



# Perfection and True Spirituality.

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# Perfection and True Spirituality.

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## Topics.

- Let us go onto spiritual maturity and perfection.
- Saying raca to a brother or sister in Christ.
- Calling a brother or sister a fool.
- If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other also.
- If any man sues you, let him have your cloak also.
- Whoever compels you to go a mile, go with them two.
- Give to those who ask and love your enemies.
- Bless them that curse you and do good to them that hate you.
- You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

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## LET US GO ONTO SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND PERFECTION

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- **Hebrews 6:1-2:** Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity (perfection in KJV) not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God <sup>2</sup>and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

The focus of these verses is not salvation, but going on unto spiritual perfection and maturity. The purpose of this study is to discover what the author of Hebrews had in mind when he told his listeners to go on to spiritual perfection and maturity and what he meant when he told them to leave behind the doctrines of, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment. Let's begin this search by looking at the next most important thing to God after acknowledging He exists and loving His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us the Ten Commandments are summed up in the words, love your neighbour as yourself it is called the royal law in the New Testament (Matt. 22:37-39) (Mark 12:28-31) (James 2:8).

This shines a spotlight on the truth that God cares about humans they are important to God, this is obvious because of this statement of Jesus and the fact God sacrificed His Son and Jesus gave his life to save humans from death to life eternal (John 3:16), but what does love your neighbour as yourself really mean? Under normal circumstances no sane human deliberately causes themselves harm everyone will try to avoid hurting themselves emotionally, physically, financially and spiritually. People do what they can to protect themselves, they do not wilfully cause themselves pain rather they do what they can to protect the body and protect self, meaning that they do-good to themselves and not evil or harm. This is what Jesus means when he says, love your neighbour as yourself he is simply saying, do not do harm to another human, do-good as you would to yourself. This is the theme of the Bible concerning humanity from beginning to the end.

- **Matthew 5:22-24:** Jesus said, I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother (without a cause in KJV) will be liable to judgment; whoever insults (says raca in KJV) his brother will be liable to the council and whoever says, you fool! Will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup>So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Following are the three attitudes revealed in these verses:

1. Anger without a cause.
2. Saying Raca (to a brother or sister).
3. Calling a person, a fool.

Each one of these three result in eternal dangers, as the following shows.

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### **1. ANGER WITHOUT A CAUSE**

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Everyone can be guilty of anger, when they are confronted with injustice or ungodliness, controlled anger that is motivated with the purpose and desire to heal an injustice or protect the innocent and the goodness of God, is anger with a cause. This kind of anger will motivate a person to stand up for justice and protect the innocent. Being angry, when there is no cause comes from protecting self it is all about self, it is an evil that's only purpose is to destroy dominate and control another human for the purpose of feeling powerful and superior or to dominate and be in control. This kind of anger flows from uncontrolled selfish rage and destroys in contrast to controlled godly anger that is directed toward injustice and flows toward protecting the innocent and what is decent and right.

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### **2. RACA AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST**

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Raca is a term of reproach, rebuking, criticizing and demeaning a person, it carries with it the connotation, that the person is worthless. The primary purpose for saying "raca" to a brother or sister in Christ, is because the person saying "raca" has a heartfelt desire to put another person in their place during a heated discussion rather than desiring to correct the error and heal the relationship.

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### **3. CALLING A BROTHER OR SISTER A FOOL**

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The word fool carries with it the idea of an idiot or of one being dumb, it has only a cruel intention and that is to destroy and hurt another person. This attitude comes from a person who sees themselves as intellectually superior. They believe they have secret truths too high for the average person and look on and consider the layperson as being too low for them to give attention to. They see and look upon others as intellectually inferior to themselves, they are like the Pharisees who saw themselves as being too high for the common people they are full of religious and intellectual pride. Calling someone a fool in this context is pride and self-superiority displayed at its peak.

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### **ANGER, RACA AND FOOL**

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Anger (without a cause) and raca and fool all stem from the same thing, they are all motivated by pride and ego, and self is the most important person. In this context going on unto perfection and maturity is not about continuing to learn every detail of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation or being a Bible dictionary, it is not about miracles or perfectionist preaching. It is not about going onto to be brilliant teachers or having a head full of intellectual knowledge, nor is going on to perfection about big church buildings or large congregations.

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### **GOING ON UNTO PERFECTION**

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In this context going on unto perfection and maturity is about learning to walk in mercy and love, forgiving and repairing relationships, striving (where possible) to maintain unity and peace, doing-good to those who do not deserve it and showing compassion and mercy to those that despise you. But the call to spiritual perfection and maturity gets even harder, Jesus calls us all to walk in an even deeper level of faith with him and a far deeper level of love not only toward our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also toward those outside God's Kingdom as the following words of Jesus will show.

- **Matthew 5:38-39:** Jesus said: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup>But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:38).

The context here is about pride, annoyances, hardships, pain and troubles that come by others because of a person's faith. Jesus says the answer to this kind of evil is to turn the other cheek. During ancient ages the palm of the hand was used in the smiting of a person's cheek. The Scripture is not talking about defending your home or protecting your family and children when they are in danger of abuse. The focus of these verses is when a believer is in hardship because of their faith they are not called to go to war to defend it the Christian faith is unto death not unto war. Believers are called to suffer for Christ, not to fight for him, the right cheek was seen as a place of honour and authority, pride is the issue here, turn the other cheek; means to turn around turn ones back, ignore it, and turn from the course pride wants to take. Turning the other cheek is about changing your mind and going against the natural responses of the flesh (i.e., don't retaliate, attack or lust for revenge etc.), these responses all arise from self, ego and pride. Jesus is calling those that would be his disciples to live beyond their natural human nature, to go beyond their ego and their pride and to live beyond the natural destructive desires of the flesh. Paul calls the Corinthian Christians infant Christians because they were acting in a human way self, ego and pride was dominating their church they were controlled by the flesh and not by the Spirit of Christ. They followed their natural mind which will always entice a person to go the way of their own understanding and follow what their emotions dictate to them. Jesus in this message is calling those that belong to him to live outside of their own ego, pride and what self wants.

- **Matthew 5:40:** Jesus said: "If anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well."

The man taking the person to court obviously has a lawful reason for doing so otherwise he wouldn't be taking him to court. Jesus is saying, if someone takes you to court, because you have done something unlawful against them and the law makes a judgment in their favor, give more than has been awarded, in other words, accept the decision of the law, don't be bitter, don't seek revenge, shake hands, show forgiveness and do-good and do all you can to compensate for the wrong you have done and to heal the relationship so that you do not make them your enemy.

- **Matthew 5:41:** Jesus said: "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

The key word here is force often Roman soldiers would force civilians to carry their belongings if they refused it is certain they would be brutally beaten. Jesus is saying, if you are in a position where you are forced to do something do it willingly, do extra and show goodness since the repercussions of not doing it will be far worse and may even result in death.

- **Matthew 5:42:** Jesus said: "Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."

If you are in a position to help, then help, this could be giving or lending money, cars, furniture, tools, etc., giving your labour or simply your company and your time to encourage and comfort another, in other words simply do- good. All of these above Scriptures are teaching what the nature and responses of the spiritual person should be. All of them have

a common attitude or theme that is totally opposite to the attitude of self, ego and pride (i.e., the flesh). The spiritual person is called to do-good regardless of the circumstance, when someone hurts or does the wrong thing to a believer in Christ that does not give the believer the right to respond in the same manner. The only response Jesus calls the spiritual person to, in all circumstances is to do-good and what is just and fair, but the call to spiritual perfection and maturity gets even harder, maybe some Christians are able to rise to all the above challenges, but now the battle to spiritual maturity really begins with the following words.

- **Matthew 5:43-45:** Jesus said: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. <sup>44</sup>But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; <sup>45</sup>That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Enemies in this context applies to people that are hostile, opposing and hateful toward you. Jesus says, “Love them.” Clearly it is a high calling to go onto spiritual perfection and maturity and to be a disciple as Paul was of Christ. At this point it should be highlighted that love in this context does not mean you should be feeling some kind of emotional sweetness toward them, neither does it mean you have to become bosom buddies, especially if there is no repentance or change in their character. You may never see them again and in most cases (but not all) this is probably the best course of action.

Love them in this context, simply means, you do-good as opposed to seeking revenge and doing harm.

- **Matthew 5:44:** Jesus said: “I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Curse in this context applies to someone who calls you names, speaks evil things about you, mocks you and gossips, and spreads malicious rumours about you, Jesus says, “Bless people that do that to you.”

- **Matthew 5:44:** Jesus said: “I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Self is naturally controlled by pride and ego which under the right circumstance produce hate and hate produces anger and the desire to demean, degrade and criticize a person, the lust for revenge and the desire to see a person suffer physically, mentally, spiritually or even killed. Jesus' teachings go totally against what natural human responses are and what self, ego and pride desire. The attitude Jesus is teaching in these Scriptures is to be humble, show goodness and always respond in kindness, mercy, grace and love and simply do-good in contrast to listening to the destructive voices of self, ego and pride. These are hard sayings which clearly show that the call to spiritual perfection and maturity is a high calling. Remember this is not a calling to salvation, but a calling to perfection and maturity.

This is a high calling, no-one should ever feel unworthy before God simply because they fail His perfect standard, because there has only ever been one man who was able to attain to them all in utter perfection and his name is the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. We all live in a corrupted fallen body that we inherited from our earthly father Adam; none of us are free from sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within our members. Sin has invaded our fleshy bodies like a cancerous virus added to this we are all tainted and driven to some degree by, self, ego and pride.

Every brother and sister in Christ should always remember that Christ didn't die for us so that we could attain to the perfect standard of the law or to God's perfect holiness, but because we couldn't. If any of us could attain to that glorious state of sinlessness Christ died for no reason. It is the blood of Christ and his righteousness that saves us and not our own righteousness. This is the glory of the Christian faith God rejoices when a sinner comes to his throne in humble repentance. It is important to notice going on to perfection and maturity has nothing to do with knowing the Bible from Genesis to Revelation or being a walking Bible encyclopedia, it is not about intellectual knowledge, but about loving and unselfish behaviour.

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## YOU MUST BE PERFECT AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT

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- **Matthew 5:45:** Jesus said: "So that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup>And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup>You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

At first glance Jesus statement, "Be ye perfect, as God is perfect" may seem a ridiculous to some especially since we know that God is not only perfect and absolute Holiness, but also is perfect and absolute love. Has Jesus set us an impossible task or does he have something else in mind? Clearly Jesus the master of wisdom would not make any ridiculous statements so what is he actually saying? To answer this question let's look at the context, Jesus says, "God rains on the just and the unjust," carrying the idea that God does-good to the righteous and to the unrighteous. Going on to perfection and maturity in this context is about showing mercy and love to those who do not deserve it and about always responding in kindness and good to others and not just to our friends or brothers and sisters in Christ.

Failing to attain to spiritual perfection and maturity does not mean a Christian is unsaved, natural human nature with its limitations is a very powerful force that is why salvation is by faith and God's grace and not by attaining to spiritual perfection and maturity. Nevertheless, even though God understands the power of the flesh, self, pride and ego and the limitations of our human nature. The call for every brother and sister in Christ is to Endeavour to go on to spiritual perfection and maturity.

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## SUMMARY

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Going on to perfection and maturity can be summed up in the following words, don't hurt or offend anyone, always do-good regardless of how others have treated you, Jesus said it this way, "Love your neighbour as yourself." The spiritual call to perfection and maturity is high and the walk full of trails, the invitation is to everyone. If a person will surrender their life and their will to Christ and endeavour to love humans, he will lift them from the valley of self, ego and pride and take them to the mountaintop of the Spirit. For God's church to be a witness to the world, it needs to be filled with Christians who are walking in the Spirit.

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## FOOTNOTE

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Love does not mean the elimination of justice. If a crime or evil has been committed, then justice must be done, but it is done in the attitude of protecting the innocent and doing that which is right, rather than being sought in the attitude of hatred and revenge. If a person I love kills another human the most loving thing for me to do is see that justice is

done, simply because before God I am called to protect the innocent, this is the whole Spirit of the Ten Commandments and fulfills the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Love your neighbour as yourself."

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**For related topics see the titles:**

- Forgiveness.
- Anger.

Both titles are in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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