

A MORE **PERFECT** YOU

THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION IN CHRIST

MIKE MAZZALONGO

TEACHER'S GUIDE

bibleTalk^{TV}



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A More Perfect You

The Pursuit of Perfection in Christ

Mike Mazzalongo

The Bible tells us to seek perfection yet we know that perfection is not attainable in this sinful flesh. These contradictory ideas are reconciled in this study of Christian perfection.



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Overall Teaching Strategy

It is recommended that teachers use a combination of informal lecture and guided discussion to present these lessons. There are discussion questions associated with each lesson that teachers may use and/or supplement their own questions. A student note book is also provided for each lesson.

Students should read the scriptures, view the associated video and/or read the text for the lesson. This helps them come to the class ready to discuss the lesson and to formulate questions of their own. Teachers should begin the class with a review of key points from the video/text before starting the discussion.

Begin each lesson with appropriate introductory statements that help students focus on the lesson. Teachers should also provide a summary of the previous lesson and an overview of key points of the new lesson. This helps students see the ongoing narrative of scripture.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing, or having students summarize the information from their notes. It is also helpful to ask questions from the lesson to determine that students grasp the concepts. Asking questions in this manner also serves as an assessment to ensure objectives are met.

Challenge students with a call to action to apply this information to their lives to help them grow spiritually and help others to do so as well. This can be accomplished by asking questions of students as to how this information relates to their spiritual development at this time and moving forward.

For more information on teaching adults, please visit:

<https://bibletalk.tv/101/teaching>

Lesson #1 – Perfection: The Absolute Standard

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is to introduce the concept of perfection as God expects. Of special note is Jesus as the standard for perfection. NOTE: The concepts of conditional and actual perfection are introduced in this lesson. Instructors may decide to simply define these concepts since a deeper study will begin in lesson 2 and continue.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the concept of perfection.
- **Feel:** Value the gift of salvation God provides through Jesus.
- **Do:** Demonstrate appreciation for God’s grace by living faithfully according to the teachings of Jesus.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 1 – Perfection: The Absolute Standard
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 1

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Defining perfection

1.1 The world’s view

1.2 The Christian’s view

2.0 The absolute standard of the Christian life

3.0 Choosing Perfection

3.1 Conditional perfection

3.2 Actual perfection

4.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. What is your definition or understanding of the concept of perfection?

The intent of this question is to establish a basic understanding of the concept of perfection. Look for both spiritual and secular definitions. As a possible follow-up discussion, ask why if perfection is impossible to achieve, does God require it?

2. How does the world's view of perfection differ from a Christian's view of perfection?

Use the introduction from the text to assist in discussing this question. The "world" holds a variety of understandings of perfection ranging from being the best one can be based on self or society's standards, to that of the aesthetic's perfection sought after through the denying of self. Christianity recognizes that we are compelled to strive for perfection as exemplified by Jesus with the understanding that we are incapable of achieving it. This underscores our need for God's grace and our obedient faith.

3. Use Matthew 5:48 to answer the following questions:

What or who is our ultimate standard?

Our heavenly father.

Why do we, as believers in Jesus Christ, strive for perfection knowing we cannot attain it?

We receive an imputed righteousness through faith in Christ. This expression of God's grace on our behalf motivates believers to strive for moral/spiritual perfection through faithful obedience to Christ. This moral/spiritual exercise powers our growth in Christ and satisfies our thirst for righteousness which Jesus spoke of in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5:6). God, therefore, considers us perfect through our faith in Jesus.

4. What are the effects on someone regarding perfection who believes in Jesus?

- Faith in Christ eventually leads to the confirmation that we are truly imperfect.
- Faith in Christ provides one with a vision of true perfection.
- Faith in Christ provides a standard for measuring progress (becoming Christ like).
- Faith in Christ offers the believer a constant choice for thoughts and deeds.

5. Summarize the consequences of our choice as discussed in Galatians 5:13-25 and I Peter 1:5-7.

Those who choose imperfection will perish.

Those who strive for perfection will achieve it.

Although not a complete list, perfection is seen through the characteristics Paul and Peter outline.

We cannot attain perfection on our own. It is attained only through Jesus. There are Christlike characteristics seen as the Holy Spirit works in our lives. As we become more Christlike, these characteristics will become more a part of who we are and how we are seen.

6. Discuss the following statement:

Perfection is not something we do, it is something we seek and become.

Look for responses based on the listing in the text.

7. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

God knows that we cannot be perfect, yet we want to. He satisfies this desire by offering us perfection through faith in Jesus Christ. The “good news” that Christians proclaim is that Jesus’ perfection is transferred to those who have faith in Him (initially expressed in repentance and baptism – Acts 2:38). The “good” in this news is that perfection can now be obtained through a system of faith rather than a system of performance which no human can accomplish.

Lesson #2 – Conditional or Actual Perfection?

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on deepening our understanding of the concept of perfection. Of special note is the relationship between conditional perfection and actual perfection.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the concept of perfection.
- **Feel:** Value the gift of salvation God provides through Jesus.
- **Do:** Demonstrate appreciation for God’s grace by living faithfully according to the teachings of Jesus.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 2 – Perfection: The Absolute Standard
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 2

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Perfection

1.1 Conditional perfection

1.2 Actual perfection

2.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. Discuss conditional and actual perfection.

Conditional perfection is when we are saved. It is a gift from God given at our baptism. It enables us to come before God in prayer without fear of death for our sins. It is considered conditional because we receive it through faith in Jesus Christ.

Actual perfection is seen in the ways we grow spiritually to become more Christlike. We should be able to measure this as we compare our spirituality from when we began our Christian walk to how we live now. It is considered actual because it is seen in actual our faithfulness to our Lord.

Although we've been granted salvation (conditional perfection), we grow in our actual perfection as we follow the teachings of Jesus Christ found in the Bible.

2. What is the term used to describe conditional perfection in each of the following scriptures?

- Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37-40
- John 3:3
- Romans 3:24
- 1 Corinthians 6:11
- 1 Peter 1:18
- 1 Corinthians 1:30

3. What is the term used to describe actual perfection in each of the following scriptures and how do they differ from conditional perfection?

- Romans 6:19
- III John 1:5
- Ephesians 6:18
- Colossians 3:12

4. Why should we seek to be like Christ?

Jesus is perfect. He is the standard for righteousness. He teaches us how to live life in the Kingdom of God.

5. If perfection in Christ is attained when we obey the gospel, then why should we seek to grow spiritually?

Although we are saved when we obey the gospel, we are as infants in our knowledge and ability to serve God. Growing spiritually enables us to become more like Christ, and in doing so we improve our ability to serve, are better equipped to withstand Satan's attacks and learn how to more effectively lead others to Christ.

6. What are likely consequences of not seeking to grow spiritually to actual perfection, and how can we overcome the consequences?

Our imperfect past will draw us back into a life that will weaken and destroy our faith. This is a major lesson from the Book of Hebrews and Paul's writings to the Galatians. We overcome this by seeking and following God's will throughout our lives.

7. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

God understands our weaknesses in attaining actual perfection in this life. He expects faithfulness in order to grow spiritually. God promises continued forgiveness (conditional perfection) as we strive faithfully to attain actual perfection (Christlikeness).

Lesson #3 – The Holy Spirit and Perfection

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on how the Holy Spirit works in our lives in the areas of conditional and actual perfection. Of special note is an understanding of our spiritual experiences in worship and how the Holy Spirit channels blessings from our Lord.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand true spirituality in our worship and other interactions with God.
- **Feel:** Explain the concept of worshiping in spirit and truth.
- **Do:** Practice our faith in ways that are acceptable to God.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 3 – The Holy Spirit and Perfection
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 3

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Review

2.0 The Holy Spirit and Perfection

2.1 Elitism

2.2 Progressives

2.3 Traditionalists

3.0 Loss of faith

3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. Use the text to discuss the following questions:

How do you define perfection?

How is perfection attained?

It is initially granted by God when we obey His commands for our repentance and baptism.

Describe conditional and actual perfection.

Conditional perfection – given upon our repentance and baptism.

Actual perfection – granted as we continue to grow and mature in our Christlikeness.

2. How is the pursuit of actual perfection a powerful witness to those without Christ?

- It sets Christians apart as they seek to obey the Lord's teachings, grow in the fruit of the Spirit and live faithful lives.
- Our choice to pursue actual perfection brings honor to God.

3. The text discusses two problems associated with adding activities and other human derived elements to worship to heighten the spiritual experience. Use the text to discuss these two problems.

Elitism – What are some sins associated with the practice of elitism in connection with worship?

There are many violations of God's commands (sins) when we deviate from His will. Two that might immediately come to mind are:

- Pride – Setting oneself up above others and putting the focus on self rather than God
- Division – Causing division among believers before God.

Progressives – In what way is the progressive view correct and incorrect?

- Correct – The continued effort to make faith relevant to new generations.
- Incorrect – Using superficial changes to adapt worship to a modern culture.

Traditionalists – How are traditionalists correct and incorrect?

- Correct – Any change that compromises scripture is dangerous (as an understatement).
- Incorrect – Thinking their view is the only acceptable way for things to be done.

4. The following questions relate to the discussion of loss of faith.

How does Romans 10:17 state we gain faith and what is an implication?

From hearing the words of Christ. The implication is that not hearing (applying) the words of Christ causes a loss of faith.

How can worship lead to a loss of faith?

As Paul states in Romans 10:17, we develop and grow in faith through hearing (applying) the teachings of Jesus. If our attitudes and actions in worship are not as Jesus teaches, we are weakening our faith and that of others. An all-too-often result is spiritual burn out rather than spiritual strengthening as one seeks a heightened sense of spirituality using only man-made formulas or practices.

5. What is the purpose of worship and how does it impact our spiritual feelings and experiences?

Worship is our opportunity to offer praise and thanksgiving to God and to lay our burdens at His feet through prayer.

Legitimate spiritual feelings and experiences are generated by the Holy Spirit as we pursue actual perfection. This comes through our knowledge and sharing of the gift of salvation. This should also produce humility, gratitude, peace and true happiness. These are byproducts of our worship and interaction with God.

6. How does Jesus' response to the Samaritan woman in John 4:24 relate to the Spirit's role in our pursuit of actual perfection and how does this verse speak to the concepts of elitism, progressivism and traditionalism?

In the context of John 4:24, Jesus was answering a question about the acceptable location of worship. Jesus provides the insight into God's will that there needs to be a proper balance of truth and spirit. Truth without spirit is a legalistic activity focusing on process. Although process is important, God wants our heart more than our actions (See David's prayer to God in Psalm 51:10; 15-17)

Spirituality without truth is a focus on emotion and can easily be manipulated in a direction away from God's will. This is not restricted to the process of worship (i.e. instrumental music, misunderstanding and misapplying "spiritual gifts", and other activities we see in unacceptable forms of worship). Therefore, the proper balance of adherence to God will and the spiritual and emotional elements are important. We have legitimate spiritual needs that should be met as we understand that we are worshipping our gracious and forgiving Lord.

7. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

Unity among believers is a critical characteristic of those that seek to obey God (See Proverbs 6:16-19). It was also part of the prayer by Jesus on the eve of His arrest (John 17). We must strive for unity with God primarily, but also for unity as the Body of Christ (the Church) in our worship, devotion to God and our building up of each other. In this, we do the will of God and strengthen our faith.

Lesson #4 – Paul's Teaching on Perfection

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on Paul's teachings on perfection. Of special note is how Paul's teachings from Galatians 5 show that the power of the Holy Spirit helps Christians achieve actual perfection.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand Paul's teachings on perfection.
- **Feel:** Seek to grow towards actual perfection by cultivating the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- **Do:** Apply the freedoms we have in Christ to live according to God's will.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 4 – Paul's Teachings on Perfection
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 4

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Background of Galatians

- 1.1 Outcome of those who pervert the gospel
- 1.2 Paul an apostle
- 1.3 Defend the gospel
- 1.4 How one receives conditional perfection
- 1.5 What is at stake
- 1.6 Paul's warning to Christians
- 1.7 Pursuing actual perfection

2.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as "right or wrong" responses.

1. Complete the following statements: (note: desired response is in parenthesis)

- “Conditional perfection is the state of being righteous or justified before God and received through (faith) in Jesus Christ.”
- “Actual perfection is the ideal of Christ seen (pursued) in everyday life through the help of the (Holy Spirit).
- When we describe Christ, we are describing what God sees in us when He looks at us in (judgment).

2. What is Paul describing in Galatians 5:13:25?

A state of actual perfection we seek while in our natural bodies.

3. Why did Paul write the letter to the Galatians?

Certain individuals were teaching the Galatians that they were not truly saved without adherence to certain teachings (Judaism) that included the practice of circumcision. They were also attacking Paul personally accusing him of not being a true apostle. This resulted in the weakening of the faith of some.

4. Discuss the seven points Paul establishes in his letter to the Galatians:

(See text for discussion points)

What does Paul state will happen to those who pervert the gospel (Galatians 1:6-8)?

They will be condemned.

How does Paul describe himself as a legitimate apostle in Galatians 1:11-12?

He received what he was teaching from Jesus, not from men.

What was Paul ready to do with the gospel and how does this apply to us (Galatians 2:11-16)?

The gospel was so important to Paul (and us), that he was ready to defend the gospel to anyone. Conditional perfection is given when we obey the gospel through our faith expressed in repentance and baptism.

What is the phrase Paul uses in Galatians 3:26-27 to state what happens when we are baptized into Christ and what do you understand this to mean?

Paul states, “you have clothed yourselves with Christ”. Look for statements that demonstrate that we have taken on the identity or characteristics of Christ when we are baptized into Him. For example, when a person belongs to a profession or organization, they frequently take on that entities’ identity seen by wearing a uniform or dressing and acting in a certain way (e.g. military uniform, nursing uniform, police uniform, etc.). We seek become “Christlike in our attitudes and actions. These serve not only to identify us, but also to differentiate us from the world.

Why is our expression of obedient faith not a work of law?

No matter what we “do”, we cannot keep the law perfectly. We don’t do these things to earn salvation, but to receive it.

These are things given by God as a way to respond or express our faith in Him.

These things are effective. Law keeping (a legalistic view) lead to pride, discouragement and division, among other attitudes and actions that weaken or destroy our faith.

What does Paul state as important in Galatians 4:3-7?

The gospel has the power to free us from slavery to uninspired ideas, our sinfulness and condemnation caused by imperfection.

What is the warning Paul states in Galatians 5:2-4 and how does this apply to us?

If the Christians continued to submit to the practices of Judaism (old law), then Jesus was of no value to them. The New Law is a law of grace. Today, even though we are not required to keep the old law, however, we do tend to focus on rule keeping rather than God's grace. Rules are important, but we're not saved by rule keeping, rather by our relationship with God through Jesus.

Why is rule keeping attractive and what are the dangers?

Use the text as a resource to encourage discussion (easier, appeals to pride, offers power over others)

The inherent danger in focusing on rule keeping is that of developing a feeling God owes us salvation since we've kept the rules. This is antithetical to grace. Consider referring to the event from Mark 10:17-27 (Rich Young Ruler) as the young man who sought what he needed to do to be saved since he'd kept the rules from his youth. Note that he needed to focus on following Christ (faith) rather than trusting in His wealth and rule keeping.

How does Paul encourage us to pursue actual perfection in Galatians 5:13-16?

We've been freed from our sins and given the opportunity to freely serve God by serving others in love. By doing so, we walk by the Spirit and not the flesh.

Walking in the Spirit encourages growth in the fruit of the Spirit that Paul will outline in the continuing narrative. Included in this is the most critical element of love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

Achieving perfection is impossible by ourselves. We do have a role to play but both conditional and actual perfection is given only through our obedient faith and faithfulness to Christ. As Christians, we continue to face challenges as we grow in our faith. We must remember our confession of faith in Jesus and our desire to follow His teachings. This is in keeping with walking in the Spirit as we continue to grow to Christlikeness.

Lesson #5 – Actual Perfection

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is a closer look at actual perfection. Of special note is why actual perfection is not another form of law keeping and the problems with law keeping as presented in Galatians 5:16-18.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the concept of actual perfection.
- **Feel:** Value walking in the spirit.
- **Do:** Pursue the elements of actual perfection.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 5 – Actual Perfection
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 5

Body of the Lesson

- 1.0 Review of conditional and actual perfection
- 2.0 The look of imperfection (Gal 5:16-18)
- 3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. In the text for this lesson the author states that only God sees conditional perfection while others can see actual perfection. How do you understand this?

See also Paul's teaching in Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Timothy 2:19. Conditional perfection is given by God upon our repentance and obedience to His will for our salvation. The manifestation of actual perfection is seen as we grow spiritually through the practice of walking by the Spirit in order to become Christlike.

2. How does Paul state we will not carry out the "desires of the flesh"? (Galatians 5:16)

By walking by the Spirit. Perhaps another way of looking at this is if we focus on doing God's will and developing and growing in the fruit of the Spirit, we will turn away from the desires and practices of the flesh.

3. What are the three reasons from the text that explain why false teachers offered an invalid argument?

- The things pursued were perfect – False teachers presented ideas of men, not God.
- The things pursued were from God – Law keeping to attain perfection is a human idea, imperfect and does not work. Conditional perfection is a gift from God.
- Walking by the Spirit (actual perfection) is not a form of law keeping – Law keeping is salvation through rule keeping and communicates earning salvation and merit before God. Walking by the Spirit is a walk of faith.

4. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

To rely on self or others for our salvation leads to failure and is clearly against God's will. Walking by the Spirit and growing in our faith is clearly what God wills. It begins by our obedience to the gospel, expressed in repentance and baptism (conditional perfection) then continues as we walk by the Spirit (actual perfection). The desire and product of the flesh, no matter the form, is imperfection (see Galatians 5:19-21). Not specifically mentioned, but a part of this is rule keeping as a view of earning salvation. God's gift of perfection, therefore, is given by His grace and received through our faith.

Lesson #6 – The Deeds of the Flesh

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on producing the fruit of the Spirit in the Christian's life. Of special note are four groups of activities Paul describes and condemns as being those that will lead Christians away from the Kingdom of God.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the dangers of the deeds of the flesh.
- **Feel:** Value walking in the spirit.
- **Do:** Pursue the elements of actual perfection.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 6 – The Deeds of the Flesh
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 6

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Review of Galatians 5:16-18

2.0 The deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)

3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson.

There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts.

These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. How are we saved and considered perfect before God?

Through our obedient faith in Jesus. This includes our repentance (turning from focus on self and sin to focus on Jesus) baptism (immersion in water) and, living faithfully (walking by the Spirit).

2. Using Paul's words from Galatians 5:19-21, outline the works of the flesh and what Paul states they lead to. Also discuss how Christians deal with overcoming these in our world today.

- Group 1: Sexual sins – They lead to immorality, impurity and sensuality.
- Group 2: Spiritual blindness – These lead to idolatry and sorcery (attempts to manipulate the spiritual world).
- Group 3: Divisive spirit – These lead to enmities (hatred), strife, jealousy, anger, disputes, dissension, factions and envy (NOTE: See also Proverbs 6:16-19 – what God hates).
- Group 4 – Insobriety – These lead to drunkenness, carousing and sins caused by the loss of control of our spirit.

Collectively, these lead to our destruction. We overcome these by submitting to God's will in an active way. We cannot remove ourselves from awareness of these destructive elements in our world, but we point ourselves and the world to a better way by submitting to Christ and living pure lives.

3. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

Paul is writing to Christians that have turned away from these and turned to the teachings of Jesus. However, to return to these is to reject Jesus and thus lose one's salvation. We must be on guard to eliminate these deeds of the flesh from our lives as we seek actual perfection.

Lesson #7 – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit: Part 1

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is the way that a spiritual life and character are produced in the lives of disciples. Of special note is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and a Christian's willingness to submit.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand how the Holy Spirit produces fruit in a Christian.
- **Feel:** Recognize the importance of producing fruit.
- **Do:** Submit to God's will as we work towards actual perfection.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 7 – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – Part 1
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 7

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Review

2.0 The fruit of the Spirit is

2.1 Submitting to the word of the Spirit

2.2 Submitting to the power of the Holy Spirit

2.3 Submitting to the discipline of the Holy Spirit

3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson.

There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts.

These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. What is Paul's intent for writing Galatians?

He is warning against following false teachers who were perverting or changing the gospel. They were teaching that one had to submit to rule keeping which they imposed, specifically Jewish customs such as circumcision. Paul explains why they are already in a perfect state (acceptable before God) because of His grace received through obedient faith in Jesus and maintained by walking in the Spirit, not by the teaching of man-made doctrines.

2. What are the four groups or types of deeds of the flesh that Paul outlines in Galatians 5:19-21 and what do they lead to?

- Group 1: Sexual sins – They lead to immorality, impurity and sensuality.
- Group 2: Spiritual blindness – These lead to idolatry and sorcery (attempts to manipulate the spiritual world).
- Group 3: Divisive spirit – These lead to enmities (hatred), strife, jealousy, anger, disputes, dissension, factions and envy (**Note:** See also Proverbs 6:16-19 – what God hates).
- Group 4 – Insobriety – These lead to drunkenness and carousing and other sins caused by the loss of control of our spirit.

3. What does Paul mean by “fruit of the Spirit”?

Fruit of the Spirit is that which is produced by the Holy Spirit in a Christian’s life. Note that Paul states that there is no law against these. This indicates that these virtues are higher in value before God than the practice of the Law. The Law, therefore, cannot overrule or replace these.

4. How does a Christian submit to the Word of the Spirit?

We receive God’s word through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Therefore, as we obey God’s word, we are submitting to the Holy Spirit. This requires us to read God’s word regularly, think and meditate upon it, internalize it (receive it and make it a part of our lives) and actually do as it instructs.

5. The text for this lesson describes the Godhead (God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) as the same but with distinct roles. Discuss the distinct roles and your understanding of them.

- **The Father is the establisher** – Creation is established at His command. He established morality and the terms of salvation following our failure to obey.
- **The Son is the embodiment** – John 1:10 and Colossians 1:16 state that the Son brought forth the universe and mankind. The Son, Jesus, embodies the will of God in accomplishing His Word, saving the Church at the end of time, and integrating the heavenly Kingdom into the Godhead.
- **The Holy Spirit is the enabler** – The Holy Spirit enabled the will of God the Father to be accomplished in all things including creation, God's Word and the sustaining of the universe. It is through the Holy Spirit that Christians learn and apply God's word.

6. How does a Christian submit to the discipline of the Holy Spirit?

Discipline means teaching. We learn from the Holy Spirit by submitting to Him while experiencing various conditions including trials (James 1:2-4) and correction (Matthew 18; 1 Corinthians 5). The Holy Spirit also guides us through periods of dryness (periods of spiritual famine – Matthew 4) and discouragement (Acts 23:11). The Holy Spirit also provides insight and guidance in discerning the meaning and application of His word, and enables us to experience spiritual life (love, joy, peace etc.) while we live in sinful flesh and in a fallen world.

7. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

When we know how the Holy Spirit works and how to walk in the Spirit, we grow and produce the fruit of the Spirit. Our walk by the Spirit begins when we receive the Spirit at baptism (Acts 2:38). We then begin to grow towards actual perfection as we submit to His lead through the various periods of our lives.

Lesson #8 – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit: Part 2

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is a continuation of the way that spiritual life and character are produced in the lives of disciples. Of special note is the first spiritual fruit developed by the Holy Spirit – Love.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand how the Holy Spirit produces fruit in a Christian.
- **Feel:** Recognize the importance of love.
- **Do:** Submit to God's will as we work towards actual perfection.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 8 – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit Part 2
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 8

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Contrasting walking by the flesh and walking by the Spirit

2.0 The fruit of the Spirit – love

3.0 The character of Christian love

3.1 Essential

3.2 Visible

3.3 Eternal

4.0 The greatness of love

4.1 Eternal

4.2 Character of God

4.3 Power of life

5.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. What is signified by contrasting walking by the flesh and walking by the Spirit?

Look for responses that relate to destruction resulting from walking by the flesh and eternal life resulting from submitting to God’s will.

2. What is significant about listing love as the first fruit produced by the Holy Spirit?

Its primary position signifies the importance of love in all things. Love is the nature (characteristic) of God (I John 4:7-8). If we are walking by the Spirit, then this key characteristic will grow in our lives as well. As we seek to become more Christlike, love will become the major characteristic seen by others in us (John 13:35). Through the practice of love in our own lives, we learn more about God, His will and why He continually blesses us in the way that He does.

3. Answer the following questions from I Corinthians 13:

Why is love essential?

If we don't have love, we're missing the essence of Christianity.

What are visible attributes of love the in the life of a Christian?

See the listing from I Corinthians 13:4-7.

In what ways is love eternal?

See I Corinthians 8-12. Love never fails, falls away and is always present. Since love is the main element in the character of God and God is eternal, so too is love.

What are various meanings of "perfect" as Paul states in I Corinthians 13:10?

There are various understandings of this word:

- Christ's return
- Completion of the writing of the New Testament
- The relationship established between God and the Christian upon baptism
(One's growth from conditional perfection to actual perfection)

4. Why is love the greatest of spiritual gifts?

- Love is eternal (Galatians 3:26; 5:5; Revelation 22:4)
- God is love (I John 4:7-8)
- It is the power of life (John 3:16)
- It is how we will be known (John 13:35)

5. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

Walking by the Spirit begins the process of creating perfect love in us and will be completed when we are accepted into the presence of God when our Lord returns.

Lesson #9 – Three Sets of Spiritual Fruit

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on looking at the spiritual fruit created in a Christian. Of special note is how these continue as we grow in actual perfection.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand how the fruit of the Spirit continues to grow in Christians.
- **Feel:** Value growth towards actual perfection.
- **Do:** Grow spiritually so that the fruit of the Spirit grows in our life.

Support

- Series – A More Perfect You; Mike Mazzalongo, 2017
- Video – Lesson 9 – Three Sets of Spiritual fruit
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 9

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Review

2.0 Three sets of Spiritual fruit

3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. Why is Paul writing the Galatian letter and how does it apply to us?

Paul is warning against various false teachings that draw us away from God and weakens our faith. In our lives today, we too are surrounded by a wide variety of false teachings. These can weaken our faith and if allowed to, will destroy our relationships with God.

2. What three ways do we submit to God as we walk in the Spirit?

- Submit to the Holy Spirit's word (read and obey scripture)
- Submit to the Holy Spirit's power (follow the Holy Spirit's direction...note, this necessitates knowing and meditating on God's word)
- Submit to the Holy Spirit's ministry (allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives)

3. How do we produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

No amount of self-will or positive thinking produces spiritual fruit. In fact, these prevent us from producing the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit produces fruit in us as we submit to Him.

4. Answer the following questions based on Matthew 7:15-20 as relates to the fruit of the Spirit:

How will we recognize false teachers?

By their fruit. Those who are false teachers do things and produce fruit contrary to God's will.

What happens to one not producing fruit of the Spirit?

They face destruction.

5. Summarize the three sets of Spiritual fruit as outlined in Galatians 5:22-24 and their impact on a Christian's pursuit of actual perfection.

- Set 1 – Love, joy, peace – Treating others as God has treated us (see Matthew 7:12), the happiness we experience as we accept God's grace. The peace realized as we overcome the fear and impact of suffering and death.
- Set 2 – Patience, kindness, and goodness – Our willingness to remain faithful under trials that can cause us to falter in our spirit walk (see James 1:2-4). Our attitude and character towards others. What we do as a result of our spiritual walk as servants of God. This is seen in our relationships with others as we present Jesus through Christian lifestyle.
- Set 3 – Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – Our ongoing pursuit to discover and obey God's will. Our attitude of forgoing self-will while accepting God's will. Maintaining behavior within the boundaries established by God in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Taken together, these three sets of virtues speak to different needs in our spiritual walk. They impact our pursuit of actual perfection by serving as a measure of spiritual growth while at the same time encouraging us to continue to grow in these virtues.

6. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

God grants us conditional perfection upon our response of faith to the gospel. This is the beginning of a way of life that leads to actual perfection as we grow to become like Christ in all areas of our lives. We are made perfect in Christ but Satan attacks us to weaken and destroy our faith and influence. However, we combat those efforts by relying on the Holy Spirit and by growing in the spiritual fruit He produces in our lives.

This concludes the series on “A More Perfect You – The Pursuit of Perfection in Christ”. To God be the glory in all things!

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