

“

NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE*

... For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5:43-8

”

*Without Context.

15. Be Perfect

TODAY’S VERSES:

Perfect Meaning

- 1 Corinthians 14:20
- Ephesians 3:15, 4:13
- Colossians 1:28, 4:12

Call to be Perfect

- Leviticus 11:44
- 1 Peter 1:15
- 2 Cor 6:18 – 7:1

Christ is Perfect for Us

- Hebrews 10:14
- Romans 3:21-26
- Colossians 1:22
- Ephesians 2:4-9

Living as Sons & Daughters of God

- Eph 1:5,11-14, 2:10, 4:24
- Colossians 3:10
- Matthew 5:1-20

RECAP & DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Jesus uses the “antithesis” statements in the Sermon on the Mount to highlight how the Jewish people were taking the Old Testament law out of context. The law had become a list of ways to show obedience, instead of having obedience from a heart’s disposition toward God. It is in this context Jesus calls believers “to be perfect like their heavenly Father is perfect.” Perfect is not in the literal sense here, rather the Greek word “teleios” which describes believers journeying to “maturity” and “completeness” in our walk with the Lord. Jesus’ purpose in calling believers to perfection is not to act “more” morally upright, it is to remind us to act in response from a heart that is saved by grace. We must remember that we have been adopted into God’s family through Christ’s work on the cross, that He merited for us what was impossible for us so that we can grow to resemble our Father more every day.

- What does Jesus mean by being perfect? Why is this important to read in context?
- Textual evidence of the word “hate” has been found in the Jewish Dead Sea Scrolls to refer to pagan (gentiles) occupiers of the promised land. This was a cultural issue that crept into how they interpreted scriptures. Is there anything today that has crept into our interpretation of scripture that is not found there?
- What are some ways our culture tells us we must be perfect in the literal sense?
- What are some ways that we, as the Church, can help guard against calls to merit grace?
- What are some tangible ways we believers grow into maturity while keeping Christ as our “True Bearing?” Are there ways we should avoid achieving this?
- What can we learn from how God uses unqualified people of the Bible for His glory?
- How do the “beatitudes” (Mt 5:1) inform us on how to live as Sons and Daughters of God?