

## The Myth of Perfection

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:02PM

To summarize: It doesn't really exist.

I've come to expect more perfection in say a 'perfect' cup of tea, or bowl of noodles, or a kugel. ;-)

Or watching a beautiful sunset/sunrise. Can't get more perfect than that.

But to be perfect?

Nah. Now to be good, better, best. That's something worth striving for IMO.

## Re: The Myth of Perfection

Posted by: lurking in ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:17PM

The pursuit of perfection drives many people out of the Mormon church. Think of all those who are baptized into the church, then realize that in order to be "good" Mormons they have to follow a ton of rules and take on onerous "callings," and then deal with the guilt that is heaped upon them when they inevitably fall short of perfection. And still there persists a great mystery among Mormon leadership as to why most converts only last a few months, or less.

And then there are those born into Mormonism, who are conditioned to believe that pursuing perfection is the natural way of life for people who love God. They either turn into great rationalizers, become mentally ill (thus the high rate of anti-depressant usage in Utah) or leave the church altogether--or maybe go through all those stages, like I did.

"Be ye therefore, perfect, ..." may be the worst verse in the entire Mormon canon!

## Re: The Myth of Perfection

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:19PM

A resounding "amen" to that!

Your "Be ye therefore perfect" verse would be a good one for RPackham's thread he has running concurrently on the "worst" possible scripture in Mormonism.

In fact, it just became my favorite of the worst. :D

## Re: The Myth of Perfection

Posted by: lurking in ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 02:36AM

As I was writing my response above, and thought of that insidious scripture, it occurred to me that it would be a good candidate for Richard's thread. However, I

had a different verse in mind that I wanted to submit, so thanks for going ahead and posting the "Be ye perfect" one to Richard's thread!

: )

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 05:48AM

Note: I made sure to give you credit for the verse (even if JC said it first!) ;-)

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: summer ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:22PM

I agree with you, and it was one of my major problems with Catholicism. I think it's one thing that Catholicism and Mormonism have in common -- the quest for spiritual and moral perfection, and the accompanying guilt when one inevitably falls short.

I came to the realization over time that continually examining one's soul for every minor "sin" was both unhealthy and ultimately unproductive.

There is a line from a Who song that really resonates with me -- "I don't need to be forgiven" -- not for everyday, human mistakes. Not when a heartfelt, "I'm sorry, I don't know what I was thinking" will serve. Not when I have the major sins under control.

As many of you know, I have spent the last couple of decades teaching some of the most difficult, unruly children that God has put on this planet. I've been hit, kicked, punched, intentionally tripped, sworn at, had objects thrown at me, etc., etc. Like other urban teachers who have survived the job, I've had to toughen up in the process. I am not the best at what I do, but I have always given it my best and have been more than good enough. So when I die and go to heaven, I would just \*love\* to see the person who would pass judgment on me. Have at it, asshat, because I will give you as good as I get, or better.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 05:54AM

summer Wrote:

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> There is a line from a Who song that really  
> resonates with me -- "I don't need to be forgiven"  
> -- not for everyday, human mistakes. Not when a  
> heartfelt, "I'm sorry, I don't know what I was  
> thinking" will serve. Not when I have the major  
> sins under control.

I love this last paragraph! It makes so much sense.

> As many of you know, I have spent the last couple

- > of decades teaching some of the most difficult,
- > unruly children that God has put on this planet.
- > I've been hit, kicked, punched, intentionally
- > tripped, sworn at, had objects thrown at me, etc.,
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- > judgment on me. Have at it, asshat, because I will
- > give you as good as I get, or better.

Can't picture any judgment other than a great big thank you for taking on such a task and challenge in working with what likely constitute case studies in childhood education!

What you deserve will be an enormous congratulations!

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 02/17/2016 05:55AM by Amyjo.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: blindguy ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:33PM

The whole problem with seeking perfection (beyond the guilt it causes when you can't measure up to standards) is that different people have different definitions of what perfection is. You could consider yourself perfect and then someone would come along and say, "Well, you're not perfect, because you didn't give me what I thought I was due."

From a religious perspective, though Christianity views Jesus Christ as being perfect (because he was God incarnate on Earth), the fact remains that if you accept the Biblical story about him as being true, you have to accept that there were many within the society of his era that did not view him as being perfect at all.

Therefore, since full perfection is not achievable, I think a much better goal would be the one that was sung by the late Rick Nelson in his top 10 hit from 1972 "Garden Party," which was his response to the audience's rejection of his performance at Madison Square Garden the year before. The chorus reads:

"Well, it's all right now.  
I've learned my lesson well.  
You see you can't please everyone  
So you've got to please yourself."

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 06:17AM

I loved that song, and sang along when it came on the radio. Don't hear it much anymore! :)

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: GodLedMeOut nli ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:45PM

The perfect is the enemy of the good.  
:)

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 06:16AM

This is the first time I've heard this quote! Thanks for sharing it here. :)

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: donbagley ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 07:54PM

My father is perfect. He's the worst man I've ever known.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 06:24AM

Now that is scary. Perfectly fragile, or insane may be more like it?

A perfect madman!

Kahlil Gibran wrote the poem, "The Madman." (doesn't do justice to your dad, but it's a pretty perfect poem.)

HOW I BECAME A MADMAN

You ask me how I became a madman. It happened thus: One day, long before many gods were born, I woke from a deep sleep and found all my masks were stolen -- the seven masks I have fashioned and worn in seven lives -- I ran maskless through the crowded streets shouting, "Thieves, thieves, the cursed thieves.

Men and women laughed at me and some ran to their houses in fear of me.

And when I reached the market place, a youth standing on a house-top cried, "He is a madman." I looked up to behold him; the sun kissed my own naked face for the first time. For the first time the sun kissed my own naked face and my soul was inflamed with love for the sun, and I wanted my masks no more. And as if in a trance I cried, "Blessed, blessed are the thieves who stole my masks."

Thus I became a madman.

And I have found both freedom and safety in my madness; the freedom of loneliness and the safety from being understood, for those who understand us enslave something in us.

But let me not be too proud of my safety. Even a Thief in a jail is safe from another thief.

Nice (n/t)

Posted by: donbagley ( )  
Date: February 17, 2016 09:57PM

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: elderolddog ( )  
Date: February 16, 2016 09:08PM

One of the things that made being a mormon easy for me was my acceptance of spending eternity in the Terrestrial Kingdom. Which was easy once I accepted that I would rather masturbate than go to the CK.

And who do you think 'made' me that way? All that bull crap about putting aside the Natural Man was exactly that, bull crap.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: imaworkinonit ( )  
Date: February 16, 2016 09:15PM

'Good enough' is just right.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: blakballoon ( )  
Date: February 16, 2016 11:01PM

Thanks for posting! Ive ponderized on this before. The unending chase for perfection is quite dangerous. It's elusive, a never achievable goal. It just locks you in a cycle of failure, guilt and self recrimination. Yes it drives people out of church.

I realise now that DH found the peace of jackmo'ism when he came to terms with and accepted that the CK wasn't for him. I was a burnt out, physical and emotional wreck when I finally accepted my terrestrial status. Then it all didn't matter anymore.

When you give all you can and its never enough..  
That piece you hold back from the 'alter of sacrifice' because.. well that piece is yours and yours alone.. is the piece that condemns..  
Well that's just sick.

Edited to say, I just went and re-read "swallowed up in the will of the father" by Neal A Maxwell

Holy crap! I used to love that talk.. now I see why I was such a mess.

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 02/16/2016 11:13PM by blakballoon.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: byuboner ( )

Date: February 16, 2016 11:08PM

Just my two cents...I've often thought the "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect" saying is strongly misinterpreted by Mormonism.

As I'm not a student (let alone a scholar) in Koine Greek I can't discuss the actual Greek word and whether or not "perfect" is the best rendering of the word's meaning into English.

To me, I interpret Jesus's teaching as "be a complete (perfect) person as God is complete--Love boundlessly, go the extra mile, help those in need, live a passionate life--and be whole and complete in this.

Anyway, I'd much rather be with all you imperfect RfMers that with self-seemingly Saints any day!

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Amyjo ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 06:43AM

You know, that's a good talking point. Because as LDS it was strongly emphasized that perfection implied in all areas of our being, and actions. It was so unattainable that falling short became preferable to the impossible.

Now to be loving and helpful, charitable, practicing the law of charity, goes closer to the Christlike image portrayed in the gospels than to be perfect in every aspect of life.

Reminds me of a semi-retarded person who used to attend worship services at one of the last LDS places I worshiped at years ago. She wasn't allowed to be baptized because she "wasn't perfect enough to understand what baptism implies." Her soul didn't need saving therefore, because she was regarded as having the mentality of a child less than eight, and didn't require the baptismal covenant. They said she'd be saved regardless as an excuse not to baptize her. Despite her wanting nothing more than to be baptized like all those around her she worshiped with (she wasn't that retarded to not understand what she was missing out on.)

It seemed cruel and unusual punishment to deny her the 'blessing' of baptism as it were a symbol, or a token. It would've given her great peace of mind to have been given this courtesy, but she wasn't "whole" enough so said the Mormon lay leadership.

Where I worship now there's a severely autistic woman who has full membership privileges and is treated as equally as anyone else in the congregation, despite her autism. She's in her own little world, but she isn't denied membership at my synagogue.

I will add her late father was a Nobel laureate in Physics, but that still isn't why she's treated as co-equal. Her condition is readily apparent but no one judges her for it. She is just accepted as she is.

Now that is love, and more Christlike than denying someone membership based on

something beyond their control as in how their brain is able to process information.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Student of Trinity ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 08:38AM

You don't need Greek to see that this verse doesn't mean what some people think it means. Just read it carefully.

"Therefore be ye perfect" begins with "Therefore". So it's a conclusion that follows from the preceding verses, not a stand-alone soundbite.

The whole argument is this:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

So the verse about being perfect literally means: Don't use moral standards as an excuse to discriminate against people and pick favorites, because that's not what God means by being perfect. God's way of being perfect involves giving rain and sun to everyone.

Never discriminating against people, and loving even enemies, is a high moral standard. But it's the exact opposite of perfectionism in the sense of being fussy about every little rule.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Mike T. ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 07:41AM

I've always loved imperfections. Not the kind that are hurtful, but the endearing imperfections that make a quirky house delightful, or a plain girl beautiful, or a pet indispensable. To think that anyone should strive for "perfection" is ridiculous and goes against nature.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: GNPE ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 08:58AM

Perfectionism is a Bona Fide part of MoCulture / 'the whip' that's used to coerce members into conformance/compliance.

While my exposure to other religions is limited, I've NEVER heard it used like it is in TSCC.

[Re: The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: Trails end ( )

Date: February 17, 2016 11:21AM

My nephew gave me a border collie years ago...as a pup hed run full bore across the yard and wham right into the truck...oh boy this is bad...hes retarded...and he is but hes perfect in his own way...loyal to a fault...only goes after any aholes that show up in the yard...a great judge of character and never wrong..never leaves the yard and his joy in my return is expressed so freely every time i come home...i rejoice in his honesty and steadfast loyalty and devotion...yeah ive had dogs more talented at working cows but none more fitting the twilight of my life...i can overlook a couple of inadequacies...cuz he overlooks mine...thats just what real friends do...sad ive got so few with two legs...I doubt ill enjoy the CK with Jake or Sadie or Sonny...they were perfect and im not..my guess is they might put in a good word for me...but hell...if being perfect is all about riding a vertical broomstick...ill pass...Ya got any coffee?...just a thot...jake and sadie were a thrill to have around...but didnt live long due to bravely going where no dog should have gone...ol sonny has outlived em by double so is he really the retard?....i doubt ill ever grieve burying a two legged friend as much as i did jake and sadie..the wagging of a dogs tail is better than a handshake..BOB...rip..my nephew died a couple years ago of an enlarged heart...he gave so freely and selflessly to anyone in need..bit of a misfit in lds culture....only 30..amazes me everday hed give me ol sonny as a constant reminder to not sweat the small stuff...its all small stuff

Re: [The Myth of Perfection](#)

Posted by: elderolddog ( )  
Date: February 17, 2016 08:53PM

...damn it... got something in both eyes...