

Foundations 10a — Going on to Perfection

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits”.
Hebrews 6:1-3

The GOAL of the Gospel that Paul preached was to bring ALL BELIEVERS to FULL MATURITY in Christ.

“Him (Jesus) we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.”
Colossians 1:28-29

“... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” **Ephesians 5:25b-27**

“And He (Jesus) Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. . . . 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”
Ephesians 4:11,13

Much preaching and teaching today is limited to the message of receiving the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ. This is glorious and true but it is only the beginning of the gospel. Repentance and receiving forgiveness are beginning steps in the journey of a bride who is preparing herself for the Bridegroom King. Our destiny in eternity is contingent upon growing up

into the fullness of Christ in this life. The degree of our transformation in this life, determines our place in God’s kingdom in eternity. The Good News of the Gospel is that we are not only called to perfection (full maturity) in this life but the grace of God is available for us to achieve it, if we are willing.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” **Romans 8:29**

Jesus Himself taught: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”
Matthew 5:48

Love has been perfected in us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; that as He is, so are we in this world. 1 John 4:17

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” **1 John 2:6**

What does perfection look like?

The Greek word, *teleios*, is translated as “perfect” in the New Testament. It means to be “fully mature; lacking nothing in order to be complete; brought to its desired goal”.

Perfection implies mature love for God and man
And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.
1 Thes. 3:12-13

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. **Ephesians 1:4**

The above verses reveal that when we are increasing and abounding “in love” toward all men then we are blameless and holy before God. Perfection does not

mean that we never make a mistake. It means that every motion of our heart is love. To this we are called.

“Now the goal of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith” **1 Timothy 1:5**

Becoming “perfect in love” is the preparation of the bride of Christ.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.
1 John 4:16

Love has been perfected in us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; that as He is, so are we in this world. 1 John 4:17

When our love is perfected (brought to full maturity) then,
1) we have boldness in the day of judgment, and
2) we have become, in this world, just as Jesus is now.

Becoming Perfect in Love

“No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us” **1 John 4:12**

“If we love one another . . . His love has been perfected in us”. We do not have to travel to another country, have a large ministry or do something spectacular in order to become perfect in love before God. We must learn to love the person(s) who are right next to us. God has pre-destined our conformity to Christ. In doing

so, He has sovereignly allowed us to be in our present situations and to be surrounded by the people who are near us now. By loving them, God’s love will be perfected in us. This means loving our spouses, parents, family members, fellow employees, bosses and neighbors. Yes, they have been sovereignly placed in our lives so that we can become perfect in love.

Sometimes it is easier to “go” somewhere and “do ministry” than it is to love the person next to us. It is possible to exercise our ministry gifts without growing in love. Jesus said that is what some people would do. They will do great signs and miracles but not grow in conformity to Christ. Those who continue to live that way will eventually hear Him say “Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” The main goal that God has for each of our lives is that we grow in love and thereby conform to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Being conformed to the love of Jesus Christ was the passion of Paul’s life. Writing to the Philippians near the end of his life, the cry of Paul’s heart is clear:

“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”
Philippians 3:10

The death of Jesus on the cross, in our place, is the ultimate expression of love.

God defines “love” as laying down our life. “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” **1 John 3:16**

When Paul says he is seeking to “be conformed to His death,” he is saying that he

wants to grow into the fullness of the love of God that is expressed by laying down his life. *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”* **John 15:13**

After declaring his passion to be “conformed to His death” Paul continues:

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.”
Philippians 3:12-15

Paul was “pressing on” to attain perfection in love. He says in verse 15 that everyone who is mature has this mind (pressing for perfection in love). This is a marker we can use to test ourselves. Are we passionately pursuing being conformed to the love of Christ as He laid down His life? This is the primary goal of those who are maturing.

We can come to full maturity (perfected love) in Christ by sincerely loving those who are right next to us. I once had a prophetic experience where a heavenly messenger appeared in a dream and communicated to me about some things that would happen in my life. I was made to know about some future visitations from other heavenly messengers. (The way this communication took place was “thought to thought.” It is a form of communication that is superior to speaking words. There is no possibility of misunderstanding.)

This messenger caused me to know that when I had future visitations, the heavenly messengers who would appear would “dial down” the glory level that they walked in because I would not be able to handle their level of glory. He “said” this was because the present level of the

development of my soul was not mature enough. Feeling disappointed with myself, I pleaded with this heavenly being “I am really seeking to grow in Christ. What can I do to grow more?”

He then extended his hand and said “Look at this”. When he did, a vision appeared where he was pointing. In the vision I saw myself walking out of our church office carrying a box for someone who was going to their car. I could not only “see” the vision, but I could feel all the emotions taking place. I was doing a simple thing: carrying a box for someone. But in the vision I was doing it with a lot of love. I then opened their car door for them. I also did this with intentional love flowing from my heart. Again, with much love I set the box in the car, and then with love I closed the car door.

The heavenly messenger then looked at me and said “Do everything with a lot of love and you will grow very quickly”.

This is a significant key to coming to maturity in Christ!

“Let all that you do be done with love.”
1 Cor. 16:14

“If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.” **1 John 4:12b**

Loving those around us purifies our souls

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart” **1 Peter 1:22**

When we choose to allow Christ’s love to pass through us to another, His love has a transforming affect. It purifies our soul, transforming us into His image! This is why Paul stated in 1 Cor. 13:8 *“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”* When we do “good works” without love, the works may profit the person(s) we are serving, but it profits us nothing. When we do everything with intentional love, we profit. That love of Christ flows out of us and transforms us as it passes through us.

To mature in love means that we are patient and kind toward those who are next to us. It means that we genuinely care about their highest good. It means that we “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Walking in love means that, refusing bitterness, we forgive and forget the wrongs done to us. We love the person next to us as we would love Christ Himself.

Let us purpose to love knowing that “it is God who is working in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Let us love because we have become partakers of His Divine nature through His exceedingly precious promises (2 Peter 1:4). Let us continue growing in love until every motive of our heart and all our thoughts, words and deeds spring from love!

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame (perfect) before Him in love” **Ephesians 1:4**

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” **Hebrews 13:20-21**