

On Perfection And Sinlessness

Question #1:

Hello Everyone.

Please I need your help with my Christian life.

I got baptized with the Holy Ghost on June30th and since then I've been experiencing God's love and touch.

But I've been unable to still get rid of some addictions from my life(I've been able to get rid of many through his help tho).

But whenever I'm enjoying a closer relationship with God, I just fall back to the sin and start all over again. Its been very saddening for me and I don't know what to do.

The addiction is pornography.

Your advise, help and all is highly welcomed.

Thank.

Answer #1:

We do have a responsibility to God to lead sanctified lives free from the taint of sin but we will never be perfect in this life. So, let me encourage you to also give your attention to pursuing spiritual growth and production for your Lord. In doing so, you will also find the strength to more and more consistently triumph over your sinful tendencies.

But in dealing more directly with addictions, it would be wise to avoid whatever might trigger an episode and be quick to confess every failure and get back to controlling yourself. Always keep in mind that when we sin or do righteousness, it is a choice we make ourselves. We never get pushed into it by anybody. We choose. So you can live each moment free from an addiction by your own choice. But in this race, we all stumble a lot. And we only get better and better at running straight by growing spiritually.

Question #2:

But why are we asked to be perfect?

Answer #2:

Sorry, didn't see this question before.

We are commanded to be perfect because we are supposed to prove our calling and our choice of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Master by striving to be like Him. But we will never be perfect with a body of sin. What counts though is that we demonstrate our desire for perfection by striving moment by moment, day by day to actually be perfect and confessing every sin and every failure so that we maintain fellowship with the Lord in fervent hope of a day when we will exchange this sinful body for a perfect, eternally sinless one.

Question #3:

There are forms of perfection which definitely do not apply to us while on earth, but to walk perfectly before God is possible.

God said to Abraham:

Genesis 17:1

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Answer #3:

But did Abraham succeed at obeying that command? See Genesis 20 for one possible illustration of his own very human imperfection.

Question #4:

Christ said

Matthew 5:48

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Answer #4:

And the Spirit of Christ said through James:

James 3:2

[2]**For we all stumble in many ways.** If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well...

Which is why He also says through John

1 John 1:8-10

[8]If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

[9]**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

[10]If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Question #5:

Even, concerning Job, this was recorded about him

Job 1:1

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Answer #5:

And the Lord said this to Job too:

Job 38:1-2

[1]Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

[2]"Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge?"

Question #6:

Lastly, the ultimate goal of the church is perfection

Ephesians 4:13

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:

Answer #6:

Perfection here means maturity. It is not the same as sinlessness. Even a believer as mature as Paul was stumbled every now and then. Peter too was a very mature believer and was with Paul one of the greatest apostles but he too stumbled every now and then.

We ought to strive for maturity by all means. But sinlessness is not a wise goal to assume that we can achieve while we still live in a body of sin.

Question #7:

God won't be saying all these if it is unattainable. We can't strive for it if we don't first believe it is possible. Let's not assume it is impossible, but believe it is possible and then strive for it.

Answer #7:

As I began to say above, sinlessness is not a wise goal to assume that we can achieve in this body of sin. We will continue to stumble until we put off this flesh and put on the new body from above. This does not mean that we ought not to resist sin. We must. The more we love the Lord the less we will want to sin against Him. This is true and worthy of all belief. But we cannot reach sinlessness in this body. We must receive a new body to be completely free of sin.

Insisting on believing that we can be completely free of sin in this body will only lead to self-righteousness and hypocrisy worthy of the Pharisees. We will be tempted to start redefining sin to suit ourselves. But if we accept that we live in a body of sin from which we hunger to be delivered, then we will also maintain a running battle for sanctification and continue to maintain a humble hope of Resurrection that glorifies the Lord we love.

Question #8:

To all these I will only say that we may try as we may to rationalize and evaluate from the human perspective, what is possible or not but that will not take us anywhere. Remove the power and grace of God from the equation, and Christianity becomes as dead as any other religion. But with God, all things are possible. Done with the conversation. Have a nice time.

Answer #8:

Indeed I agree that with God all things are possible. That is why we must strive to walk in sanctification confident in the ability of the Lord to change our bodies of sin into bodies of perfect righteousness so that we can live freely before Him without concern that we might fail Him again.

Question #9:

2. Perfection: So you mean God is mature and as such, we need to get matured?

Answer #9:

I am sure that I said no such thing. If you can quote where I did, I will retract it.

"Perfect" and "mature" are English words that tend to mean different things for us. But they translate a Greek word in the New Testament which embraces both concepts. God's command that we should be perfect is clearly a command that we be sinless. But where Paul talked about becoming a perfect man in Ephesians 4, he was not speaking of sinlessness (in NIV1984, in fact, you will not see the word "perfect" in the context, just "mature"). Rather, he was talking about attaining maturity in the Truth, that is growing up spiritually until one has come to understand what really our Lord Jesus Christ is about and can therefore act in a responsible manner with such knowledge. The latter does not equate with or guarantee sinlessness.

Question #10:

Perfection here means sinlessness.. Check out these passages:

Romans 8vs1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Galatians 5vs17. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

I John 3vs9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he CANNOT SIN BECAUSE he IS BORN OF GOD.

I John 5vs18. And we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Answer #10:

Perfection where, do you mean? If you are referring to God's command, then, of course you are correct. If you are referring to Paul's teaching, however, you are quite wrong.

As for the passages, Romans 8:1 has nothing to do with being sinless or not. It simply says that those who are in Christ are no longer under condemnation. This follows directly upon Paul's discourse in Romans 7 which actually began in Romans 1. Paul meant there that it is not those who try (and inevitably fail) to keep the Mosaic Law or those who were given said Law (that is physical descendants of Abraham) who escape God's condemnation, rather it is those for whom Christ has atoned, that is, those who have accepted covering by the Lord Jesus Christ Who are no longer condemned. In fact, the context vehemently rejects any idea that sinless perfection is possible (Romans 7:18) or that it is necessary to Salvation (Romans 4:5-8).

Galatians 5:17 teaches us that if we walk in the Spirit, that is, deliberately seek the Truth, learn it, believe it and apply it and endeavor to help other willing people to do the same,

we will not serve the desires of the flesh. That is a principle, a truth. But it does not at all suggest that we in fact can walk in the Spirit every moment of every day of our lives until we die or are resurrected at the Second Advent if we live to see that Day. It only says that every time we walk in the Spirit, we will not be serving the flesh. What one can take away from that is that we must fight to keep ourselves walking in the Spirit. If we falter or stumble, then we must pick ourselves up and get back to walking in the Spirit. But there is nothing here that even suggests that we can live every moment walking in the Spirit. If there were, it would immediately make James 3:2 a lie and that is impossible.

1 John 5:18 is not nearly as easy as you suppose it might be to interpret. If indeed it is so self-explanatory as you say, then we shouldn't have that much of a difficulty understanding how John says that after saying

1 John 2:1

[1]My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And **if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;**

If indeed, the translation of that passage is correct and your first impression of it is correct, then why did John say in the same letter above that if any believer sins (he is writing to believers and addresses them in the above verse), we have an Advocate in the Lord Jesus?

Clearly, John is saying something different than you understand and the translation may be part of the problem. The NIV1984 says:

1 John 5:18 We know that anyone born of God **does not continue to sin**; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

The difference is significant. First, clearly, from 1 John 2:1, John did not believe that believers can never sin. In fact, without chapters and verses (which were a human invention created for convenience), 1 John 2:1 is really part of what John was saying in the preceding chapter. In that preceding chapter, John had said "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This is in the immediate context of 2:1.

Next, in 1 John 3:3-10, the language is similar to 1 John 5:18. In NIV1984, the translation still goes "continue to sin". That does not contradict 1 John 2:1. So it is a better translation than any one that suggests that it is impossible to sin after we have been saved. However, the translation is still wanting in light of the entire letter. It makes the most sense to understand what John is saying thus (and I paraphrase):

"those who truly belong to God do not persist in sin because they keep themselves safe (by diligent confession of every sin and failure and thus maintaining fellowship with the Lord and the whole Church, see 1 John 1:6 - 2:2) so that the evil one cannot harm them."

So, again, this verse does not teach that sinless perfection is possible or expected of

believers although it is in fact commanded of us.

Question #11:

Maybe the reason why you don't believe God still speak is because you haven't been spoken to before by him which is a clear-evidence that you ain't part of His sheep because that's a confirmation that you are His.

Answer #11:

I suppose I can understand why you would take it upon yourself to try to understand whether anyone - especially someone who is claiming to teach the Truth - is a believer. I used to do that same exact thing right here on this forum years ago. Let me assure you that I respect that demand for credentials and will honor it immediately but I must ask you to consider my answer in good faith so that you do not condemn your own self with the demands that you make. That is always a danger for many of us believers when we test the authority of teachers.

I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am confident that He is Eternal God Who became a true Man - sinless, perfect Man though, unlike the rest of us - and died a terrible spiritual death on the Cross for our sins so that we can be reconciled to God and then He rose from the dead and was received again back into the Heavens for our justification.

So, I am a believer. There is nothing in the Bible that suggests that unless one has "been spoken to before by [God]", they are not believers. Several unbelievers received communications from God. The unbelieving Pharaoh got a dream about a global famine from God. Unbelieving Nebuchadnezzar received an eschatological dream from God as well. Just consider the staggering number of Israelite and Judahite kings who were evil and still received communications from God through prophets (same as believing kings themselves did too). Even the Pharisees heard the Lord Jesus Christ Himself directly. The wicked, idolatrous Israelites in the desert too heard the Lord and saw His Miracles. But they too were unbelievers who perished.

Still, refer to my earlier statements to understand about hearing God's voice. It isn't about being able to experience the miraculous but about choosing to listen to, learn from, believe in and diligently obey the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Bible. That too is something I strive everyday to choose.

Question #12:

The passages that I gave for perfection are self explanatory so let me explain I John 1vs8-10.

Vs 8: Anyone who claims he has no sin deceives himself and the truth is not in him.

When the gospel is presented to you (at this point you've never experience calvary) and you claim you have no sin, you deceive yourself because the sin of Adam made us all sinners and you must have by omission or commission committed a particular sin in the past.

Vs9: if you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. At this point you've come to calvary, no matter how filthy you are, no matter how moral you've been, no matter how long you've been a sinner or how many sins you've committed, He will cleanse your sin if only you'll come to the cross. Isaiah 1vs18 confirms that.

Vs10: If you say you have not sinned, you make him a liar and his word is not in you. Here, after you have been cleansed, if you begin to claim as if you never sinned in your life before you met God at the cross of calvary; then you make him a liar and his truth is not in you because HE in HIS WORD said all have #sinned (past tense) and come short of the glory of God.

Answer #12:

I think that my earlier response to your presentation of 1 John 5:18 is sufficient for this one as well.