



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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John Rottschäfer PhD
Certified Life Coach
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Being Perfect

"That's perfect ... just perfect!!"
We've all heard it said, sometimes in joyful celebration, sometimes in sarcastic frustration. The word "perfect" has been used to describe everything from gifts, to plans, to tools. We've even likely tried to produce it, or achieve it, or be it ourself, only to meet with exhausted disappointment for all our efforts. So what is "perfection"? And what does it take to truly be perfect?

The dictionary offers over ten definitions of the word "perfect". For most of us, the word implies the presence of flawlessness - an absence of weakness, brokenness, error, distortion, or sin. Though we typically consider personal perfection unattainable this side of the grave, we still see it as a goal to work towards. We expend effort to reduce our flaws and strengthen our weaknesses. While such efforts are commendable, they have the tendency to keep us focused on our inadequacies, and in doing so rob us of the very perfection we seek to display.

Fortunately, there is another way to understand perfection. After all, what is it that makes a gift, or a plan, or a tool "perfect"? Their perfectness is revealed as they demonstrate the

qualities and characteristics which are needed to meet an existing opportunity or task. In the same way, we humans display our perfectness as we demonstrate the qualities, characteristics, and proficiencies needed to accomplish what we are called to do. This view of being perfect ("def. 1: EXPERT, PROFICIENT") emphasizes our strengths, gifts, and skills, rather than our flaws and weaknesses. It encourages the growth of our perfection through learning, practice, and the confident sharing of our self with our world. Graciously, it recognizes perfection without first requiring flawlessness, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually. It focuses instead on our ability to fulfill what we are called to do on this earth.

What is it, then, that we are called to do? While there likely are many possible answers to this question, let's consider for a moment a Christian perspective on this query.

Since earliest recorded time, mankind has been called to three tasks:

- 1) to worship the Creator God,
- 2) to responsibly manage the earth,
- 3) to love one another.

Accordingly, mankind has been gifted with the internal qualities needed to

fulfill these tasks, and the ability to develop them into mature proficiencies. We are created with an inner awareness of the Divine, an awareness we seek to give meaning to through religious identity and expression. As the pinnacle of creation, we have the power and freedom to harvest the earth's resources for our survival, but also the responsibility to respect and maintain it wisely. We also are created with the ability and desire to relate and connect with each other, to value and give to each other, and to love and be loved.

Is perfection, then, possible? Yes, as long as we have a proper view of perfection - a view that emphasizes: 1) the constructive use of our God-given gifts and qualities, and 2) the desire to grow personally into the mature excellence our God calls us to.

Since such perfection does not require an absence of flaws or failure, it makes the truth of perfection a reality that can be grasped and developed by all who so choose.

Let's free our fixated focus from our flaws, and relish in the privilege of being the perfect answer for those tasks we are called to fulfill.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

You can contact me at:
John Rottschafer, PhD
Free to Be Life Coaching
12317 Verlin Dr
Gowen, MI 49326

phone - (616) 450-4615
e-mail -
john@freetobelife coaching.com
www.freetobelife coaching.com



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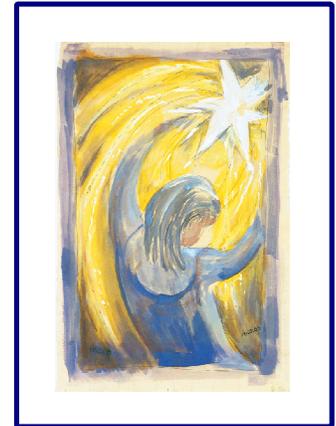
Perfect Love

Once again, February brings with it Valentine's Day, a day to celebrate the joy of love and the specialness of those we love. How appropo we should celebrate love, since it is one of the three original "duties" we have been called (and empowered) to fulfill. Yet, what does it mean to love each other perfectly? Are cards and candy on Valentine's Day enough? What about the rest of the year?

While it is difficult to consisely capture the essence of love, one characteristic stands out - love comes alive when it becomes behavior. We're not talking of love as a single behavior, but rather as a consistent way of living. The Bible describes such love life in many places, but one of the most helpful descriptions is contained in these three directives:

- 1) **Act justly** - do what you are supposed to do, don't do what you shouldn't; treat others fairly and compassionately; assist, don't exploit; live lives of genuine ethical and moral integrity.
- 2) **Love mercy** - exercise it towards all people, especially those who don't deserve it; forgive freely; openly encourage.
- 3) **Walk humbly** (with your God) - promote each other rather than your self; use your gifts to serve others, without the expectation of being served; give thanks, enjoy, celebrate. (Micah 6:8)

Perfect love exists in such complete, mature love. It requires a desire, a decision, and a commitment to love in this way. And it requires the divine Spirit of love within us, for to love in a perfect way is to allow the love of God to flow through our lives to others. What a priviledge!



"Use what talents you have; the woods would have little music if no birds sang their song except those who sang best."

- Rev. Oliver G. Wilson