
YOUR UNIQUENESS AS A CHRISTIAN

Did you know that there is a uniqueness required to live up to our potential in Christ? Did you know you possess it? The passage today deals with the standards of conduct for believers and identifies a uniqueness required in order for us to live up to our potential in our Christian walk. We, as citizens of Heaven, are to manifest that uniqueness in our daily lives.

In our previous study we saw that:

We continue to possess an Old Sin Nature after salvation, and sad fact is, we will until the rapture. Although we don't receive "experiential perfection" until the rapture of the church, we are to earnestly (like a sprinter running full out to win the prize) pursue spiritual maturity, recognizing the war between our sinful nature and being under the control of the Holy Spirit. This requires abiding with God daily, minute by minute, along with studying and applying His Word. Following these principles will result in our lives being uniquely different from the lives of unbelievers.

Our verses today are Philippians 3:15-17 (nasb),

"Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude;
and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;
however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who
walk according to the pattern you have in us."

Paul has just finished saying in the previous verses that he hasn't yet attained perfection, and now, he's addressing those who are perfect and has included himself! What's the deal?

It is wonderful how getting into the language helps define and makes it simpler. In the original Paul is not using the same two words in those two verses, even though they are translated into English as the same word, "perfect".

The word "perfect" in verse 12 is the Greek word 'te-te-lei-oh-mai' -to be perfected in the past with the result that he continued to be perfect; The verb stresses the actual accomplishment of the end in view - it's goes back to what we call "EXPERIENTIAL righteousness" which Paul said he had not obtained, he hadn't experienced being perfect yet.

But, "perfect" in verse 15 is the Greek word 'tel-ei-oi' which is a *Noun - a thing (perfection) - a standing, or condition of perfection*, and here, the noun indicates Paul is speaking about those who, because of their position in Christ, are designated as being holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1:4). These are the ones who are perfect because of their position in Christ, that includes us, as believers. In Him, we are made perfect, but it won't become something we experience until the rapture.

~The noun 'teleioi' is plural and refers to all believers, because all believers are in Christ. It is also masculine. Remember in Greek, the masculine form of a word doesn't have to do with male or female but rather means "initiator". So, we are the initiators of the action (faith is an initiation of trust that places us into Christ). And, we are then identified as Sons of God.

So, all the grammatical aspects of the noun indicate that the reference in verse 15 is positional perfection. At salvation, our position is changed from living in the domain of darkness to being placed into Christ, who is perfect, so then, we are positionally perfect - resulting in our having the potential for experiential perfection. Whew! Do you need to re-read that?

Paul says, here's the truth, you are righteous and perfect because of your position in Christ so start living in the uniqueness of that position!

Can you wrap your mind around that? We don't make ourselves perfect, we ARE perfect, in that unique position of perfection in Christ, because He is perfect and we are in Him, we have the capability, and should reach out, striving after, living to that potential, that means we will grow in spiritual maturity. Living as Christ lived, according to the Spirit.

What a shame it is, when we have been given the mind of Christ and we continue to live with a human mindset. We have the potential to live different, Paul says. We can live empowered by His Spirit as we are changed by being in His word, which is the very mind of Christ. May we instead be diligent to live to the potential He has supplied through our unique position in Christ. If we walk according to that line, and as we see others who are spiritually mature and follow their line, we can't help but to learn, grow, walk more like Christ.

Read Ephesians 1:3 and write down what we have been blessed with:

What does 2 Peter 1:3 tell us?

Our blessings begin with being in Christ, being stamped with His perfection, His righteousness and holiness. You do not have to live in defeat. There is never a battle you must lose. So put on the mind of Christ.

Read John 16:33 - What does this say about what Christ has done?

Now, 1 John 4:4: 5:4-5. What are we?

Falling short of using the mindset of Christ in our situations and circumstances can bring defeat. But in Him, we are victors. Let us set our mind on Him, the author and perfecter of our faith.

God has left us both instruction and examples in living up to our potential. Paul exemplified the proper attitude when he said, "For me to live is Christ". Jesus, of course, was the ultimate example of living under the control of the Spirit, in full obedience to the Father.

Stop and think. Is there someone you know that exemplifies walking in maturity marked by faith? Then, follow after them. While you're doing that, why don't you encourage them in their walk with a quick note of thanks, and pray for them, for they, too, fight the battles of this world. As God's word states, let us encourage one another, all the more, as we see the day drawing near.¹

As we live up to our potential of who we are in Christ, there will truly be a uniqueness with regard to both our attitude and behavior. Let us not look like the world around us, rather, let us look like the Christ who saved us.

REVIEW

- ~ Our position in Christ has made us perfect
- ~ That position makes us uniquely capable to live as Christ to the world.
- ~ Let's be diligent to live to that potential and do our part in following both His instruction and examples.