

A Perfect Heart



David Wilkerson February 18, 2013

I have walked with the Lord for over sixty years. After all this time, I am convinced it is possible to walk before the Lord with a perfect heart. You may say, "Nobody's walk is perfect. The Bible makes clear we're all sinners." But Scripture does tell us it is possible to walk before the Lord with a perfect heart. Let me take you into what this means.

The Lord said to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). God also said to Israel, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 18:13). David, for one, determined in his heart to obey the command to be perfect. He said, "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way...I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Psalm 101:2). Solomon fell short of God's command to be perfect: "His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father...(He) went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father" (1 Kings 11:4, 6).

God's command to be perfect is found in the New Testament as well. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Paul wrote, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). Later Paul added, "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (4:12). And Peter wrote, "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

What exactly does it mean to have a perfect heart? And how do God's people attain it? First, a perfect heart does not mean a sinless, flawless heart.

Man judges perfection by outward performance, but God judges the heart, the unseen motives (see 1 Samuel 16:7). David was said to have had a perfect heart toward God "all the days of his life," yet we know David failed the Lord miserably. His life was marked forever by adultery and a notorious murder.

The definition of perfection according to Scripture is "completeness," "maturity." In both the Hebrew and Greek, the term includes "uprightness," "being without spot or blemish," "totally obedient." John Wesley thought of perfection as "constant obedience." In other words, a perfect heart is a responsive heart. It quickly and totally reacts to the Lord's wooings, whisperings and warnings. This heart says at all times, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is attentive. Show me the path to go in, and I will walk in it."

Here are three things that distinguish such a perfect, responsive heart.

1. A perfect heart is searchable.

"The Lord searcheth all hearts" (1 Chronicles 28:9). The perfect heart cries out with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23-24).

God said to Jeremiah, "I the Lord search the heart" (Jeremiah 17:10). The Hebrew meaning of this phrase is, "I penetrate; I examine deeply." Paul attests to this, writing, "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10).

In Revelation 2:24, Jesus speaks about “the depths of Satan,” of going down into profound deepness of sin. He’s telling us that evil goes down deep into the soul, its roots reaching into hell. Indeed, David said of the wicked, “The inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep” (Psalm 64:6). These passages are all holy warnings. We’re being told, “You don’t realize how deeply this association with evil affects you. It takes you down into hell itself.”

I believe there are new depths to sin in these final days. It has taken on stronger, deeper roots. Our children are confronted with depths of sin that we never knew and never will know. Temptations come at them in many more subtle forms than with any previous generation. But a perfect heart is the same in any generation. It longs for the Holy Spirit to search out the depths of the innermost man — to investigate, dig out and expose all that is unlike Christ.

All of our hearts hunger to be pure and presented perfect before the Lord. It is a true mark of the Spirit. But shallow sermons don’t dig deeply enough to do the work of searching the heart. And those in the pews who hide a secret sin will avoid any probing. Multitudes of Christians today want a blood covering but not a blood cleansing.

A perfect heart is after more than eternal security or a covering for sin. Such a heart seeks to be in God’s presence to enjoy communion. Communion is talking with the Lord, sharing sweet fellowship, seeking his face. It’s why David eagerly cried out, “Search me, O God!” He wanted to enjoy communion with the Lord.

Here is the sequence, reflected in both Old and New Testaments: covering, cleansing, commitment, communion. Yet some Christians today want nothing more than to be covered, secure in Christ’s blood. They desire a quick ticket to glory, with no pain, no cross, no cleansing. They’re encouraged by preachers who declare, “All this digging and searching only brings up guilt and condemnation. All your sin is under the blood!”

Yet the Spirit’s searchings are not vindictive but redemptive. His purpose isn’t to condemn us by resurrecting some old transgression. It is to prepare us to come into his holy presence to enjoy sweet fellowship with him. “Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart...He shall receive the blessing from the Lord” (Psalm 24:3-5).

2. A perfect heart is trusting.

The Psalmist said, “Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded” (Psalm 22:4-5). Over and over David testified, “In the Lord put I my trust” (Psalm 11:1). “O my God, I trust in thee” (25:2).

The Hebrew root word for “trust” suggests “to fling oneself off a precipice.” It is to be like a child who hears her father say, “Jump!” and she trustingly obeys, throwing herself from a height into his waiting arms.

Contrast this with Christians who feel they are the devil’s punching bag. Nothing could be farther from the truth! The enemy is unable to touch any believer without God’s permission. He doesn’t have free access to harass you or me. What kind of father steps out of the way and allows a bully free access to his child anytime he likes?

Satan couldn’t touch Job without permission from God. The Lord had to lower the wall around Job for the devil to have access to him, and that was only temporary. This happened in Paul’s life as well. A messenger of Satan buffeted him, but only because God allowed it. Why? The Lord wouldn’t permit Paul to be lifted up with pride by the great revelation he had received.

The Lord is always in control. Not for one moment has Satan ever been outside the power of God’s Word. Therefore, the trusting heart says, “All my steps are ordered by the Lord! He is my loving Father, and he has an eternal plan and purpose behind all that I endure.”

3. A perfect heart is a broken heart.

David said, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite [crushed] spirit” (Psalm 34:18). He also said, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (51:17).

Brokenness is more than weeping, sorrow, a crushed spirit, humility. True brokenness releases in the heart the greatest power God can entrust to man: the power to restore ruins. This kind of power brings a special glory to God when his people are in the midst of troubled times.

God associated the walls of Jerusalem with brokenheartedness. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart...Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem” (51:17-18). Nehemiah was called to oversee the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls. In the dark of night, Nehemiah “viewed the wall” (Nehemiah 2:15). There is a Hebrew word *shabar* here that is the same word used in Psalm 51 for “broken heart.”

Some would think Nehemiah became broken when he “sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven” (1:4). Yet his weeping and confessing were only the beginning of the breaking. The prophet’s heart wasn’t fully broken until he came to Jerusalem, saw the ruin, and set himself to do something about it. Word spread near and far that “there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel” (2:10).

Nehemiah rode a donkey around the outside and “viewed the ruin.” In Hebrew the meaning is, “His heart was breaking in two ways.” It “broke” first with anguish over the ruined walls – yet it also “burst” with the hope of rebuilding! This characterizes the truly broken heart: It is one that sees the church and families in ruin, it feels the Lord’s anguish, and it desires to do something about it.

Such a heart grieves over the reproach cast on the Lord’s name. It looks deep inside and sees its own shame and failure. But all this brokenness leads to another element: hope. The truly broken heart has heard from God, “I will heal, restore and build. Let us get rid of the rubbish and go to work repairing the breaches.”

Years ago, I walked through Times Square, weeping and mourning because of all the evil I saw in the streets. I went back to my home in Texas, and for more than a year I continued to weep and mourn. Then God said, “David, go and do something about all the ruin.” I had come and seen the destruction. But I was not fully broken until I was moved with hope to begin rebuilding the wall.

Have you begun “viewing the ruin” in your life? When you see Christ in all his glory, the sight of him will shatter you. Brokenness means the total shattering of all human strength and ability. Yet it also means recognizing this: “Stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent” (Daniel 10:11). It is the deep assurance that things are going to change — that healing and rebuilding will come. Dear reader, your ruins are going to be reclaimed for God.

Until you take hold of this hope, you will not get past your tears. Your life may still appear to be a heap of rubble, with mounds of broken — down places that need repair. But you have God’s tools in hand. And above you there is a big sign posted by the Lord’s own hand, which reads: “GOD AT WORK. Enemies Beware!”

Pray this with me: “God, I know you are at work in me and in all my trials. Therefore, Satan has no hold over me. I am not going to deteriorate in my trust. I know I will not fall. My sin is grievous, but I have repented. Now it’s time to rise up and rebuild.” Amen!

[Download PDF](#) [1]

Links

[1] <http://worldchallenge.org/printpdf/284/>