

## Perfected in Christ

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Cooper Mt Ward – Adult Fireside

### **Moroni 10:32**

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

### **Perfected in Christ**

- What does it mean to be perfected?
  - Matt 5:48
    - See footnote b
    - See Elder Nelson quote #1
- Who can be perfected?
  - President Dalton quote #2
- What does it mean to be "perfected in Him"? (follow next questions immediately)
  - Can I perfect myself? (Can you perfect yourself?)
  - Can I perfect anybody else? (Can you perfect anybody else?)
  - Do I become perfected by:
    - "fixing" my spouse?
    - My spouse "fixing" me?
    - Have a perfectly clean and decorated house all December long?
    - Perfect children who never stray from the faith?
    - Perfect children who are never disobedient, cry in church etc.?
    - A perfect marriage?
    - perfect church life?
    - Providing my family with all worldly things?
- Repeat - What does it mean to be "perfected in Him"?
  - Defer discussion on grace to later

- When am I perfected?
  - Will it be in this life?
    - See Joseph Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith quotes
  - What is the purpose of this life in this regard then?
    - See Bruce R McConkie quote
  
- What is perfectionism?
  - See Cecil O Samuelson quote #1
  - What is the difference between perfectionism & being perfected in Christ?
    - See Cecil O Samuelson quote #2
  
- What is the process then?
  - What does it mean to "come unto Christ"?
  - What does it mean to "deny yourselves of all ungodliness"?
    - Mosiah 3:19
      - See Neal Maxwell quotes #1 & #2
  
- What does it mean to "love God with all your might mind and strength"?
  - John 14:21 (he who keeps the commandments loves me)
  - Matt 6:24 (no man can serve two masters)
  - How do we "change what we love"?
  
- Why is that still not enough to do these things by ourselves?
  - How does it become enough?
  - What is the price?

### **Then is his grace sufficient**

- What does it mean "then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ"?
  - How does Christ make up the gap?
  - Does it mean we just must confess the Christ?
  - How are we saved by grace?
  - Does grace only become active at the end of our life "after all we can do"?
  - How does faith then fit with grace?
    - See Gerald Lund quote #1, #2
  - How does repentance fit?
    - See Bruce Hafen quote
- What does it mean "if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God"?
  - See President Dalton quote #3

### Russel M Nelson #1

"In **Matt. 5:48**, the term *perfect* was translated from the Greek *teleios*, which means "complete." *Teleios* is an adjective derived from the noun *telos*, which means "end." The infinitive form of the verb is *teleiono*, which means "to reach a distant end, to be fully developed, to consummate, or to finish." Please note that the word does not imply "freedom from error"; it implies "achieving a distant objective." In fact, when writers of the Greek New Testament wished to describe perfection of behavior—precision or excellence of human effort—they did *not* employ a form of *teleios*; instead, they chose different words." ("Perfection Pending," Ensign, Nov. 1995, 86)

### Russel M Nelson #2

"With that background in mind, let us consider another highly significant statement made by the Lord. Just prior to his crucifixion, he said that on "the third day I shall be perfected." Think of that! The sinless, errorless Lord—already perfect by our mortal standards—proclaimed his own state of perfection yet to be in the future. His eternal perfection would follow his resurrection and receipt of "all power ... in heaven and in earth."

The perfection that the Savior envisions for us is much more than errorless performance. It is the eternal expectation as expressed by the Lord in his great intercessory prayer to his Father—that we might be made perfect and be able to dwell with them in the eternities ahead." ("Perfection Pending," Ensign, Nov. 1995, 86)

### **Steven D Dalton #1**

"I think that this verse (Moroni 10:32) clearly teaches that everyone can become perfect, and this verse outlines concisely and clearly the process.

We are to learn how to "deny ourselves", and also, learn to change what we love. We are to learn how to love God, who He is, what He does, what He teaches, with all of our heart. And then, THAT STILL WILL NOT BE ENOUGH for us to become perfect.

We will not reach perfection on our own, by simply doing those things. However, what this verse teaches, is that IF we will do those two things, THEN His grace steps in, to make up the difference. And as one who can testify to the truthfulness of this passage, as we see the Lord begin to do His mighty work of perfection in our lives, even in tiny ways, we simply cannot deny the power of the Lord, because we are witnesses of the efficacy of His grace in our own puny lives.

I know that this is the true path to perfection...learning to truly love Him and His gospel, and learning how to deny myself of anything that is not in accordance with His will, and then standing back, and watching His grace change me. Miraculous." (Personal correspondence to Mike Baird, 3/13/2007)

### **Steven D Dalton #2**

"I think that this verse (Moroni 10:32) clearly teaches that everyone can become perfect, and this verse outlines concisely and clearly the process." (Personal correspondence to Mike Baird, 3/13/2007)

### **Steven D Dalton #3**

"as we see the Lord begin to do His mighty work of perfection in our lives, even in tiny ways, we simply cannot deny the power of the Lord, because we are witnesses of the efficacy of His grace in our own puny lives." (Personal correspondence to Mike Baird, 3/13/2007)

### **Bruce Hafen (#1)**

"Jesus taught that we should be perfect as he is perfect. His experience suggests that his own developmental process was marked by his being a recipient of the Father's divine grace. His experience also shows that being free from sin is not the same thing as attaining a state of perfection." (The Broken Heart, p. 164.)

### **Bruce Hafen (#2)**

"We grow in two ways—removing negative weeds and cultivating positive flowers. The Savior's grace blesses both parts—if we do our part. First and repeatedly we must uproot the weeds of sin and bad choices. It isn't enough just to mow the weeds. Yank them out by the roots, repenting fully to satisfy the conditions of mercy. But being forgiven is only part of our growth. We are not just paying a debt. Our purpose is to become celestial beings. So once we've cleared our heartland, we must continually plant, weed, and nourish the seeds of divine qualities. And then as our sweat and discipline stretch us to meet His gifts, "the flow'rs of grace appear," like hope and meekness" ("The Atonement: All for All," Ensign, May 2004, 97)

### **Joseph Smith**

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 348)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

"Salvation does not come all at once; we are commanded to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. It will take us ages to accomplish this end, for there will be greater progress beyond the grave, and it will be there that the faithful will overcome all things, and receive all things, even the fulness of the Father's glory. I believe the Lord meant just what he said: that we should be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. That will not come all at once, but line upon line, and precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God. But here we lay the foundation." (Doctrines of Salvation 2:18)

### **Neal A Maxwell (#1)**

"Thus, putting off the views and appetites of the natural man is such a large part of denying oneself " ("Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness'," *Ensign*, May 1995, 66)

### **Neal A Maxwell (#2)**

"No wonder most of the Ten Commandments are self-denying "Thou shalt nots." Heavenly Father loves his children perfectly, but he knows our tendencies perfectly, too. To lie, steal, murder, envy, to be sexually immoral, neglect parents, break the Sabbath, and to bear false witness—all occur because one mistakenly seeks to please himself for the moment regardless of divine standards or human consequences. " ("Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness'," *Ensign*, May 1995, 66)

### **Bruce R McConkie**

" If we keep two principles in mind we will thereby know that good and faithful members of the Church will be saved even though they are far from perfect in this life. These two principles are

(1) that this life is the appointed time for men to prepare to meet God-this life is the day of our probation; (Alma 12:27) and

(2) that the same spirit which possesses our bodies at the time we go out of this mortal life shall have power to possess our bodies in that eternal world. (Alma 34:34)

What we are doing as members of the Church is charting a course leading to eternal life. There was only one perfect being, the Lord Jesus. If men had to be perfect and live all of the law -strictly, wholly, and completely, there would be only one saved person in eternity. The prophet taught that there are many things to be done, even beyond the grave, in working out our salvation.

And so what we do in this life is chart a course leading to eternal life. That course begins here and now and continues in the realms ahead. We must determine in our hearts and in our souls, with all the power and ability we have, that from this time forward we will press on in righteousness; by so doing we can go where God and Christ are. If we make that firm determination, and are in the course of our duty when this life is over, we will continue in that course in eternity. That same spirit that possesses our bodies at the time we depart from this mortal life will have power to possess our bodies in the eternal world. If we go out of this life loving the Lord, desiring righteousness, and seeking to acquire the attributes of godliness, we will have that same spirit in the eternal world, and we will then continue to advance and progress until an ultimate, destined day when we will possess, receive, and inherit all things. " ("The Seven Deadly Heresies," in Speeches of the Year, 1980, 78-79)

### **W. Jeffrey Marsh:**

"When the focus is on perfecting ourselves, somehow the importance of the Atonement is left out of the repentance and cleansing process." ("Be Ye Therefore Perfect..."—Handling Obsession with Perfection, Women's Services and Resources Addictions Conference held at Brigham Young University, 6 February 2002)



**Cecil O Samuelson #1**

(“What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?” New Era, Jan. 2006, 10)

Perfectionism is a medical condition characterized by severe self-criticism and self-doubt, often accompanied by anxiety, depression, or obsessive-compulsive behavior. It can lead to appetite and sleep disturbances, confusion, problems in relationships, inability to concentrate, procrastination of important tasks, and, if left untreated, major depression, anxiety disorders, and suicide

**Cecil O Samuelson #2**

(“What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?” New Era, Jan. 2006, 10)

What’s the Difference?

<b>Doing Your Best</b>	<b>Perfectionism</b>
You desire to give things your best efforts and are satisfied when you do.	You have a list of “shoulds” and “have to’s” and are dissatisfied even if you complete them.
You know it’s okay if you make a mistake. You move on and see your mistake as an opportunity for growth or learning.	Mistakes bring feelings of self-hatred. You don’t want to do anything because you are afraid of failure.
You want to do your personal best, and you try not to compare your achievements to those of others. You don’t need to be the best at all things.	You feel tremendous pressure to earn others’ approval. You must be the best or “perfect” in your tasks.
You can find joy in doing the things you love, and you can get things accomplished.	Your need to do things perfectly leads to procrastination until you have time to do it “perfectly,” and you feel driven by fear or duty instead of love.

### **Gerald Lund #1**

" In other words, faith is the principle that activates the power of the Atonement in our lives, and we are put back into a proper relationship with God (justification) as faith activates that power. " ("Salvation: By Grace or by Works?" Ensign, Apr. 1981, 17)

### **Gerald Lund #2**

" We are like a powerhouse on a mighty river. The powerhouse has no power residing in itself; the potential power rests in the energy of the river. When that source of power flows through the generators of the power plant, power is transferred from the river to the power plant and sent out into the homes (lives) of others. So it is with faith. The power to achieve justification does not reside in man. Man requires the power of the atonement of Christ flowing into him. If no power is being generated, one does not—indeed, cannot—turn the generators by hand (justification by works); but rather, an effort is made to remove those things which have blocked the power from flowing into the generators (working righteousness as a result of faith). " ("Salvation: By Grace or by Works?" Ensign, Apr. 1981, 17)