

# Perfectionism vs. Biblical Excellence

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## Perfectionist Self-Test

**Instructions:** Try to answer as many questions as possible on your own before the lecture begins. Check YES or NO.

	YES	NO	Questions
1.			Do you often avoid trying new things because you do not want others to see that you are not good at those things?
2.			Do you usually think you should have done things better?
3.			Do you put things off because it will take too much time to do them perfectly?
4.			Do you repeatedly re-live mistakes you have made in public?
5.			Do you dislike the idea that you may be just "average" in some area of your life?
6.			Do you often feel guilty because you do not accomplish the things that you see others doing?
7.			Do you feel that you have no purpose in life unless you can make a spectacular performance or contribution in some way?
8.			Do you often find faults in other people or in their work?
9.			Do you put off tasks because you do not know exactly how to do them perfectly?
10.			Do you find it hard to believe compliments because you don't meet your own standards?
11.			Do you miss out on the joy of living today because you are so busy worrying about whether you will be able to do all the things you are committed to in the future?
12.			Do you feel that you won't really be able to get God's special affection until you "shape up" and meet higher standards for prayer, Bible reading, devotions, and witnessing?
13.			Do you feel that keeping your appearance and home immaculate is important to keeping the approval of others?

## **I. Description of Perfectionism**

### **A. How many people are perfectionists?**

### **B. What kind of Christian is entrapped by perfectionism?**

### **C. What do perfectionists look like? (Symptoms)**

1. "All or Nothing" Thinking
  - a. Unrealistic Goals
  - b. Broken Vows
  - c. Success Amnesia
  
2. Fear of Failure
  - a. Paralysis
  - b. Dread of Future Commitments
  - c. Fear of Losing Control
  - d. Panic
  
3. Guilt
  - a. "Tyranny of the Shoulds"
  - b. Paranoia
  
4. Bitterness against "the shoulds," others, and God
  
5. Depression
  
6. Controlled Facade

7. Physical Problems
8. Reduced Productivity
9. Difficulty with Relationships
  - a. With other people (intolerance and intensity)
  - b. With God (distrust and distance)

**D. What then is a perfectionist?**

<b>A Perfectionist</b>	<b>A Pursuer of Biblical Excellence</b>
Sets impossible goals of perfection; must come out the winner	Sets a goal to faithfully give his best effort; leaves the results to God (Ja. 4:13-16)
Motivated to do well by fear of failure	Motivated to do his best by gratitude to God (Rom. 12:1)
Meditates on his failures or mistakes and discounts the successes	Learns from his mistakes, forgets them, and concentrates on the future (Phil. 3:13-14)
Takes criticism personally and defends himself	Realizes he can improve from criticism and learns from it (Pr. 9:8-9)
Thinks his value as a person depends on his performance	Realizes that his value was ascribed to him by God and that he could never earn it nor ever lose it (Eph. 1:6-7)
Views life as a miserable rat race; dreads the future	Looks forward to future challenges, trusting God to help him do well (Pr. 31:25 — Lit. "smiles at the future")
Gets depressed when he fails	Sees past his failure to how God can use it in his life to make him more Christlike and chooses to "hope in God" (Psa. 42:5,11; Heb. 12:11; James 1:2-3)
Compares himself with others (leads to pride or discouragement)	Compares himself with the standard God has for him as revealed in the Bible (II Cor. 10:12-13)

1. He is not the same as a pursuer of excellence.
  - a. In what he is trying to prove
    - 1) Perfectionist: \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) Pursuer of Excellence: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. In whom he will allow to control his destiny
    - 1) Perfectionist: \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2) Pursuer of Excellence: \_\_\_\_\_
2. He is a person who \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **II. Development of a Perfectionist**

### **A. We formulate the ideal standard**

1. Advertising
  - a. James 2:1-7
  - b. I Peter 3:3,4
  - c. I Timothy 6:6-11
  - d. Jeremiah 9:23,24
  - e. Luke 16:15
  - f. II Corinthians 6:3
2. Implication of parents, teachers, etc., in our youth
3. Others' comments
4. Comparison with other people (II Cor. 10:12)
5. Our own deduction (Prov. 3:5,6)

### **B. We set out to meet this ideal standard to prove to ourselves, others, and God that we have worth.**

### **III. Deliverance**

#### **A. Recognize the problem—identify the symptoms**

#### **B. Acknowledge the cause**

1. Our effort to overcome fear
  - a. That I would be a failure; that I would have no feelings of self worth
  - b. That others would disapprove of me
  - c. That God would disapprove of me
2. Our desire to be in control

#### **C. Develop an accurate picture of God's love and acceptance of you, and build a relationship with Him.**

1. Ephesians 1:6
2. Psalm 23

#### **D. Learn the biblical way of viewing human acceptance and love.**

1. Proverbs 29:25
2. Romans 8:31