

50 POSITIONAL TRUTHS

#26: Perfected forever

The New Testament Greek word for perfect is *teleios* (τέλειος); the idea is of completion, maturity, attaining an end or purpose, or to be fully developed. The term does not inherently refer to perfection in the sense of sinless perfection or absolute perfect righteousness. Unfortunately, a fair number of Christians see the word “perfect” in their Bibles in the context of some temporal completion and mistakenly believe that they can attain some sinless perfection in this life. Based on their warped view of this term, they generally become very self-righteous and priggish about some superficial standard. Instead of being oriented to grace, they generally become legalistic dunderheads ready to throw a hissy fit if they observe some “sinner” blessed by, enjoying, and growing in God’s grace. Again, the central meaning of this word is completion, understanding this will help us understand how it is used in the Bible.

There are at least three primary “completions” in Scripture. First, there is a progressive experiential “completion.” When believers imitate God (divine viewpoint) there is a sense in which they become *complete* (“perfect”), Matt. 5:48. When a believer passes a test and moves forward in the spiritual life, he is said to become *complete* (“perfect”), James 1:4. There is no implication in any of these passages of sinless perfection. The idea is that they have progressed in completion.

Second, there is an absolute state of completion that does include sinless perfection. Scripture declares that every believer in the eternal state will be conformed to the image of Christ, 1 Pet. 5:10. Every believer, regardless of his life on earth, someday will be conformed to the image of Christ—sinless, no old sin nature, an eternal resurrected body.

Third, there is positional perfection/completion. This perfection is due only to the believer’s standing in Christ. In this respect the believer is seen to be absolutely perfect, indeed as perfect as Christ Himself, but it is altogether due to the fact that he is in Christ and partaking of what Christ is, not to any “perfection” of his own. Again, *positionally* every believer is as perfect and complete as Jesus Christ, regardless of his temporal status—reversionism or supergrace. That’s grace! What a motivation! Instead of the believer trying to earn the approbation of God through the various religious treadmills, he should rest in the fact that God already *considers* him perfect in Christ. When the believer is freed from the bondage of trying to earn salvation, he can spend his time thinking about and responding to the marvelous matchless grace of God!

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Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected [perfect tense of *teleioo*, positional truth] for all time those who are being sanctified [progressive experiential truth].