room, saying, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should *give eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."⁹ Please continue to read the Lord's prayer from John 17:6-8 and 13-26:

17:6 I have manifested **thy name** unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. **17:7** Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. **17:8** For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

17:13 And now come I to thee; and these things **I speak in the world**, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. **17:14** I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **17:15** I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. **17:16** They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. **17:18** As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. **17:19** And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; **17:21** That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. **17:22** And the glory [in other words light and truth as defined in DC 90:6a] which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; **17:23** I in them, and thou in me, that they may be

⁷ Luke 4:42-44

⁸ Genesis 6:59-60

⁹ John 17:1-4

made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. **17:24** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

17:25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known that thou hast sent me. **17:26** And I have **declared** unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Jesus finished His Father's work not only by giving the disciples the words of eternal life which God had given Him, but also through giving us the perfect example to follow so that we might know everything requisite to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. While talking with the Jews, the Master explained, "For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same *works* that I do, *bear witness of me*, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself who sent me, hath borne witness of me. And verily I testify unto you, that ye have *never heard* his voice at any time, *nor seen* his shape; for ye have not *his word* abiding in you; and him whom he hath sent, ye believe not. Search the Scriptures; for in them *ye think* ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life, lest ye should honor me."¹⁰

Jesus explained that the works which He accomplished, which were the will of God, testified that He was the Messiah, and that the Jews had neither heard the voice of the Father nor seen Him because they did not live by every word that proceeded forth from the mouth of God. Jesus told them that they would not find eternal life in the law of Moses, but rather in the Son of God who had paid the ransom for our sins. If the Pharisees and Sadducees would have believed in Him, then they would have seen and known God, then they would have known what was requisite for the Kingdom by Christ's example. Please read from John 10:24-30 and 37-38 and John 14:8-12:

10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. **10:25** Jesus answered them, ***I told you***, and ye believed not; **the works** that I do in my Father's name, ***they bear witness of me***. **10:26** But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. **10:27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and ***they follow me***; **10:28** And I give unto them ***eternal life***; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. **10:29** My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. **10:30** I and my Father are one... **10:37** If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. **10:38** But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. **14:9** Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me ***hath seen the Father***; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? **14:10** Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak

¹⁰ John 5:37-41

not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 14:11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake. 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

The healings, the miracles, the parables, the preaching, and the works that Jesus demonstrated throughout His life all testified that He was the Only Begotten Son and that He had authority of God to give eternal life to all those who might repent and believe on His name just as Jesus told the rich young ruler, “Go, sell that thou hast [meaning sins], and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.”¹¹ Without Jesus Christ it is impossible for any soul to be made perfect, for He truly and literally is the Gospel, the Word, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and if He did not come to show the children of men what is required to inherit eternal life, how could anyone enter into the Kingdom?

Therefore, as Paul wrote in his epistle to the Colossians, we should give “thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”¹² It is only through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are redeemed and sanctified so that we can be “made meet,” or in other words perfected, to partake of the love of God. The Lord has promised His sons and daughters, “If thou wilt do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God, which is the *greatest* of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation...Keep my commandments in all things; and if you keep my commandments and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life; which gift is the *greatest* of all the gifts of God.”¹³ By humbling ourselves to the dust and following the footsteps of Christ, who is the visible image of God, we will be made perfect in Him.

Go on to Perfection if God Permits

When considering the concept of perfection, there are two mistakes that we generally make. One, we start out thinking that such a feat is impossible for anyone to accomplish, or two, we start to think that we can become perfect through our own good works. Neither of these thoughts is from the Lord. For if we believe the first, we are in essence calling God a liar, as we have said in our heart “although my God has commanded it, it cannot be done,” and of course we read earlier that God gives no commandment without preparing a way for us to accomplish it. We must ask ourselves as the angel of the Lord posed in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”¹⁴ Is it impossible to become perfected through God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost?

If we believe the second thought, then we are essentially saying that it is through our own merits and not through the grace of God that we are made perfect. Aaron told the Lamanite King in Alma, chapter

¹¹ Matthew 19:21

¹² Colossians 1:12-15

¹³ DC 6:5e and DC 12:3b

¹⁴ Genesis 18:13

thirteen, “And since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atoneth for their sins, through faith and repentance, etc.¹⁵” It is important to understand that it is not by our own works but rather through the great goodness of God and His abundant mercy that we can become perfected. Nevertheless, there are some steps that an individual needs to follow in order to become perfect as Jesus commanded. Please read the following Scripture from Hebrews 6:1-3:

6:1 Therefore not leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, **let us go on unto perfection**; not laying **again** the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. **6:2** Of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **6:3** And we will go on unto perfection if God permit.

Perfection, much like love, is a gift that God bestows upon those who keep His commandments. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to *his mercy* he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.¹⁶” There is no work that we can ever do that can repay the gift which we have received through God and Jesus Christ. However, if we desire to be perfected and justified by His grace, then we must respond to the love of God by keeping His commandments. “We love him, because he first loved us.¹⁷”

We would ask the reader, if we keep the commandments of God, but not with a willing heart, what good have we done? Have we truly followed the commandments of the Lord? Do we truly love Him as we ought too? In the second book of Chronicles, we read of a certain king of Judah, named Amaziah, who “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.¹⁸” In response, Amaziah eventually fell away from the Lord and instead turned after other gods. Please read the following Scripture from Moroni 7:5-9:

7:5 For behold, God hath said, A man being evil, can not do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent, **it profiteth him nothing**. **7:6** For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness. **7:7** For behold, if a man being evil, giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God. **7:8** And likewise also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray, and **not with real intent of heart**; yea, and it profiteth him nothing; for God receiveth none such; wherefore, a man being evil, can not do that which is good; neither will he give a good gift. **7:9** For behold, a bitter fountain can not bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; wherefore a man being a servant of the devil, can not follow Christ; and if he follow Christ, he can not be a servant of the devil.

¹⁵ Alma 13:46

¹⁶ Titus 3:3-7

¹⁷ 1 John 4:19

¹⁸ 2 Chronicles 25:2

Mormon counseled that if we desire to serve God with real intent of heart then we must “*cleave* unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the *pure love of Christ*, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with *all the energy of heart*, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are *true* followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be *purified* even as *he is pure*.¹⁹”

In order to be purified by the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost we must come to a true knowledge of the Son of God. Jesus said, “*No man* can come unto me, *except* he *doeth the will* of my Father who hath sent me. And this is the will of him who hath sent me, that ye receive the Son; for the Father beareth record of him; and he who receiveth the testimony, and *doeth the will* of him who sent me, I will raise up in the resurrection of the just.²⁰” For the children of men to receive the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and to do the will of God, we are called to repent and exercise our faith in the Only Begotten Son by surrendering our will and trusting in Him. In so doing, a change will be wrought in our hearts to the perfecting of the saints, so that we, through the keeping of the commandments of God, might become innocent or pure before the Father.

Although Jesus was innocent from birth, He told the Pharisees in the thirteenth chapter of Luke, “Go ye and tell Herod, Behold, I cast out devils, and do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day *I shall be perfected*...This he spake, signifying of his death.²¹” If Jesus was innocent from birth, how was it then that He was not perfected until His death? The answer is simply that while Jesus was both innocent and perfect from birth, His perfection was not completed until He had accomplished *all* that God had sent Him to do. Christ told the Nephites, “Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world *to do the will of my Father*, because my Father sent me; and my Father sent me that I might be *lifted up upon the cross*; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, I might draw all men unto me: that as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil; and *for this cause* have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father, I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.²²” In other words, Jesus was perfected by doing all that was required by God for our salvation, which was to preach the Kingdom, to be crucified, and to be resurrected all through the power of the Holy Ghost.

At the river Jordan, Jesus told John that He had to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness and while at Gethsemane He told the disciples that He had to be taken so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. In truth, everything that Jesus did was to fulfill all righteousness so that the children of men might know the path to receive salvation, and Christ did not do those works by or of Himself, but through the power of the Holy Ghost. John the Baptist spoke of Christ, saying, “For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God giveth him not the Spirit by measure, for he [the Holy Ghost]

¹⁹ Moroni 7:52-53

²⁰ John 6:44

²¹ Luke 13:32-34

²² 3 Nephi 12:26-28

dwelleth in him, even the fullness.²³ We also read in the Scriptures “how God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the *Holy Ghost* and with power; who went about *doing good*, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.²⁴ Moreover, Paul wrote in the ninth chapter of Hebrews that it was through the eternal Spirit that Jesus offered Himself without spot to God in order to purge our conscience from dead works. We also know from reading the eighth chapter of Romans and the second book of Nephi that Jesus was resurrected by the power of the Spirit [read Romans 8:9-11 and 2 Nephi 1:73-75].

Through the Scriptures we see that Jesus did all things by the power of the Holy Ghost, and if the Son of Man was only able to accomplish the will of God through the Spirit, how much more do we need that same Spirit to reside within us? If we do not take the Spirit of God as our guide, how can we ever go on to perfection? For it is the Holy Ghost who testifies of the Father and the Son, and if we receive not the Son then we cannot receive the Father. Therefore, how can we receive the Father or the Son without the Holy Ghost, and how can we receive the Holy Ghost if we do not keep the commandments of God? We must then walk and live by the Spirit of God. Please read from Galatians 5:1, 13-14, 16-25:

5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be ***not*** entangled again with the yoke of bondage...**5:13** For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for ***an occasion to the flesh***, but by love serve one another. **5:14** For all the law is fulfilled in ***one word***, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

5:16 This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, and ye shall ***not*** fulfill the lust of the flesh. **5:17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. **5:18** But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, **5:20** Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, **5:21** Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things ***shall not*** inherit the kingdom of God.

5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **5:23** Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. **5:24** And they that are Christ's have ***crucified the flesh*** with the affections and lusts. **5:25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also ***walk*** in the Spirit.

Those who are purified even as Christ is pure have crucified the flesh, or in other words the natural man who is carnal, sensual and devilish, with the affections and lusts of the world. Therefore, rather than following their own will or surrendering to emotion, the sons and daughters of God are to entreat the Holy Ghost and take Him as their guide. Paul also wrote in the seventh chapter of Romans, “But my

²³ John 3:34

²⁴ Acts 10:38

members are warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into *captivity* to the law of sin which is in my members. And if I subdue not the sin which is in me, but with the flesh serve the law of sin; O wretched man that I am! *Who shall deliver me* from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, then, that so with the mind I myself serve the law of God.²⁵ Please read the following testimony:

*For whatever reason, there are times in our lives where we desire to do things which we know are not right in the sight of God. Whether because of temptation or simply because we do not feel like it, we sometimes struggle to do the will of the Lord. Unfortunately, it is easy for us to give in to that which is not right during these times of weakness. The mistake that I have made in the past is using my feelings as an excuse as to not keep the commandments. For example, there are times when I have come home at night tired and worn out, thus instead of spending time in study and prayer with the Lord as I ought too, I have occasionally offered a short half-hearted prayer before going to bed. When I do this or other things like it, I essentially say that because I do not feel like it, it is too hard or too difficult for me to do God's will, thereby it is okay not to do it. Nevertheless, no matter how we might feel, there is no excuse for not keeping the commandments of the Lord. We will not be able to stand before the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost at that last day and say, "Sorry Lord, I just did not **feel** like it."*

*In the garden, the disciples told Jesus "the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."²⁶ I feel as if I have told God similarly despite the promptings of the Holy Ghost. When Jesus sweat great drops of blood in anticipation of taking upon Him the sins of the world and being spiritually separated from the Father for the very first time, I imagine that He did not feel much like doing this, which is why He prayed, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."²⁷ It was not because Jesus did not love God that He asked for the cup to pass from Him, but rather because of the pain of being separated from the Father. Nonetheless, because the love that Jesus had was pure and true, He suffered Himself to be lifted up on the cross by wicked and sinful men. As Paul wrote, Jesus resisted sin even unto blood. The next time we experience a situation in which we do **not feel** like doing the will of God, let us remember what our Lord Jesus Christ did for us.*

Trust in the Perfect Ways of God and put on the Bonds of Perfectness

The only way that the sons and daughters of God can become purified and perfected even as Jesus Christ was, is by hearkening to the still small voice of the Lord, which is the Holy Ghost [read **Chapter Eighteen**], and by trusting the ways of God. It is critical to ask ourselves, do we believe that God's ways will lead us to the benefit of our souls? In Isaiah, chapter fifty-five, God said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways *higher* than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."²⁸ If we truly believe

²⁵ Romans 7:25-27

²⁶ Mark 14:43

²⁷ Luke 22:42

²⁸ Isaiah 55:8-9

that we cannot possibly comprehend all the things that God can comprehend and that He is righteous and perfect, then do we not believe that all things will “work together for good to them that love God” and “to them that walk uprightly?”²⁹ Please read the following Scriptures from Deuteronomy 32:1-4, Psalms 18:30-32, and Psalms 19:7-10:

32:1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. **32:2** My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass; **32:3** Because I will publish the name of the Lord; ascribe ye greatness unto our God. **32:4** He is the Rock, ***his work is perfect***; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

18:30 O God, ***thy ways*** are perfect; the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those who trust in him. **18:31** For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God, **18:32** Our God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect?

19:7 ***The law*** of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. **19:8** The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. **19:9** The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. **19:10** More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

In the second book of Chronicles, King Jehoshaphat counseled the Levites and priests to judge the people of the Judah righteously, saying, “Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is ***no iniquity*** with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.³⁰” It is imperative that we entreat the Holy Spirit, who will lead us into all truth, and trust in the perfect will of God as there is no iniquity in Him, not because of commandment but because He ***chooses*** to be a God of love and righteousness. For “righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of ***his steps***.”³¹ In essence, God sent His Only Begotten Son to establish and to show the children of men the paths of righteousness so that we might “follow His steps; who did no sin” and enter into the Kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ truly is the visible image of the invisible God, and it is the Holy Spirit that shines in our hearts so that we might see the way to everlasting life. The one aspect of the Eternal God that Jesus demonstrated perhaps more than any other was the pure love of God. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.”³²

In Luke, chapter fourteen, Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees of the Kingdom of God in a parable, saying, “When thou makest a dinner, or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when

²⁹ Romans 8:28 and DC 97:4c

³⁰ 2 Chronicles 19:7

³¹ Psalms 85:13

³² 1 John 4:10

thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.³³” Jesus fulfilled this parable, thus showing the love of God, by taking upon Himself the form of a servant and calling the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind to sit down in the Kingdom, not so that He or the Father might receive a reward, but because of the love they have for our souls. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.³⁴”

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord told the saints, “above all things, clothe yourselves with the bonds of *charity*, as with a mantle, which is a *bond of perfectness and peace*.³⁵” In order for the children of men to be perfected, we must have the pure love of Jesus Christ abiding within us for we cannot be perfected by our own works but through the power, mercy, and grace of God. “No man hath seen God at any time, except them who believe. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and *his love is perfected in us*. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.³⁶” Please read the following Scripture from Colossians 3:8-17:

3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. **3:9** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his [Jesus Christ] deeds; **3:10** And have put on the *new man*, which is **renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him**; **3:11** Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and *in all*.

3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; **3:13** Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. **3:14** And above all these things **put on charity**, which is the *bond of perfectness*.

3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. **3:16** Let the word of Christ *dwelt in you richly* in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **3:17** And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Conclusion

While it is true that no man can become perfected without the Holy Ghost and the power of God, perfection is not impossible for those who put their trust in the Lord and surrender their own sinful will to that of the Father’s. It is important to understand that Jesus Himself commanded us to be perfect and that God gives no commandment without first preparing a way to accomplish it. However, perfection means to do everything requisite with the will of God despite how we might feel, as Christ

³³ Luke 14:12-14

³⁴ 1 John 4:11

³⁵ DC 85:38c

³⁶ 1 John 4:12, 16-17

demonstrated throughout His life, death, and resurrection. Only through crucifying our flesh with the affections and lusts of the world and through following the steps of the Son of God as enlightened by the Holy Ghost can we ever hope to go on to be perfected. Moreover, it is through purification and perfection that mankind is able to be cleansed without spot and thereby become innocent before the Father. Therefore, when we come to stand before the bar of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost at the last and great judgment day, we will be restored perfectly to that which we did on this earth, whether it be good or whether it be evil.