

McCLAIN MINISTRIES

Since 2000 A Monthly Christian Newsletter Publication

April 2008

Spring Forward
With
Jesus



This Months Issue

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Frankye Regis
Maggie Lee

Happy Anniversary



"Together Forever with God"

The Candias'

Congratulations Anitra Williams!



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Melva's Corner

No Limits On God! (Special Edition)



Central Truth: Let's not limit God. I don't want to get to heaven and find out that I only did half of what the Lord had planned for me. I'm sure you don't want that either.

In Psalm 78, the psalmist magnified God's faithfulness by recounting Jewish history; specifically, God's mercy on the Jews who came out of Egypt during the forty years in the wilderness. He speaks of how many times they rejected God and doubted His goodness. **Psalm 78:40-41 says, "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel."**

That is a powerful passage of scripture, and one that applies to us today. The Lord has spoken that passage to me many times before, but now it's taken on a brand new meaning.

Verse 41 says they limited the Holy One, which is speaking of God. That's an amazing statement! The dictionary defines the verb "limit," as "to confine or restrict within limits." We can confine, restrict, or limit God.

That's a totally foreign concept to some people. There are those who think there can be no such thing as a limit on God. They see that as removing His Divinity.

A god that can be limited isn't really a god in many people's thinking.

I will say this: God isn't personally limited by anything or anyone. But when it comes to us receiving from Him, we can limit what He wants to do through us or for us. God doesn't sovereignly do what He wants with us. We have to co-operate. God Himself is limitless, but what He can accomplish is limited. Not because of any lack of power or ability on His part, but because of the part we have to play.

Ephesians 3:20 says, "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us . . ." Many of us stop after the first comma and proclaim God can do anything, but that's not the truth of this verse. God has limited Himself to what we believe Him to do. If there isn't the power of faith working in us, then He can't, or you could say, will not, work independent of us.

God is who He is, regardless of what we think or believe. If we don't believe God is real, that doesn't make Him cease to exist. As far as our experiences go, we won't encounter Him until we change that opinion. In essence change our mind!

Take salvation for example. **II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."** You can't make it any plainer than that. It is not God's will for people to perish, but they do. Why? Not because God wills it, but because God gave us a free will and there are those of us who choose to reject God's provision for our salvation.

That's a very sobering thought! Many don't like that truth because it makes them responsible. They like to think that God just sovereignly makes things happen in their lives. That way, they can blame God for the mess they are in and say, "God is teaching me something or making me a better person." But that's not what God's Word says.

The Lord willed for the Israelites to enter into the promised land in a short period of time. But the generation that came out of Egypt died during the forty years in the wilderness. That wasn't God's will. That was because of their own choices.

In I Samuel 13:13, Samuel told Saul that if he would have believed and obeyed God, the Lord would have established his kingdom over Israel forever. That means that David wasn't God's first choice; Saul was. If Saul wouldn't have limited God, then we would be singing about the sure mercies of Saul instead of David. We have to co-operate with the Lord to see His will fulfilled in our lives.

There are many ways we limit the Lord. In Psalm 78, the scripture mentions they limited God by not remembering His goodness and faithfulness toward them. They lusted for things they didn't have, and rebelled at godly authority. There are other ways we can limit God too.

Unknowingly we can limit the Lord by small thinking about ourselves and what the Lord can do through us.

We all have images on the inside of us of who we are and what we can do. These images and thoughts are like ceilings, or limits, to what we can do. You will never occupy a place that you haven't already carved out in your thoughts.

What makes one person able to sky dive while another one would never do such a thing? In most cases, it's not some physical ability that makes the difference. It's the way they think on the inside. We can't do something on the outside that we haven't already embraced on the inside. **"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).**

Sometimes, these limits come through things that were spoken to us as children, like: "You'll never amount to anything," or, "You never do anything right." If we believe these negative words, they become

strongholds which limit what God can do for us. Other times, life shatters our dreams, and we develop negative thoughts on our own which become self-fulfilling prophecies.


Then, there are some limits which just occur naturally, and we have to grow through them, like children learning to sit, then stand, then walk, then run and jump, etc.

I believe we all tend to think too small. Regardless of how far you think you've come, we have a BIG God who thinks and does BIG. As a friend said to me once, "if your dreams and visions aren't keeping you up at night, you're thinking too small." Let's not limit God. I don't want to get to heaven and find out that I only did half of what the Lord had planned for me. I'm sure you don't want that either.

Maybe you are playing it too safe and you need to take the limits off of what the Lord wants to do for you and through you. There's always something more. The Lord has a perfect plan for you. If your life isn't fulfilling, then you haven't discovered God's best. God has great thoughts for us all (Jeremiah 29:11).

I encourage you to take the few things I've shared here and let the Lord stir you up to receive nothing less than His best. You won't accomplish everything all at once. As lofty as my dreams are the Lord continues to show me from time to time that I'm still thinking too small. We never really arrive, but I've left the station. I pray you're going with me.

Scriptural References:

**"For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
(Jeremiah 29:11) **

Fulfilling Your Destiny! (Special Edition)



Central Truth: Fulfilling God's will in your life first begin with the understanding that it's wisdom to know His will.

Before you were ever born, before you ever demonstrated any talents or abilities, God created you for a purpose with a destiny. Look at these scriptures. **Jeremiah 1:5** says, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

In **Galatians 1:15** we read, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace."

Both the Prophet Jeremiah and the Apostle Paul knew that God had a predetermined plan for their lives, where all of their gifts, abilities, and talents would be used.

We also know from Scripture that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was, what the world would call, a six-month-old fetus. I personally don't like that word because it's an attempt to dehumanize a child. God did not fill a hunk of tissue; He filled a living human being.

Throughout the Scripture are many examples of God's preordained plans for people, and we know that He is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34**). So what He has done for others, He will and has done for you.

Fulfilling God's will in your life first begins

with the understanding that it's wisdom to know His will. Next is understanding that you were not created to be self-sufficient but God dependent. **Ephesians 5:17** says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

The Bible says in **Jeremiah 10:23**, "O LORD, I know that the way of a man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Ephesians 5:17 is a direct command. He would not have commanded it if it were not possible to know. That would be unjust. Some who read this may take offense, but if you don't know God's will, you aren't acting wisely.

God never created you to be independent; He created you to be dependent upon Him. That is why it is not in a person to direct their own life. Let me give you a simple example.

What if you were hired by a company that didn't have job descriptions for anyone? Can you imagine the chaos and conflict that would occur if the daily activities of all the employees, including yourself, were left up to the discretion of each individual? It would be a mess.

In a way, that is basically what's happening in society today—people are doing their own thing. Without direction from God, people find themselves unfulfilled, unproductive, and plagued with all kinds of self-inflicted problems.

God has a purpose for your life, He has a destiny for you to fulfill, but Satan wants to kill, steal, and destroy that plan. You get to choose. Will God win in your life, or will it be the devil? If things are going wrong for you, I can guarantee you it's not God that caused it to happen.

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the Lord,

thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

God’s plans for you are all good, not evil. So, if your life is a mess, it’s because you have not followed His plan. But don’t lose hope if that’s you, because God isn’t upset with you. His expected end for you hasn’t changed. He is able to plot a course from where you are right now to where He wants you to be.


I don’t care what has happened or how far off-track you are, God can put you back on course. Everything about you was created by God so that you could fulfill the expected end, your destiny. Your gifts, your talents, the way you look, your race, and even where you were born have a role in His plan. You were not an accident. The Bible says God knew you before you were in your mother’s womb.

Once you discover God’s plan for your life, it carries with it a supernatural ability and an anointing that will cause you to flourish. You are no longer working from just your own ability and talent, but you’re operating out of obedience, and that is where the blessing and anointing of God are found.

Fulfilling your destiny all begins with knowing God’s plan for your life. But, as long as you can live without knowing His will for your life, you will. I am convinced you can’t find it accidentally; you will need to seek it with all your heart. And when you find it, that’s just the beginning. You will learn that decisions do determine your destiny, so it’s important to make good ones. Bad ones have certainly derailed the destinies of many people. There’s a right way and a wrong way to make decisions. Next to salvation, this should be the most important pursuit of your life. So don’t wait any longer—start seeking God now.

Scriptural References:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you

may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13) 

HIGHER MOUNTAINS...HIGHER PRAISES

BLESSED EVERYDAY!
Sylvia Washington

Valentine’s Day was a blessing for me. I was in need of a certain amount of money by Friday the 15th of February. Well on February 14th, Valentine’s Day, I sold Valentine Baskets and made the amount I needed and more. God is blessing me in a mighty way. He’s always there, even when he seems far away.

Bless the Lord Oh my Soul and ALL that is within me. Bless HIS Holy Name.

My prayer is that everyone will be Blessed in a mighty way.

A VISIT TO AFRICA
Reported by: Melva McClain

March 13th, Just to update you. McClain Ministries' Loretta Lever is visiting our girls in Africa. Here is a text message from her:

“The people in Burkina Faso are very nice. Melva, they pray for you all the time. We have met with school officials three times. We took pictures of the girls this morning. The School Director is very nice. The Chief presented me with a ‘live’ chicken and a rooster. Everyone here thinks very highly of Theo. He knows everyone. All of the officials met with us yesterday. They said this is the first time they have ever had that many officials together at one time. The village is very poor. Please email me ASAP to let Theo know how much money was sent for the additional school benches so he can request it at western union. I have pictures of the girl’s community garden and we went to the market yesterday.”

yesterday and I have pictures of them selling. Lots of pictures to share.

Talk with you soon. God has kept me healthy.

March 18th Update: I just want to let you know that Loretta Lever has returned home safely tonight from her trip to Burkina Faso, Africa. Let's give God the Praise and Glory for a safe trip. I know we all look forward to her report.

SERVING GOD ALMIGHTY IS A WONDERFUL THING

Please see the praise report from our sister **Gloria Wallace**. What a God we serve!

Hi Melva:

As you and the prayer partners know Mother Rosemary Collins, who is a member of my church, was admitted to the hospital on Thursday, March 6th because she would not eat or drink anything that entire week. When she arrived at the Hospital she was very weak, basically nothing but skin and bones. The doctor said she was very dehydrated and her kidneys were not functioning properly. They immediately started her on an IV. I called her that Friday and Saturday and spoke with her daughter Donna who told me her Mother would not eat or drink anything. I let her know I would be there Sunday after church. As I entered her room Mother Collins looked up and saw me and said here is my baby. I told her she had to start eating to get stronger. I got her to eat all of her meals everyday. I was there with her from 8am until 6pm daily. She ate 3 meals a day and all the snacks that I gave her in between meals.

During that time she gained 8 pounds. Her doctor's ran every test they could think of trying to find out why she was losing blood and why she did not have an appetite. I was there with her through all of her tests; she would even look around to

sure I was there. And I was. The doctors finally concluded that she was on to many different medicines.

They changed all of her medicines and started her on B12 shots. She begins talking, walking, and singing, praise God I am on my way back. She also said, "baby if you had not forced me to eat I would be at home with the Lord." I told her God was not ready for her to come home, He had more things for her to do. She is so anointed and such a gifted person - at the age of 84 she can name every book in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation in perfect order and she can quote scriptures word for word. Churches are always calling on her to speak at their church - she is such an anointed speaker and a fantastic singer as well. She was released from the hospital the evening of March 15th and doing fine. I told her to continue to eat all her food and that I would be there for her as long as she needed me.

What a wonderful God we have, He is worthy to be praised. God Bless.

WAIT I SAY ON THE LORD! Denise Jones

God is so good! All you have to do is WAIT ON HIM. I've been waiting for seven years for a Toyota Sequoia. Seven years ago I asked God for this vehicle for my business.

I printed a copy of a WHITE Sequoia that I found on CARS.COM and put it on my refrigerator. It meant so much to me till I wanted everybody I knew to know how bad I wanted it.

That's not all, every time I would see one especially a white one I WOULD BLOW A KISS AT IT, OR WINK MY EYE because I knew this was what I truly wanted to drive.

On the way to Melva's house one Saturday for Bible class I passed by a car lot and a

WHITE Sequoia was parked in the front, it was strange because it was the ONLY one there on the lot.

I wrote down the number and called the salesman the following Monday to ask about the vehicle, mainly the price and model of the vehicle.

It was a 2001, and they were asking \$15,988.00. The next day I got in my car and drove to Brandon to look at the Sequoia but when I go there they were closed . . . so all I could do was "PAINT THE BLOOD OF JESUS ON IT." The next day I went on cars.com to see if I could find one a little more reasonable and I did at a car lot in Florence MS. I picked up a friend of mine to ride with me but when we got there we didn't like the Sequoia or the salesman, so she and I drove back to Brandon, but the car lot was still closed.

The next day I called the salesman in Brandon again to let him know I was coming to see the Sequoia, and this time I asked, "What time do you close." This time I also carried my CHECKBOOK!

When I arrived a salesman met me at my car and asked could he help me I told him that I was interested in the Sequoia BUT I only had \$14,000 CASH he said well, "because it's the END OF THE MONTH, the manager might let it go for that." He then went inside and called the manager to let him know what I was offering.

I don't know what happened but wherever the manager was he drove up QUICKLY!

Saints, I BOUGHT the 2001 TOYOTA SEQUOIA for \$14,800 CASH. I was told that a lady was there looking at the vehicle the day before and left saying she wanted it but had to talk to her husband, she called after I wrote the check to say she was on her way to get it, the salesman told her

"Not this one mam, I have a check on my desk, IT'S SOLD!"

I've attached photos of the SEQUOIA. The last photo is the one I printed and put on my refrigerator 7 years ago.

It's the EXACT vehicle and if you turn the numbers around it's the amount I paid for this one.

WAIT I SAY ON THE LORD!



PERSONAL TESTIMONY
Melva McClain

The manual on "Faith Is . . ." is finally complete and it has truly taught me what faith is. During the past 6 months I have personally had my faith put to the test. And I am so pleased that the Lord laid an initial firm foundation so that I could weather the test. If you are experiencing a crisis of faith today this manual was written with you in mind. In the pages of this manual you will see how I weathered my crisis of faith and I believe it will help you as well. Always remember, God will never leave or forsake you. And not only will He not leave you, He will put people in your life to lift you up when necessary. I just completed the final chapter entitled "Perfection." You will find it on page 10.



GOD'S AMAZING FAVOR

Denise Jones

I'm very pleased to say that ETERNAL CREATIONS made it through with the EASTER BASKET SALES! YESSSSSS!

Satan tried to steal my JOY so he could take my GOODS but it DIDN'T happen!

Friday when I pulled up on the lot to set up to sell my baskets a man was already there - set up to sell PURSES! Ya'll would NOT have wanted to see the LOOK on my face and I don't think he appreciated it. You see I was there selling baskets on Wednesday and nobody told me that a man was going to be there selling purses.

So, I asked him if the owner said he could set up there and he replied "yes" I then went inside the store to speak with the manager but he wasn't there, another man was there working in his place who called the owner. By that time, PHOEBE called and I told her about it she said you have the license to set up there, don't worry about it.

I looked up and the man was taking all of the purses down, I said, sir you don't have to leave just move down, he said, "no, I don't wanna get in your way, I didn't mean any harm mam."

Actually, I think I scared the poor man.

Folk told me when I was selling Valentine's baskets in that spot that someone was going to notice the traffic I was getting and try to get that spot but, I told that ole devil that GOD gave ME this spot and you and your forces are NOT gonna take it from me! NOBODY had EVER asked the manager if they could sit in spot until I came.

The store owner said that man with the purses asked if he could sit there every other Friday and was told him he could ONLY if I didn't have anything going on at

the time. I made sure I got the owner's name, gave them one of my business cards gave his wife a basket and I also gave his kids baskets . . . I said you WILL remember me IN JESUS NAME!

My Goal for EASTER was to make \$4000 - \$5000. I made \$3400 PRAISE GOD!

Its just in time, I am planning my daughter's wedding for June and this was probably the last BIG SEASONAL basket sale for the year so I am going to use the funds for the wedding. PRAISE GOD!

I had about 30 baskets left - so I decided to set up for a while Sunday. I didn't sell much but the HOLY SPIRIT told me why I was sent back to set up Sunday.

I gave away over 15 baskets and received lots of hugs; thank yous and smiles from a lot of mothers and kids faces

This is what it's all about, giving back. This is the prayer I prayed before I set up to sell my baskets:

"Heavenly Father please let the public see the PASSION I have for MY baskets; the TIME and EFFORT I put into each and every one of them."

If only you could have heard the WORDS people were saying about the baskets. It was such a JOY I told the Lord if I didn't sell ONE basket, thank you so much for answering my prayer.

I thank God for allowing ME to be ME!

God bless each and every one of you and I pray that God will give you the desires of your heart.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Home Bible Workshop Schedule



Mark your calendars for the months of **April and May 2008**. Please join us and take the next step in your walk with God.

April 12

Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST

“The Power of Intercessory Prayer”
Includes Nationwide Video Conferencing

May 10

Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST

“The Power of Intercessory Prayer”
Includes Nationwide Video Conferencing



2ND QUARTER TELECONFERENCE

April 26

8:00 A.M. CST

 Toll Free Dial-In Number

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Participant Code: 730940

Embrace Spring with a Renewed Spirit



THE GOD EFFECT OF PRAYER

6:00 P.M. Hour of Prayer



SPEND TIME PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Use this wonderful supernatural tool the Lord has blessed us with **the 6 o'clock hour of power**. This is the time to intercede for the needs of others, the concerns of the ministry, and to pray for the leadership within our community, our nation, and our world.

Hearts throbbing as one, prayers ascending to heaven multiplied by those praying in **one accord**. Sharing burdens, joys, and petitions to bear. Lay all your cares at the foot of the cross and encourage others to do the same. Lives are being changed. Breakthroughs are happening.

Life Changing Work - McClain Ministries



With the guidance of the Holy Spirit McClain Ministries has endeavored to provide you with quality spiritual nutrition. Together with timely articles on a weekly basis we have also faithfully completed five (5) life changing manuals in the past four (4) years.

One of our goals is to self-publish these manuals so that the world can experience the messages the Holy Spirit has shared with us.

WEBSITE OFFERINGS

FAITH IS...

I have now completed writing a new manual entitled simply "FAITH IS . . ." You can find the entire manual on our website. Today I want to share the final chapter with you.

CHAPTER ELEVEN PERFECTION

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- Write the Key Verse from memory.
- Define "perfection."
- Identify the example of perfection for believers.
- Name the standard of perfection for believers.
- Distinguish between initial and progressive perfection.
- List factors involved in the perfection process.

KEY VERSE:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

INTRODUCTION

Just as a good foundation is important to a building in the natural world, a good spiritual foundation is important for the believer. Through the parable of the two builders you learned that your spiritual foundation must be built on the Word of God.

Hebrews 6:1-3 reveals that the foundations of the Christian faith are:

- Repentance from dead works
- Faith toward God
- Doctrine of baptisms
- Laying on of hands
- Resurrection of the dead
- Eternal judgment

These are basic doctrines of the Word of God on which you are to build your spiritual life. You studied each of these in previous chapters.

ON TO PERFECTION

In Hebrews 6:1-3 Paul gives an additional step which is necessary in building your spiritual life:

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection. (Hebrews 6:1)

Repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are all principles of the doctrine of Christ.

Two extremes are common among believers. One is that they have a knowledge of the Word of God but do not apply that knowledge to daily living. The other extreme is that believers emphasize experience and ignore doctrine. Both doctrine and experience are important. A proper understanding of doctrine results in experience. But experience that is not based on Biblical doctrine is not trustworthy.

You must not only understand the basic doctrines of Hebrews 6:1-3 but you must also experience them. Once you have built your life on these doctrines through experience, you must learn how to "go on unto perfection." That is the purpose of this chapter.

DEFINITION

The word "perfection" means complete, finished, and mature. The Bible uses the word "perfection" rather than "maturity" to describe a spiritually mature believer. A "perfect" Christian is one who has achieved spiritual maturity. This means his body, soul, and spirit are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The word "perfection" is similar to the word "sanctification" or "consecration" which are also used in the Bible. "Sanctification" means holiness and "consecration" means to be set apart in righteousness.

TWO DANGERS

There are two dangers if spiritual foundations are emphasized without attention to perfection:

1. One danger is to lay a good spiritual foundation and not go on to spiritual maturity.
2. The other danger is to attempt to build a "superstructure" of perfection on a faulty spiritual foundation.

COMPLETING THE FOUNDATION

A foundation is not a completed building. A superstructure must be built on the foundation. A superstructure is that part of a building which is visible above the foundation. A good spiritual foundation is not the final goal for a believer:

Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (Luke 14:29-30)

Many people begin with God. They hear the Gospel, repent from dead works, and have faith toward God, but they never progress beyond this point. They never complete their spiritual foundation and go on to perfection.

A partial foundation in the natural world is not functional. You cannot construct a building on a partial foundation or it will collapse under stress. You must complete the foundation and then construct the building.

Believers who have not completed their spiritual foundations will have difficulty under stress. They will live "up and down" lives spiritually. Their spiritual building will not weather the storms of life. They cannot go on to perfection [spiritual maturity] because their foundation is incomplete.

BUILDING THE SUPERSTRUCTURE

In the natural world, a foundation alone is not very functional. It is the building constructed on that foundation that serves as a home, office, or school. The reason some people are spiritually immature is because they only lay a spiritual foundation and never finish the building by going on to perfection.

Paul spoke of these spiritually immature believers:

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat.

For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: For he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

Paul told the Corinthian believers that it was time they should be teaching others the Gospel. Instead, they were having to be taught the first [foundational] principles of God. He compared them to babies who only could drink milk. By "milk" he meant the first principles of God. Milk is very healthy and brings growth, but there comes a time when a baby goes on to solid foods:

Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine?

them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. (Isaiah 28:9)

Just as weaning from milk is necessary in the natural world if a child is to develop properly, it is also necessary in the spiritual world. Believers must go beyond first principles on to spiritual maturity [perfection]. Spiritually mature believers are able to feast on the meat, not just the milk, of the Word of God.

THE CALL TO PERFECTION

Jesus calls His followers to perfection:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

This perfection reflects the presence of God:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one. (John 17:23)

It results in spiritual maturity:

Brethren, be not children in understanding . . . in understanding be men. (I Corinthians 14:20)

Perfection was a goal of the early church. Paul wrote:

For . . . this also we wish, even your perfection . . .
. . . Be perfect . . . (II Corinthians 13:9, 11)

Individual perfection results in your being perfectly joined together with other believers in the Body of Christ:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (I Corinthians 1:10)

Divisions in the Body of Christ are a result of spiritual immaturity.

THE EXAMPLE OF PERFECTION

Jesus is the example of perfection for believers:

For even hereunto were ye called: Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. (I Peter 2:21)

For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (Hebrews 2:10)

And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. (Hebrews 5:9)

God planned believers to be conformed [be made like] Jesus who is our example of perfection:

For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

THE STANDARD OF PERFECTION

The standard of perfection by which believers are measured is God's Word. Jesus was the example of perfection and conformed perfectly to the Word because He was the visible revelation of God's Word. God has set standards in His Word which are to govern our lives. The first standards He gave man were called the "law" and are recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament. Much of the history of the Old Testament records the inability of man to keep God's laws. God knew man would not be able to keep the law through his own efforts.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: For the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

God did not leave us in this hopeless condition. Through the law He promised the Messiah:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. (Deuteronomy 18:18-19)

In Acts 3:22-26 these same words are quoted by the Apostle Peter and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, various sacrifices were required by God for sin. After Jesus sacrificed His life for the sin of all mankind, the Old Testament sacrifices were no longer necessary:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come . . . can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect . . .

For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:1, 14)

The purpose of the law is summarized in these words:

But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be

justified by faith. (Galatians 3:22-24)

Man could not keep the standards of a righteous God through self-effort. The law showed the need for a Savior and led man to Jesus Christ. It is through Christ, not self-effort, that you are perfected. It is through Him that you are conformed to His example of perfection and to the standard of the Word of God.

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [Christ] did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Hebrews 7:19)

LEVELS OF PERFECTION

There are two levels of perfection:

INITIAL PERFECTION:

In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul calls the believers "saints" which means "sanctified ones." Yet in the same letter he corrects these "saints" because of sin. They were believers and sanctified in Christ, but some of them were not living right in their daily conduct.

These believers had received initial perfection. They were forgiven of their sins through redemption from dead works. These sins were forgiven once and for all (Hebrews 10:14).

This initial perfection was received at the time they accepted Jesus as Savior. But these Christians had not gone on to perfection. They had not continued to put off the "old man" of sin:

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. (Romans 6:6)

Paul told them it was not right to continue living in sin after conversion. He said:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (II Corinthians 5:17)

As a believer you should live a new life. It is not right to continue in sin. Paul said:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Therefore . . . we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:1,2,4) We must go on to perfection.

PROGRESSIVE PERFECTION:

Initial perfection from sin at the time of salvation is the start of a progressive life of sanctification. After salvation, you are to live a new life in Christ:

I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

Paul described progressive perfection in his own life:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12)

Paul had not attained complete perfection, but it was his goal. He described his struggle for perfection in another passage:

For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:15-23)

Paul wanted to live by God's standards, but he realized that by himself [in his flesh] he could not achieve this goal. There was a constant battle between his flesh and his spirit.

His spirit wanted to keep God's laws (verse 22). His flesh wanted to sin. He discovered that the only way he could achieve perfection was through Christ:

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you.

. . . but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (Romans 8:10,11,13)

It is only through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God's standards.

When the flesh results in you doing those things we would not, God has provided a way to restore you to perfection.

For if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9)

You do not have to try to live this new life in your own strength. You live it through "faith in the Son of God." Whenever you fail, you can be restored to perfection before God by confessing your sins and asking forgiveness.

When you are born again, you are just like a baby in the natural world. You have much to learn spiritually. While you are learning you make mistakes. When you make mistakes, you must confess your sins and God will forgive you.

As a believer, you fight the 'good fight of faith.' This is a spiritual battle which takes place in your mind and through the circumstances of life around you. On occasion, you may lose a battle to the enemy. But this does not mean he has won the war. You may temporarily feel defeated but through confession of your sins you can rise again in righteousness to continue on to perfection.

As you learned in a previous chapter, Jesus has already judged Satan. Satan was defeated by Jesus at Calvary. The power of God within you is greater than the power of the enemy:

**. . Greater is He that is within you than he that is in the world.
(I John 4:4)**

You go on to perfection through the strength of this power, not human effort. Going on to perfection is not a course in self-improvement. It is learning to live as the new creature you are through faith in Christ Jesus.

THE PERFECTION PROCESS

The following things are necessary for the perfection process to occur in your life:

A GOOD FOUNDATION:

As you learned in this course, a good spiritual foundation is required to go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1-3).

RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD:

One of the purposes of the Word of God is to provide correction which results in perfection:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

**That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
(II Timothy 3:16-17)**

Just studying God's Word will not perfect you. You must make a personal response to the Word:

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

**But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
(James 1:21-25)**

You must not only look into God's law, but "continue" [live] according to it. You must make a personal response to the Word by laying aside all "filthiness and naughtiness." Being a doer of the Word brings assurance of salvation:

But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: Hereby know we that we are in Him. (I John 2:5)

PRAYER:

Prayer results in perfection:

. . . always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)

CONSECRATION:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

By consecrating your life to God you will know His perfect will. Consecration means to be set apart. When you consecrate your life to God you refuse to conform to the standards of the world. You choose to conform to the standards of God's Word.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

One of the purposes of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is to assist the perfection process in your life. As you learned in a previous chapter, God has ministry gifts in the church for . . .

As you learned in a previous chapter, God

has ministry gifts in the church for . . .

. . . the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; 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 fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:12-13)

SUBMISSION TO PROVEN MINISTRIES:

God uses spiritual leaders in the perfection process. You should submit to the leadership of those God sets in authority in the church. Submission to "proven" ministries means submitting to spiritual leaders whose ministries have shown conformity to God's Word.

The role of spiritual leaders in the perfection process is revealed in Paul's writings:

Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith. (I Thessalonians 3:10)

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:28)

. . . always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. (Colossians 4:12)

. . . this also we wish, even your perfection. (II Corinthians 13:9)

SUFFERING:

No one likes to suffer, but when suffering comes in the life of a believer it can have a positive purpose: Suffering results in perfection:

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. (I Peter 5:10)

Patience during times of suffering results in perfection:

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:4)

SELF-CONTROL:

Part of the process of perfection is learning self-control. We are told to . . .

. . . cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1)

One of the most difficult things to control is the tongue. But control of the tongue is a key to self-control of your whole life:

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:2)

RESPONDING TO SPIRITUAL CORRECTION

Correction received from mature believers is also part of the perfection process:

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

You will be restored to perfection if you respond properly to such correction.

SUMMARY

Spiritual maturity does not mean advancing in God's favor. It does not mean the work of salvation is incomplete.

It does not gain you access to Heaven, because this was done through the death of Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus you are justified before God. It is through Him you are saved and have the promise of Heaven.

Perfection does not come by maintaining a set of standards. It is possible for a person to maintain standards that give an outward spiritual appearance yet be unspiritual and maybe even unsaved.

Spiritual maturity does not depend on how you feel emotionally. It does not come automatically through years of being a Christian or by Christian service. Spiritual maturity [perfection] comes through an increase in and application of spiritual knowledge. This increase in knowledge comes by study of God's Word.

This study results in understanding of the processes for perfection and the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. Personal application of what you learn leads to spiritual maturity through the enabling power of God.

Perfection (Spiritual Maturity)

Study Of God's Word

**.
Leads To**

**.
An Increase In Spiritual Knowledge**

**.
When Applied Through God's Power**

**.
This Leads To**

**.
Spiritual Maturity (Perfection)**

IN CLOSING . . .

We have come to the conclusion of our study of foundations of the Christian faith. But in reality you have not completed this course. As Paul said, you must now . . .

... go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1).

Each chapter of this course began with a list of objectives. These were the goals which were to be achieved through study of the chapter. Your new objective, for the next chapter of your life, is perfection . . .

For . . . this also we wish, even your perfection. (II Corinthians 13:9)

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

I am so thankful our paths have crossed. In fact, I believe it was a divine appointment. Over twenty - five years ago, an encounter with God changed my life forever, and I believe He'll do the same for you. I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to share the truth of His life-changing power and grace with you.

God called me to teach the truth of the Gospel to the body of Christ with special emphasis on God's unconditional love and the balance between grace and faith. At McClain Ministries we are working diligently to fulfill that call by training others and by developing ministry materials designed to help you in your relationship with the Lord.

Your interest in partnership is evidence of the fact that not only has this ministry affected your life, but you also have a desire to help someone else and believe this message can provide that help. Together, through partnership, you and I can reach thousands of people with the good news of the Gospel.

I believe the message the Lord has entrusted me to deliver will change the way the body of Christ perceives God. However, it doesn't matter how important the message is or how well I deliver it, until the message is sent, no one will hear. Partnership makes the delivery possible.

The Apostle Paul understood his role as the messenger, but he also understood that partnership was not only about what he received but what the partners received as well. In **Philippians 4:19** he wrote, "**But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**" This was written by Paul to his partners. The Philippians were the only ones who supported him after leaving town. In fact, they wanted to give more but didn't have the opportunity. Paul was saying that there is a special provision for those who recognize the power in partnership.

For me, it has never been about "you" supporting "my" ministry. If you're a partner, then consider this our ministry, and together we will accomplish God's will. In fact, I'm an extension of you and your obedience to God. Like Paul, I'm just the messenger that God has called for a specific purpose. If I fulfill that call, the fruit will be evident to everyone, and if I don't, then God will find another messenger and direct your support to that person.

Although I am committed to doing my part to bring revival to America, we have an awesome opportunity to make a big difference in people's lives around the world. Our current projects must be funded by those of us who are more blessed.

Do you remember when you first began to partake of the message from this ministry and how it affected your life? There are thousands just like you all over the world, waiting to hear the truth that will set them free. Will you help us? Together, we can do it.

You may never realize what your gifts accomplish during your life on earth, but I can promise that in eternity, people from all over the world will thank you for your

investment in their lives. I want to thank you in advance for your consideration and response.

Please make your gifts payable to McClain Ministries. All funds given for Community Outreach projects will be used for that purpose exclusively until the projects are fully funded. Any surplus will then be applied to the McClain Ministries general account.

HERE ARE OUR SIX CURRENT PROJECTS:

Computer Clinic

Tutoring Classes

Community Pantry

National Bulletin Board Service

Internet Radio Station

Girls School in Africa

We are pleased to offer the ability to make donations to McClain Ministries online using your credit or debit card. As you all know we have six (6) ongoing projects at this time. And all of our projects are funded through donations. Thank you so much for your support.

Just simply use the link to go to our website then:

<http://mcclainministries.org/>

Click onto the **DONATE** button

Enter the amount and update

Scroll to the bottom of the page and you will see the following narrative.

Your credit card or bank account (where available). [Continue](#)

Click on **Continue** and follow instructions

Our African Community Garden Project Is Flourishing



CATCH THE VISION OF OUR GIRL'S SCHOOL IN AFRICA

Our girls along with their families are reaping tremendous benefit from their community garden. The funds received from taking their produce to market are used to enhance the family life of the village. Your donations made this garden possible.



Loretta Lever of McClain Ministries visited our girls in March and had an opportunity to view the garden first hand. Loretta is the third from left in the above photo.



McCLAIN MINISTRIES

AFRICAN SCHOOL PROJECT

Our goal is fourfold:

1. Build a school that includes 4 classrooms, 2 bathrooms and 1 administration office at a cost of approximately \$25,000.
2. Provide 300 Girl's Secondary School Scholarships at a cost of \$117,000
3. Supply 160 benches for the new school at a cost of \$6400
4. Supply 100 benches for existing schools at a cost of \$4000

Our total target goal for this project amounts to \$152,400.

Here is how you can help with this vital project:

School contributions: \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 other _____

Scholarships:

\$75 (1 year of secondary school including uniforms)

\$450 (6 years of secondary school)

other _____

Benches:

Bench for school \$40 (*specify no. of benches*) _____

Thank you in advance for your support!

Please send to:

**McClain Ministries
1050 Ridgeside Drive
Brandon, Ms 39042**



McCLAIN MINISTRIES

Deuteronomy 16:17: Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

This Ministry has been such a blessing to me I want to share in reaching others with a **monthly gift** of:

\$30 \$40 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Enclosed is my ministry **additional financial donation** of: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

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Home Number _____

Work Number _____

Fax Number _____

Email _____

Please send to:

McClain Ministries
1050 Ridgeside Drive
Brandon, Ms 39042



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