

New Year's Resolution: Striving For Moral Perfection (Eph 5)

zero sin

Introduction:

Too often, instead of trying to be perfect, we strive to be “good enough”. We achieve that fairly easily. What causes us to feel “good enough”?

- We do the basic good things (church most Sundays, etc...)
- We don't do the “really bad” things (steal, violence, adultery, etc...)
- Your better than the majority of people (good by comparison)

But almost always, when people feel “good enough” they can still think of specific sins and problems they have in their life. So even though we have sins and problems in our lives, are we “good enough” as long as we do the things listed above?

Is this definition of “good enough” good enough? How good do we need to be?

We're going to see that this attitude of being “good enough” isn't acceptable for Christians. We need to strive for perfection.

- The word “enough” means sufficient to satisfy the required needs. So to be good enough implies that you don't have a need to improve anymore. Feeling good enough is wrong because it keeps us from increasing, but we should always be increasing (1 Thess 4:9-10)
- When we say good enough, we often mean “good enough to get into heaven”, but our aim isn't to live “good enough to get into heaven”. Our aim is to “walk in a manner worthy of [our] calling of God” (Eph 4:1).

We don't live to be good enough to satisfy the requirements to get to heaven. We aim to live good enough satisfy God! How good is that? He tells us in Ephesians 5.

How Good is “Good Enough” for God?

God gives us His standard of morality he desires from us. He tell how good we need to be.

Good Enough for God:

- Eph 5:1: Imitate God
- Eph 5:2: Walk in love like Christ
 - Who Has satisfied this requirement? Who should be satisfied with their morality? Who is living good enough? No one!

- Then why are we satisfied with our morality? Why have we stopped evaluating our lives daily to see where we need to change and improve? Why did we stop listening to sermons and classes with the attitude that we need to change, and not just other people need to change?

EX: God's standard is extreme. What happens when a goldfish is put in a small tank? What happens when a gold fish is put in a big tank? The size of the tank determines how large the fish will grow. God put us in the ocean of his moral expectations, and He desires us to grow as whales. Still, we'll never grow so large that we don't have more room to grow.

Mat 5:48: Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

- How good is good enough for God? Perfection.
- Not perfection how we tend to think of it (without mistake).
- But perfection as in being complete, whole, finished, and accomplished.
Everything in place

EX: We think perfection this way: there are ten cans on a fence, you have ten bullets. If you miss once, you're not perfect. God's perfection is like this: there are ten cans on a fence, you've got a box of bullets. Keep shooting until they're all knocked down. Except God's given us more like 50,000 cans on a fence.

Where do you stand morally speaking? Do you feel "good enough"? Have you stopped trying to shoot all those cans off the fence? If so, you need to change your attitude, and strive for moral perfection.

What Is Moral Perfection?

People don't say anything sinful about you (Eph 5:3):

We need to live in such a way, that people can't name sins that we do

- What do strangers say about you (girl at McDonald's, other drivers, train passengers)? You are rude, you are immodest, you are angry?
- What do your teachers/ bosses say about you? You are disrespectful, a cheater, dishonest, unreliable, untrustworthy?
- What does your family and closest friends say about you? You are unloving, hypocritical, lazy, irresponsible?

EX: What if I interviewed your teachers and asked them to tell me all about you? What would they say?

Any sin mentioned about us is proof that we need to improve and get these sins out of our lives. It's all unacceptable?

What do people say to you?

- What if you have coworkers and friends for a long time and they still invite you to bars or parties, are excited to share a dirty joke with you, talk about trashy movies or shows with you, etc... What does that say about you? It's a sign that you aren't living morally perfect. That's unacceptable and needs to change.

You don't say anything sinful (Eph 5:4):

What you say is the window into your mind. Your mouth acts so immediately that it's almost uncontrollable; therefore, it's a pretty accurate picture of who you are.

We can't:

- Speak any inappropriate words, curses, euphemisms, Lord's name in vain
- Dirty jokes
- Harsh words,
- Cruel words/ make fun
- Lies
- Gossip
- Boasting

Not only are these things sinful in themselves, but they indicate that there are deeper sins in your life. This should bother you. You should not be satisfied with yourself if this corruption is coming out of you. Seek to be perfect!

Don't talk about sinful things (Eph 5:12):

We might not do certain sinful things, but do we talk about those things?

- Kids will talk about gangs as if they're cool. Gangs are not cool! They're terrible.
- We talk about celebrity gossip. But celebrity gossip is all about evil things they do.
- We might watch novelas or other movies that glorify sin and fornication.
- We might joke about homosexuality as if it's funny.

We might not do certain sins, but are we intrigued by those sins? Are we entertained by those sins? Do we talk about those sins? We need to cut this sin out of our lives.

Don't partake with sinful people (Eph 5:7-8):

We have to associate with the sinful world. That means we work with them, go to school with them, etc...

But we can't partake with them. That means to join in the things they are doing.

Do we go with sinful people and join in their sinful things? Parties, bars, movies, bad conversations, etc.

Our lives can't be joined to people that do things we can't partake in. If we desire to be morally perfect, we are going to have to draw harsh lines in our relationships so we don't get carried away in their sins. That's what it takes if you want to be perfect.

Don't try to get away with sin (Eph 5:10):

Do you spend more time justifying and rationalizing questionable things you do, or meditating on how you can be more pleasing to God?

Sometimes we are like lawyers. We have the rules and standards God has for us, and then we try really hard to figure out how we can fulfill that rule, while still being able to do what we want.

We try to justify the way we dress, what we say, the movies we watch by saying it's "not that bad". We kind of feel bad, but we say, it's not too bad, and it might be ok. We are putting in our focus in the wrong place.

Moral perfection isn't trying to get away with sin. Moral perfection is finding out how you can be more pleasing to God.

Instead of trying to justify sin, we should be doing the opposite. We need to expose sin for being what it is (Eph 5:12).

Conclusion:

People are going to try to convince you that having sin in your life is not such a big problem (Eph 5:5-6).

- They are going to try to convince you that those things are not sinful
- They are going to try to convince you that you can't help it
- They are going to try to convince you that, even though they are sinful, God still won't care.

Don't be deceived! God has called you to live in perfection! Make your resolution to hunt down any sin in your life, and eradicate it. Then make your effort be in finding out how to be more pleasing to God.