

The Perfection of Love

But when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. —1
Corinthians 13:10

Paul is not talking about the perfection of a Christian, but about the love that enables the Christian not to fear. John wrote: “There is no fear in love. But perfect loves drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

If this glimpse of love we are given now is only in measure, how can it be called perfect? I answer: if you were to go to the ocean and dip a glass into the water, you would then have a glass of water that is taken from the ocean, and what is in it is the pure ocean. In quantity, it is nothing compared to the vastness of the ocean, but everything that is true of the ocean is there. And so, the perfection that Paul and John are talking about is a taste of the pure love of God. It doesn't make us perfect, but it enables us to experience, that is, taste, perfect love.

When the pure love of God emerges in the heart, our world is turned upside down. There will be no grudging, no envy, no lust, no need to be seen or to be recognized. It is more wonderful than fulfilled ambition, more wonderful than the adulation of thousands. The pure love of God just wants the Father's glory.

But what happens when our experience of this love fades? When it fades, envy returns, fear returns, panic returns, the need to prove ourselves returns. So we may ask, what's the use of having it if it is going to fade? The answer: it is to let us know what to pray for, this most excellent way. Choose the route of perfect love, and do not be surprised if the charismata emerge stronger than ever!

Excerpted from *Just Love* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd.,

1997) .