

The Trap of Perfection

Getting Started

What is a perfectionist? Are you one? Take the test below and discuss your answers with your group.

1. You are painting your kitchen. You spill some paint on the floor. It is not a lot of paint, but it won't come out. How do you feel?
 - a. Very upset.
 - b. A little upset, but it is not a big deal.
 - c. You don't care at all.
2. You are playing volleyball with some friends. They are great players, but you are not very good. They say, "It's okay. We're just playing for fun!" How do you feel?
 - a. Embarrassed, uncomfortable, and nervous. You don't want to keep playing.
 - b. A little nervous, but you're also having fun.
 - c. You are having a great time. It is just fun to play, no matter how good or bad you are.
3. You just graduated from college. What do you plan to do next?
 - a. Take a long vacation. You've earned it.
 - b. Relax for a week or so, and then start working on your next goal.
 - c. Immediately start working on your next goal. There is no time to relax.
4. Your teacher says you are very good at English, but you have some trouble with math. How do you feel?
 - a. Proud and content. Nobody is good at everything.
 - b. Proud about your English, but disappointed about your math.
 - c. Very disappointed. You want to be good at everything.



Sometimes it is good to be a perfectionist. We should always try to be the best we can be. But many perfectionists are actually afraid of failure. They are afraid that if they are not perfect all the time, their family and friends might get angry with them, or maybe even reject them. It is always important to try our best, but we need to remember that we don't need to be perfect to be loved.

Improving Your Vocabulary

content (adj) – satisfied; happy with what you have and who you are

reject (v) – to not accept something or someone

deceive (v) – to lie or trick someone; to be dishonest

confess (v) – to tell the truth about something you have done wrong

purify (v) – to clean or make pure

conduct (n) – the way a person acts; behavior

Reading God's Word

1 John 1:8

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us.

But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing.

Romans 5:8

But God has shown us how much he loves us – it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come.

Galatians 6:4

4 You should each judge your own conduct. If it is good, then you can be proud of what you yourself have done, without having to compare it with what someone else has done.

Romans 15:7

Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you.

Taking a Closer Look

1. Is anyone on earth perfect?

2. How do we deceive ourselves?

3. How can we be “purified” from all our mistakes and imperfections?

4. How can we become new?

5. How did God prove how much he loves us?

6. Why shouldn't we compare ourselves to others?

7. What does God expect from us?

8. How should we treat others when they make mistakes?

Taking Action

1. What is something you are bad at? What are some of your gifts and talents?
How can you use these gifts to help others and to serve God?

2. Do you think our world today pushes us to be perfect at everything? How can we
learn to be content even though we are not perfect?

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come.

Reviewing the Vocabulary

Answer the questions using the **bolded** vocabulary words.

1. How do we know God will never **reject** us?

2. When do you feel **content**?

3. Has anyone ever **deceived** you? How did you feel?

4. Did you ever get in trouble at school for poor **conduct**?

What did you do?

For further study, see 1 Corinthians 12 and Ecclesiastes 3:11.



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