

# GOING ON TO PERFECTION

Most people will tell you that perfection is unattainable. But according to the Bible, perfection is not only attainable, it's expected!

## Matthew 5:48

**48 Be ye therefore PERFECT, even as your Father which is in heaven is PERFECT.**

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Be ye perfect"? Perfection can mean many things. For example, it can mean *having no defect or flaw* (i.e. flawless) OR, it can mean *having all the necessary elements or attributes* (i.e. completeness). This second definition (completeness) is the most common way perfection is used in the Bible.

## Hebrews 6:1

**1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto PERFECTION;**

In this verse, perfection is a synonym for completeness or *maturity*. We know this because this same word is translated "full age" in **chapter 5**.

## Hebrews 5:14

**14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of FULL AGE, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

To be of "full age" means to attain to the *full stature* (or level) of Christ.

## Ephesians 4:13

**13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT man, unto the MEASURE OF THE STATURE of the fulness of Christ:**

## Hebrews 6:1

**1 Therefore LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES of the doctrine of Christ, let us GO ON unto PERFECTION; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,**

Before we can "go on" to perfection, we must "leave" the principles of Christ. In other words, we will never reach new levels of perfection unless we complete (move past) the *former* lessons of Christ!

## Hebrews 6:1 GNB

**<sup>1</sup> Let us GO FORWARD, then, to mature teaching and LEAVE BEHIND us the FIRST LESSONS of the Christian message;**

Everyone's eager to advance, but it seems few are willing to master (learn) any of God's lessons!

What lessons is the writer of Hebrews admonishing us to learn? The writer of Hebrews lists **6 foundational doctrines** that they were expected to complete. Moreover, these 6 doctrines are grouped into **3 pairs**. For example, the doctrine of repentance is paired with faith, the doctrine of baptisms is paired with the laying on of hands, and the doctrine of the resurrection is paired with eternal judgment.

## REPENTANCE AND FAITH

The first doctrine in this pairing is *repentance from dead works*. Notice, our first lesson is NOT about learning to repent OF things. It's about learning to repent FROM things, namely 'dead works.' What are dead works?

**Dead works** *are works that cannot save.*

## Galatians 4:9

**<sup>9</sup> But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, HOW TURN YE AGAIN TO THE WEAK AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?**

Dead works are ALSO works that can result in *spiritual* death.

## 1 John 5:16

**<sup>16</sup> If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH: I do not say that he shall pray for it.**

Many of us are masters at repenting OF sin (even serious sins). But have we learned to repent FROM dead works. Moreover, the secret to learning to repent from dead works (sin), is learning to turn to God in faith! And this is why *repentance* is paired with the doctrine of *faith*, because whoever does not turn towards God in faith is departing from *life*!

## Hebrews 3:12

**<sup>12</sup> Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of UNBELIEF, in DEPARTING from the LIVING God.**

You may be wondering, “Why do I keep going back to past sins (dead works)?” It’s because you’re not turning to God in faith. Sin is a symptom of a lack of faith!

## **BAPTISMS AND THE LAYING ON OF HANDS**

The first doctrine in this pairing is the doctrine of “baptisms.” Most are familiar with only *one* kind of baptism—water baptism. But there are *other* baptisms that we’re admonished to receive.

### **1 Corinthians 12:13**

**13 For BY ONE SPIRIT are we all BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free;**

This is a description of the baptism *by the Spirit* into Christ. Believers receive this baptism at regeneration. In fact, water baptism is a *visible* sign of this *invisible* baptism. Now, the Bible also mentions a *third* baptism.

### **Matthew 3:11**

**11 I indeed BAPTIZE you WITH WATER unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall BAPTIZE you WITH THE HOLY GHOST,**

This is a baptism into the Spirit by Christ. What’s the purpose of this baptism? Well, apart from receiving power for ministry, this baptism is *God’s* testimony that a person is truly in Christ (a son of God).

### **John 1:29, 32, 33**

**29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world. 32 And John bare record, saying, I SAW THE SPIRIT descending from heaven like a dove, and IT ABODE UPON HIM. 33 And I KNEW HIM NOT: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, UPON WHOM THOU SHALT SEE THE SPIRIT descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.**

Although John *believed* Jesus was the Son of God before being baptized, after Jesus was baptized and received the Spirit he was convinced of it!

Incidentally, this is why the doctrine of baptisms is paired with the laying on of hands. The *laying on of hands* is an act used to commission or recognize individuals for ministry. However, we should not commission or ‘yoke’ ourselves

to anyone we are not *sure* are in Christ. And the way we know they are in Christ is when they receive the *baptism* of the Spirit.

### **Acts 6:5–6**

**<sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND THE HOLY GHOST, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: <sup>6</sup> Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, THEY LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM.**

## **RESURRECTION AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT**

The final two doctrines in this list are the doctrines of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. The doctrine of the resurrection is an essential of the Christian faith.

### **1 Corinthians 15:17**

**<sup>17</sup> And IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, your faith *is* vain; YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS.**

Without the resurrection our faith would be in vain. The resurrection proves that our sins have been atoned for and forgiven. Even more than this, the resurrection gives us a certainty (hope) and causes us to look forward to the inheritance God has for us.

### **1 Peter 1:3**

**<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a LIVELY HOPE by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

### **1 Peter 1:3–4 GNB**

**<sup>3</sup> Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because of his great mercy he gave us new life BY RAISING JESUS CHRIST FROM DEATH. This FILLS US WITH A LIVING HOPE, <sup>4</sup> and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. He keeps them for you in heaven, where they cannot decay or spoil or fade away.**

Now, how does the resurrection relate to eternal judgment? We must understand that without a clear understanding of God's judgment (wrath), we would not know what we were being saved from AND we would not have the motivation to hope for something better. Secondly, the doctrine of eternal judgment is paired with the doctrine of the resurrection because the One who will execute judgment is the One who was raised from the dead!

### **Acts 17:30–31**

**<sup>30</sup> And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: <sup>31</sup> Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness *BY THAT MAN* whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that **HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD.****

This tells us that God's judgments do not arise from cruelty or indifference because the One who will judge the world is the same One who suffered and died for the world!