Myths of Perfectionism

In the Garden of Eden before the Fall, Adam and Eve had a perfect nirvana-like existence. Yet it wasn’t good enough. It wasn’t enough for them to live in the Garden, know God intimately and personally, and have a great relationship with each other. They wanted more. As a result, they fell into Satan’s trap of wanting to be like God.

Perfectionism—wanting to be perfect, to be better, to be great or even good enough—is the same. You want more than you are, and you are always striving to get there, even though you never seem to arrive.

Here are the myths of perfectionism:

✔ I will achieve perfection.

✔ I will be satisfied when I achieve perfection.

Neither is true. You cannot ever be perfect. You have a sin nature. You are not capable of being perfect. And you won’t allow yourself to achieve perfection anyway. As soon as you reach a mark you have set, you’ll move the mark. You will decide it isn’t good enough and you need more in order to arrive at your goal. Perfectionism comes from a shame root that says you aren’t good enough and that you have to do and achieve to make up for your lack of goodness. You feel less than others and unworthy and strive to prove you are not. Until the shame is dealt with, you won’t be good enough.

You wouldn’t be satisfied even if you could achieve perfection. Perfectionists are driven to do more and be more. Like Adam and Eve, you are enticed by what could be, no matter what you have.

Your worth is not in what you do but who you are. God created you in his image. You are unique and precious to him. Christ died for you before you were born, purchasing you with his blood. You are a work in progress. You will never be perfect. Accept it and stop striving for it. Allow yourself to be human and let God turn your shame into sufficiency in him.

By Karla Downing
Relationship Prayer

God,

Help me to recognize how my perfectionism prevents me from being satisfied. Take away my shame and help me to see my sufficiency, which comes from being created uniquely by you and then redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Relationship Challenge

- Recognize how perfectionism keeps you from achieving realistic goals and finding satisfaction.

Scripture Meditation

Romans 5:8-10

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

Hebrews 7:11

“If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?”

Even the priests, set apart by God, couldn’t attain perfection.
If you have any questions you would like to ask Karla, please feel free to email her. Portions of your email and Karla's response to you may be used anonymously in future materials. By emailing her, you are giving your implied permission.

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