

# Can I Be Perfect?

Intro:

1. How many times have you heard, "I'm not perfect - I'm just human!"
2. But Lord Jesus says, **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. - Matt 5:48.**
3. If the Lord commanded you to be, I guess you can be. But How?
4. There are two ways people try to be perfect enough to get to heaven.

*Romans 4:1-8, 13-25*

## I. You Can Try Working Your Way to Heaven By Living a Good Life

A. Most people try the Merit/Demerit System.

1. This is the military way.
  - a. Do a good job, you get merits. Get in trouble, you get "gigs"!
  - b. Accumulate merits & get a weekend pass.
  - c. Accumulate gigs & get extra guard duty, a G.I. party or kitchen detail.
2. The thinking here is if I do more good things than I do bad things, God will accept me.
  - a. But how do you know if you're being good enough?
  - b. The usual way - You compare yourself by passing judgment on others around you - right?
  - c. If you can have less faults than a church goer, God will accept you even if you don't go to church - right?
3. The whole idea is I get to have heaven as a reward for being good!

B. But - God's word says you can never be that good.

1. Here's the Problem - who sets the standards for acceptance? Where is the line you can cross over & say, "I've made it. I'm in!"?
  - a. Only God can set the standards! He says, . . . **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. - Rom 3:23**
  - b. This emphatically states - "There's a big gap between your best efforts & God's minimum standards for acceptance"! **ILL: The Big Gap.**
2. **v15** - The reward for the "working-your-way-to-heaven-on-your-own-steam" method is God's wrath! Why?
  - a. **v2** - This way only leads to self pride.
  - b. **v14** - This way would do away with faith (trusting God) & make His promises void.

C. God gave you the Law of Moses to show you what His standards are.

1. No one was ever completely successful obeying all of the Law of Moses - accept Jesus.
2. So - no one successfully worked his way to heaven by being good enough!
3. **v15** - Therefore - God's wrath is the result for everyone who ever tried it that way!

## II. You Can Trust God to Count You Good Enough to Get to Heaven

A. Lord Jesus paid the penalty for your sins on the cross!

1. He died to provide the difference between your best efforts & God's minimum standards for perfection!
  - a. **ILL: O. J. Simpson's Trial.** Later evidence pointed to the fact that he did it!
  - b. But judicially Double Jeopardy rules - you can never be tried for the same offense twice.
  - c. O. J. will never be put on trial again for that murder!
2. **Rom 3:23** - the wages of sin is death.
  - a. Since Jesus never sinned, He didn't have to die. He didn't have to pay those wages.
  - b. When He volunteered for the cross, He paid a price He didn't have to pay.
  - c. When you identify with Jesus by faith, God credits the Lord's (His price) death to your account!
3. **v5** - So - salvation isn't a reward for a good life - it's a free gift!

**B. v19-22 - Father Abraham's Example:**

1. Would you trust the one who tells you that you will have a son at 99 years old?
2. Remember - faith is what led Abraham to the promised land.
3. Remember - faith is what made Abraham attempt to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering.

**C. When you use the same faith Abraham used to trust God to make good on His promises to you - you will be accepted just like Abraham was.**

1. God promised that when you receive Jesus - He receives you.
  - a. The account is settled - your sins are forgiven - God considers you perfect enough for heaven.
  - b. You will have been judged "not guilty" from the throne room of heaven!
2. You are indwelt with God's Holy Spirit as a down payment of His grace.

**D. Now you are free to live your life as an expression of gratitude for the cross.**

1. You strive to please God by becoming more & more "perfect" - not in order to get saved, but because you already are! **Col 1:28 - We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.**

**2. Ways to strive toward the perfection God already considers you to have:**

- a. Obey God & live according to His direction.

**Gen 17:1 - When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.**

**I Kgs 8:61 - But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.**

- b. Behave so no one could truthfully blame you for doing wrong. **Deut 18:13 - You must be blameless before the LORD your God.**
- c. Be filled with Christ. **Eph 4:13 - until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**
- d. Become fully equipped to do good. **II Tim 3:17 - so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**
- e. Have a mature understanding of spiritual things. **Heb 6:1 -Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,**

Next time someone tells you that you aren't perfect - you can tell them, "Yes I am"! I've been made that way by the blood of the Lamb! Then strive to live it!

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