

Let's Finish Step 1, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 1 – Confession – Realizing that our lives are unmanageable, and we are powerless to do what is good; we acknowledge that sin eternally separates us from a righteous, loving God and we are helpless to meet His standard on our own.

- In Step 1, Lesson 1 we talked about the reality of our sin and what sin is all about.
- In Lesson 2, we talked about how a natural man is separated from a righteous/loving God – w/consequences now and in eternity.
- **In Lesson 3 tonight, we will talk about how we are helpless to meet God's holy standard through our own efforts.**

...We are here to talk about recovery or addiction to _____ so I can feel normal, feel pleasure, or escape the pain...so why are we focusing on God and the fact that we all fall short of God's perfect standard? It is simple, God is the only one that can give us true, lasting victory over the issues or pain we struggle with.

This lesson reminds us of some things we already know, but the more that we know about God's purity and holiness, the crazier it seems that we would try to get there on our own efforts.

Matthew 5:48

“You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

What we don't completely understand as a natural man is the loftiness of God's standard. The word perfect is to be understood as *being complete, in fullness, or lacking nothing*. Christ sets an unattainable standard. The thought in the verse is clear; God is complete in purity and holiness. He has no needs. His expectation for us is that same “perfection.” That is an extremely lofty expectation, yet that is His standard.

2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

In this verse, the Apostle Paul summarizes the heart of the gospel – how a holy God has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...and further, He has given us the ministry of reconciliation, where we proclaim the gospel of reconciliation to others. You may not be familiar with the word reconciliation – it refers to a change in relationship between God/Man or between 2 people. It is a mutual change from hostility or antagonism to friendship...we have resolved the issues that separated us.

Leviticus 11:44a

“For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.”

His basis for commanding such a thing is the very first phrase of the verse: ***“For I am the LORD your God.”*** His rationale is given at the end of the quotation: ***“for I am holy.”***

To consecrate oneself is to dedicate completely to righteousness or the highest standards. In this verse God is commanding His people (the Jews) to commit themselves to absolute purity.

You might have caught the fact that this verse is directed to the Jews as God's covenant people and therefore is not directed at us.

However, Peter, in the New Testament says:

1 Peter 1:15-16

“... but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”

In context, this section of scripture is reminding us how we are to live before God our Father. In the previous verse it introduces this idea *“as obedient children, not conforming to the former lusts, as in your ignorance”*. The statement that God is holy refers to the fact that He is set apart, no person is like God; He is perfect, transcendent, or spiritually pure, and worthy of our reverence. Holiness essentially defines the Christian’s new nature and conduct ...becoming more like Christ, in contrast with our pre-salvation lifestyle. The best way to glorify Him is to be like Him. This entire command is directed to those who have trusted in Him for deliverance from their sin (which we cover in our next few lessons).

With all of this clearly establishing God’s standard, it isn’t hard to see that we’ve fallen short of it.

In honesty we can admit, *“If perfection is what God wants, I can’t, and won’t make it.”* The result is that we acknowledge our helplessness and need for help. It is time to put it in His hands. Only God can do what needs to be done in our lives.

How about some questions to help us put our helplessness to meet God’s holy standard into perspective?

Consider & Confess

- There are all kinds of reasons a person may come to understand their imperfections. What in life has brought you to that conclusion?
- It is impossible for us to fully understand the perfection of God, so let’s think about the concept for just a minute. Who in your life is the most perfect? Why, or what makes you think of them?
- For you to become more like Christ, what things in your life must go away? (Add to this list as life goes along.) A good example is our speech...²⁹ *Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear...Ephesians 4:29-32.*
- What kinds of things should be added to your life? (Take time to add to this list as time goes on as well.)
- What things have you tried to do to be perfect in your past? Were you successful?
- Have the sins of others affected your life in a negative way? Have your sins affected others in you like in a negative way? (The point to these questions is to see that all of us need God’s help.)
- Have you ever wanted to give up since being perfect seemed unattainable?

Looking ahead:

The next step is the biggest thing you will ever consider in your life. There is hope of having a new life, but it must be done God’s way. We will be taking several weeks to discuss this huge opportunity for forgiveness, a clean slate, and a new beginning in Step 2.