

A Message to Struggling Christian Perfectionists

In today's society, insecurity and self-rejection have reached an all-time high. More than ever before, so many people *simply don't like themselves*. Sadly, Christians are no exception ...

Over the years, I have met countless people who believe God is angry with them because they haven't "arrived" at the place of perfection. As a result, they live in a state of perpetual frustration—continually rejecting themselves and feeling bad every time they make a mistake.

There's one thing for sure—Jesus didn't give His life for us to walk around feeling guilty and condemned. He wants us to feel *good* about ourselves and our relationship with Him. *And it all starts with discovering our true identity in Christ.*

Are You a Believer or an Achiever?

For many years, I tried to please God with my works. It seemed as if I was living on a performance treadmill—always trying to do something to feel good about myself and *feel* like I was in right standing with Him. In the process, I became weary, worn-out, and *unhappy*. I would think, *Something is just not working*.

I was right. No matter how much we love God and choose to do what's right, we will always be frustrated if we don't learn this one valuable lesson:

Ephesians 2:8 (AMP) says, "For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving]...."

There is nothing we can *do* to earn our salvation or right standing with have been made right with Him *through our faith in Jesus Christ*. A believer that is lacking this understanding is like a jumbo jet on the runway with no gasoline—he has all the equipment but is going nowhere!

In His mercy, God allowed me to see that there was absolutely nothing I could do to make Him love me any more or less than He already did. All He wanted was for me to believe in Jesus, the One Whom He sent (see John 6:29) and receive the righteousness He provided.

See Yourself Through God's Eyes

In order for us to experience true freedom and grow in our relationship with God, we need to learn to accept ourselves *right where we are* and see ourselves the way God sees us. As we do, we will begin to understand that becoming like Christ is a process that takes time ... and that God will be faithful to finish the good work He began.

Second Corinthians 5:21 (AMP) says, “For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become ... the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].”

This is the basis of self-acceptance—knowing that God accepts us through Jesus and sees us as totally righteous. This does not mean that we don't sin anymore or that we can dismiss it like it's no big deal. It simply means that God loves us even while we are on our way—while we are in the process of becoming like Christ—before we have “arrived.”

For example, as a two-year-old, one of our granddaughters used to throw fits when she didn't get her way. She tossed herself on the ground and screamed uncontrollably. Now, even though I disliked her behavior, I still loved her tremendously. I don't stop loving my grandchildren or kick them out of the family

because they do wrong things. I love them and work with them to develop the good character I know they need to succeed in life.

The same is true with God, our heavenly Father. He doesn't love our wrong behavior, but He certainly *loves us*. Romans 5:8 says that He proved His love for us by sending His Son "while we were yet sinners." In other words, He didn't wait until we were righteous to send Jesus—He sent Jesus because we would never be righteous without Him!

Put On Your Robe

Isaiah 61:10 says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, ... "

What does this mean for us? It means when we make mistakes, God literally has us "covered" with His robe of righteousness. So when the enemy comes against us with thoughts of guilt or condemnation, we can stand firm against his accusations. We can stand on God's Word and say ...

"I am the righteousness of God in Christ. I am clothed in *His* righteousness—not mine. The Bible says that if I confess my sin, God is faithful to forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I am loved!" (See 1 John 1:9)

God is on your side, and He wants you to feel good about yourself and the progress you are making. So don't spend your time frustrated because you haven't "arrived." God is not mad at you because you are not perfect—He is only disappointed if you quit running the race!

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