

Q:

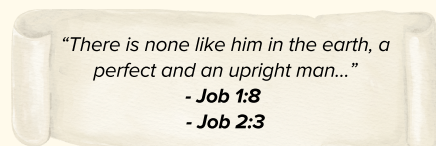
Can I become perfect like Jesus?

The answer is Yes and No. (The most shiftless of responses.)

But in this case, it might be true.

We are told history has known only one “perfect” person – Jesus Christ.

Yet in the Book of Job, written thousands of years before Jesus’ arrival on earth, God himself described Job as “perfect”. Twice.



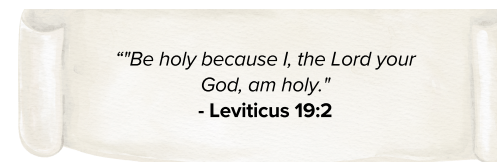
What did God mean referring to Job as perfect?

Can imperfect creatures achieve perfection?

And, most importantly, do we even want to be perfect?

When I began to rebuild my relationship with God, I fell under the spell of the mantra - "Be like Jesus". I attempted to process every thought, every word, and every action through the "What would Jesus do?" filter.

It was draining, frustrating, and impossible. Humbled and defeated, I nearly walked away.

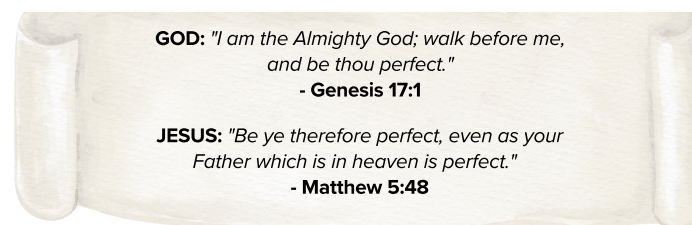


In the 5th century, Christian theologian Pelagius, declared that in principle humans can achieve perfection through sheer force of will simply by obeying God's commands and living without sin.

His claim would be condemned by the Council of Carthage (418 AD) and the Council of Ephesus (431 AD). Pelagius would ultimately die in obscurity.

How would Pelagius have conceived such a notion?

Maybe directly from God, and Jesus.



Becoming like God ("deification") has been a common pursuit for those who seek eternal life in the presence of the Creator.

Since we were created in God's image, it would be safe to assume God indeed wants us to be like Him - perfect.

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A WORD ON THE WORD:

The contemporary meaning of the word “perfect” typically implies being flawless, faultless, without defect, or zero-error. In Old Testament Hebrew, the word “TAMIM” was used to describe an “unblemished animal fit for the altar sacrifice”. The word in Greek used in the New Testament was “TELEIOS” (pronounced “TEL-ay-oss”) which meant undivided wholeness, full grown, mature, brought to its purpose. In other words, to be perfect was to become what we were designed to be.

Jesus would prove himself perfect not once, but twice: Sinless in life and as the unblemished lamb delivered for the ultimate sacrifice - defeating death and restoring salvation to humankind.

Through His mortal death, God became man so man could become like God.

"For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."
- Hebrews 10:14

Can we, flawed and error prone as we are, mold ourselves after Christ?

Can we indeed, will our way to perfection?

The first step on the way to perfection is the realization that we remain, in this life, imperfect.

"... if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse."
- Job 9:20

Christlike is the ultimate virtue – character formed by the Spirit through and repeated in practice. It is a commitment toward emulating Christ while on Earth without backsliding.

Perhaps not flawless in execution, but perfect in effort.

In Hebrew, TAMIM DEREK: “*perfect of way*”.

"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."
- James 1:4

We strive to know perfection as an orienting force rather than an objective goal.

Perfect does not mean sinless but a wholehearted, undivided devotion to the effort of completion – the mature fulfillment of our intended design.

"...thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect."
- Psalm 139:16

