

If You're Not a Perfect Christian, Here's Some Wonderful News

I've spent years and energy trying to be perfect. And burned myself out in the end.

All the while, I cited Jesus' words, "Be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Sure, I knew that I shouldn't live this Christian life in my own strength—and had you asked me then, I would have told you that it was only by grace.

But I didn't understand grace then. I didn't understand what Jesus meant by "perfect."

The Good News For Every Imperfect Christian

Deep inside, I battled with what I understood perfect to be and my own human tendency to blow it—every single day. I was afraid to let go of perfection because I was so afraid that by letting go of it, I'd snap right over to the other extreme of permissive, carnal living.

I'd read lists, like the one in Psalm 15, and while outwardly I'd shout "Amen!", inwardly, I would cringe because I'd only see more areas where I fell short:

Lord, who will abide in Your tabernacle? Who will dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and does righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart; he who does not slander with the tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor bears a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to avoid evil and does not change; he who does not put his money out to usury, nor take a bribe against the

innocent. He who does these things will never be moved (Ps. 15).

What I'd see is this: "Lord, who will abide in your presence?

Strike. Strike. Strike. Strike. Strike.

I'm doomed!

That is, until I learned that without Jesus Christ—without His blood—I'll never be perfect.

But God takes my humanness, my brokenness and all my flaws, and in his perfect hands He brings me to completion.

Even when I mess up.

And because of His grace, I'm not doomed. I can enjoy His presence. I just keep my heart open to His voice pointing out areas that need to change—but always in love. {eo}

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