

## Perfecting of the Saints

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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***Therefore 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, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1,2).***

I believe that the doctrine of perfection is one of the most misunderstood doctrines in the Bible. To understand what the Bible is talking about when it refers to perfection; you must understand how the term is used. The word “perfection” used in the Bible refers to the believer becoming “mature” or coming to a “full age”, complete. But man in his natural understanding, looks at God and says, “I will never be like God so I can never be perfect”. Perfection to man is attaining a God like state. With this attitude, man has an excuse to except all sorts of garbage and behavior in his life because after all, “Nobody is perfect”. But man has missed a very important point here.

Let me explain it with an analogy that a friend of mine thought of after I explained to him the perfection doctrine. Man was created for fellowship with God. Man was not created to be God. That is like an apple looking at an orange and saying an orange is perfect. I will never be an orange, so I can never be perfect. But an apple was not created to be an orange. The perfect apple is to become all that it was created to be! The same way the perfect Christian is simply to become all that they were called and created to be.

How did man ever come to the point that he thinks that he should be like God? To find that out we must go all the way back to the Garden of Eden when man ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This idea that man could be like God actually came from GOD!

***And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:22,23).***

Common sense would dictate that if God actually wanted man to become a god like Him then God would have told Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and not forbid it! The Bible plainly states that we are to grow up to be a perfect MAN in Christ, not to become a perfect god or a “little god”.

***And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the***

*knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-13).*

Once again, for the Christian to become biblically “perfect”, means for him to become all that God called and created him to be.

But how do we attain the perfection spoken of in the Bible? Very simply, our “perfection” is the ministry of the Holy Spirit and cannot be achieved by us as Paul explained to the Galatians, but it can be achieved in us like it is written in the book of Hebrews?

*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh (Galatians 3:3)?*

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20,21).*

*But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. (1 Peter 5:10)*

What did the apostles think of us becoming perfect?

*For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this we wish, even your perfection (2 Corinthians 13:9).*

*Finally, brethren, farewell, Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you (2 Corinthians 13:11).*

(Most important) What does Jesus think of us becoming perfect? It is not only His will, but also His prayer!

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:20-23).*