

We Believe in Being Perfect—in Christ

During His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us the challenging command to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48). But since we are all bound to make mistakes, how does God expect us to keep this commandment? By gaining a correct understanding of God’s expectations for us, we can come to know what the prophet Moroni meant when he said we can become “perfect in Christ” (see Moroni 10:32–33).

What Does It Mean to Be Perfect?

“The Greek word for *perfect* can be translated as ‘complete, finished, fully developed’ (in Matthew 5:48, footnote *b*). Our Savior asks us to become complete, finished, fully developed—to be perfected in the virtues and attributes He and our Father in Heaven exemplify.”¹

“The perfection that the Savior envisions for us is much more than errorless performance. It is the eternal expectation as expressed by the Lord in his great intercessory prayer to his Father—that we

might be made perfect and be able to dwell with them in the eternities ahead.”²

“I believe that Jesus did not intend His sermon on this subject to be a verbal hammer for battering us about our shortcomings. No, I believe He intended it to be a tribute to who and what God the Eternal Father is and what we can achieve with Him in eternity.”³ ■

NOTES

1. Gerrit W. Gong, “Becoming Perfect in Christ,” *Ensign*, July 2014, 17.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Perfection Pending,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 41.



“Understanding the Savior’s freely given atoning love can

free us from self-imposed, incorrect, and unrealistic expectations of what perfection is.”

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Becoming Perfect in Christ,” *Ensign*, July 2014, 14.

What God Expects

“Deny yourselves of all ungodliness . . . and love God with all your might, mind and strength” (Moroni 10:32).

With faith in Jesus Christ, repent when we fall short.

Keep the covenants, or promises, we have made with God.

Do our best to keep the commandments throughout our lives.

“Continue in patience until ye are perfected” (Doctrine and Covenants 67:13).



What God *Doesn't* Expect

Be perfect *now!* Never make mistakes.

Be burdened by an attitude of perfectionism.

Be constantly busy—all work and no play.

Be critical of self for lack of progress.

Try to “earn” your way into heaven.