



**RIVERSIDE**  
CHURCH



# Culture SHOCK

The Truth about the truth

"The Conundrum of Perfectionism"

March 23, 2025  
Pastor Tom Lundeen

WE ARE SERVANTS OF CHRIST!

DON'T LET CULTURE INFLUENCE US!  
CHRIST SAYS I AM THE TRUTH

MYRC.CHURCH



# "The Conundrum of Perfectionism"

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## MESSAGE NOTES

...we're exploring a huge reality that is part of our cultural landscape, that is there are many beliefs that \_\_\_\_\_ like they could be true, but they're not true.

And these *nearly true* beliefs are \_\_\_\_\_ by all types of people, including Jesus' followers at times.

...for Jesus followers there's a whole other \_\_\_\_\_ to navigate, and that is there was one perfect person (Jesus); and He just doesn't encourage us to be perfect, He actually \_\_\_\_\_ it (note **Matthew 5:48**).

How do Jesus' words here cause you to respond?

- You feel the \_\_\_\_\_ burden of a command that no matter how hard you try, you can never achieve this standard, or...
- I may not be perfect, but I'm at least not as bad as a bunch of those \_\_\_\_\_ over there.

How do we avoid the negative aspects of perfectionism while at the same time \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus' command to be perfect?

## 1. What Did Jesus Mean About Being Perfect?

When Jesus speaks, what He says \_\_\_\_\_.

So when Jesus says, *Be Perfect*, we can have \_\_\_\_\_ He's going to do what He's done over and over again.

\_\_\_\_\_ = *Complete...Mature...Whole*

Note **Romans 3:9-12**

So how do people with spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ DNA become *perfect*?

## 2. Perfection Isn't a Reward to \_\_\_\_\_, but a Promise to Receive

Becoming perfect = the \_\_\_\_\_ of becoming like Jesus so we can love God and love people like Jesus did.

Note **Matthew 11:28-30**

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In all 4 Gospels, \_\_\_\_\_ chapters, \_\_\_\_\_ verses, Matthew 11:29 is the one place Jesus describes His heart = *gentle and humble*.

So the same Jesus who tells us to *be perfect* also \_\_\_\_\_ us to come to Him and find rest, that He's gentle and humble and His yoke is easy and burden is light.

The pathway to Jesus' plan to help us ultimately to become perfect begins by:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ of pride - pride encourages legalism, and legalism kills genuine spirituality and it always leads to \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ His grace (note **Matthew 11:28**) - the process of being made perfect starts with grace, is \_\_\_\_\_ by grace, and it ends with grace (note **Galatians 3:3; 1 John 3:2**). Receiving grace means admitting weakness and demands \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ taking next steps (note **Matthew 11:29**) - Jesus wants us to take next steps, but never \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***The Truth about the truth:***

- Jesus is the only One who has ever lived a perfect life; but through Him we are on His \_\_\_\_\_ to meet His standard (note **Romans 3:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:21**).
- What pride do you need to repent of?
- Is humility a missing \_\_\_\_\_ for you in receiving God's grace?
- What next step is Jesus asking you to partner (\_\_\_\_\_) with Him?

***Tell us about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey!***

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# SG

Your group matters.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Icebreaker -

*What schoolteacher had the biggest impact on your life and why?*

1. How do Jesus' words to "...be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (**Matthew 5:48**) make you feel? How have you processed this command in the past?
2. Most Christ-followers have wilted under the "crushing burden" of what they see as a God-given command to attain perfection, as they disappoint again and again. Share what this did (or is doing) to your relationship with Jesus.
3. "When Jesus says... 'Be clean', the leper becomes clean... 'Be still', the wind and waves obey... 'Be gone', demons go running... 'Lazarus, come out', a dead man starts walking." (Johnson) How does this understanding change your view of "Be perfect?"
4. Read **Matthew 11:28-29** and **2 Corinthians 5:21**. What is Christ's pathway to perfection for you?
5. Why is "repenting of pride" the first step toward receiving the grace of God? What is it about pride that keeps us from trusting Jesus to actually perfect us?

## PERSONAL GUIDE

*Day One:* Matthew 25; Psalm 114

*Day Two:* Leviticus 24; Proverbs 21

*Day Three:* 2 Corinthians 4; 1 Kings 10

*Day Four:* Revelation 6; Jeremiah 48

*Day Five:* Ecclesiastes 10; Acts 2

*This Personal Guide has been adapted from Professor Grant Horner's Bible Reading System.*



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How do Jesus' words here cause you to respond?

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## 1. What Did Jesus Mean About Being Perfect?

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So when Jesus says, *Be Perfect*, you can have confidence He's going to do what He's done over and over again.

Perfect = Complete...Mature...Whole

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Becoming perfect = the process of becoming like Jesus so we can love God and love people like Jesus did.

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In all 4 Gospels, 89 chapters, 3,779 verses, Matthew 11:29 is the one place Jesus describes His heart = *gentle and humble*.

So the same Jesus who tells us to *be perfect* also welcomes us to come to Him and find rest, that He's gentle and humble and His yoke is easy and burden is light.

The pathway to Jesus' plan to help us ultimately to become perfect begins by:

- A. Repenting of pride - pride encourages legalism, and legalism kills genuine spirituality and it always leads to shame.
- B. Receive His grace (note **Matthew 11:28**) - the process of being made perfect starts with grace, is fueled by grace, and it ends with grace (note **Galatians 3:3**; **1 John 3:2**). Receiving grace means admitting weakness and demands humility.
- C. Always taking next steps (note **Matthew 11:29**) - Jesus wants us to take next steps, but never alone.

### ***The Truth about the truth:***

- Jesus is the only One who has ever lived a perfect life; but through Him we are on His pathway to meet His standard (note **Romans 3:22-24**; **2 Corinthians 5:21**).
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