

## The Perfect Christian

He is a super-spiritual person who gets up at 4 am so he can pray for four hours. Then he reads the Bible for another four hours. He goes to work (at which he is tops in his field), where he effectively shares Christ with everyone in his office. He teaches several Bible studies, goes to church every time the doors are open and serves on several committees. He is also a wonderful spiritual leader at home—a sterling example of a loving husband and father, who leads stimulating family devotions every day for his Proverbs 31 wife and perfect children.

This perfect Christian is the model for all other Christians; he or she is the person that best emulates the ideal of what a person that loves God should truly be and do. This person is able to be interrupted and looks at giving himself for the aid of others as a privilege. In fact, this person cannot give enough of himself. His deeds and accomplishments for Christ speak for themselves. He displays all the fruit of the spirit and is respected by all. This perfect Christian is worthy and pleasing to God because The Life that is Worthy and Pleasing to God can only be lived by People that are Worthy and Pleasing to God.

## Colossians 1:1-14

**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,**

**<sup>2</sup>To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:**

**Grace and peace to you from God our Father.**

**<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— <sup>5</sup>the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel <sup>6</sup>that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. <sup>7</sup>You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, <sup>8</sup>and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.**

**<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. <sup>10</sup>And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,**

**<sup>11</sup>being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup>For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

This epistle of Paul, like that to the Romans, was written to those he had never seen, nor had any personal acquaintance with

- The church planted at Colosse was not by Paul's ministry, but by the ministry of Epaphras an evangelist, one whom Paul delegated to preach the gospel among the Gentiles.
- The people of Colossae were a thriving church in an area that was once a thriving trade center, but its commercial influence was waning in Paul's day
- The Christians Paul addresses in this letter were struggling with a Greek-influenced form of Jewish philosophy that viewed Christians as still vulnerable to spiritual forces.
- It was thought that these forces needed to be placated through veneration, through some sort of asceticism of food and drink, and by honoring certain days prescribed in Old Testament ceremonial law.
- Legalistic practices for being worthy and pleasing to God

-The people who had infiltrated the church with this ridiculous and harmful teaching were called Gnostics

-The Gnostics prided themselves on their knowledge

-They claimed to have information superior to that of the apostles and tried to create the impression that a person could not be truly happy unless he had been initiated into the deepest secrets of their cult. The Gnostics denied the true humanity of Christ.

-They taught that "the Christ" was a divine *influence* that came out from God and rested on the Man, Jesus, at His baptism.

-They further taught that the Christ left Jesus just before His crucifixion.

-The result, according to them, was that Jesus died, but that Christ did not.

-Some Gnostics, believing that the body was inherently sinful, practiced asceticism, a system of self-denial or even self-torture, in an effort to live a life that was worthy and pleasing to God

-The errors which existed in Colosse are still with us today.

-Gnosticism has reappeared in Christian Science, Theosophy, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unity, and other systems of beliefs.

-Gnosticism central teaching was that spirit is entirely good and matter is entirely evil  
This led to five core beliefs

1. man's body which is matter is evil

2. salvation is the escape from the body, achieved not by faith in Christ but by special knowledge
3. Jesus could not have been on earth in a human body because the body is matter and matter is evil thus it only appeared that Christ was human or that Christ entered into Jesus at baptism
4. since the body was evil it was to be treated harshly

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-Paul's is introducing himself to an audience he has

never met and to a people that would likely be suspicious of his intentions

-knowing this he boldly proclaims himself to be an apostle- that is a person chosen by God who has seen Jesus Christ to fulfill His purposes

-secondly in his introduction he tells the people who they are

-they are saints

-they are God's chosen, a holy people

-remember the Colossians are an oppressed people who have been lied to being convinced that they must work and toil for their salvation

-they are weighed down with the knowledge of their sin and shame and Paul, knowing this, calls them saints

-this was encouragement to a people that believed their salvation was not secure

-look what comes after Paul's declaration of commitment to pray for the people because they are faithful in regards to their belief in Jesus Christ and in their love for other Christians

-the apostle makes no mention of their transgression but instead in the introduction his primary concern is that they know that they are in Christ

-And look at what Paul says about this faith

-remember again that the people have been wrongly taught that belief in the gospel is insufficient for gaining salvation Paul comes against that notion in this passage by telling them that what they are a part of is not a small thing made up of an insignificant amount of people but it is a great thing that

continues to grow.

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**1:9** look at the word “knowledge” here in verse 9. In this book as well as the Book of first John the word knowledge carries with it a lot of weight to this audience. The Gnostics claimed salvation was only possible with special knowledge  
-Paul answers the Gnostics’ false claim to having this superior knowledge by suggesting “full” knowledge is discovered in God’s revealed will.  
-The false teachers are making great boasts of possessing superior wisdom and sharing secret mysteries and revelations.  
-Paul’s counter-argument is that God’s truth is

available to all who would sincerely seek Him.

-the apostle is pointing the people to a God that is not aloof or ambivalent but one that is accessible and desirous to impart his truth to his people  
-and look at verse 10 when one attains this knowledge then that person can live a life that is worthy and pleasing to God  
-this statement would have shaken and awoken the Colossians  
-in fear and doubt they were striving to do the right things and behave the right way  
-striving to be worthy striving to please a God they believed did not provide a sufficient sacrifice for them  
-and here Paul is enlightening them that the very thing that they were trying to do through obeying rules and regulations was available to them now and attainable by God’s power  
a God according to verse 12 who has qualified them to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup>For he has rescued them from the dominion of darkness and brought them into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup>in whom they have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.  
-the nail in the coffin of the Colossians false teachings is hammered here with the word qualified  
-the final a most powerful statement that Paul has made up until this point is made here  
he tells the Colossians that they are qualified  
-the word here means to make competent or

sufficient, to entitle, authorize, or enable  
-Paul has announced to the people that they are qualified through Christ  
-that not only are the Colossians saints, not only is the gospel sufficient, not only is knowledge of the will of God accessible through prayer, not only can they live a worthy and pleasing life with this knowledge but they are also qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints, to be in the Kingdom of his son and to be a redeemed people.  
-remember back in verse 9 and 10 Paul is telling them the way to live a life that is worthy and pleasing to God and here in verse twelve Paul is saying that they are qualified by God  
-the point that Paul is making in this passage is that

**The Life that is Worthy and Pleasing to God can only be Lived by People that are Worthy and Pleasing to God**

-The Colossians were infected with the belief that salvation is attained by the escape from the body, achieved not by faith in Christ but by special knowledge  
-The Colossians have deviated from the path of the gospel  
-They had been led astray by the false teachers that have filled their minds with doubt and fear that belief in the Jesus Christ was not sufficient for salvation  
-Thus they thought they needed to work

-Paul's aim in this section of scripture is to show them that they are qualified through Jesus Christ  
-their primary focus is not to live a life that is worthy and pleasing to God their primary purpose is to believe that they are worthy and pleasing to God through Jesus Christ  
-once more the apostle pours out his compassion on these people as he says to them that they have been qualified by God  
-They had rejected the truth of the gospel for a lie  
-Because of this they were not living a life that was pleasing to God because they did not identify themselves with the truth that they had already been made worthy and pleasing to God through Jesus Christ

-We cannot live a life that is worthy or pleasing to God unless we identify ourselves with the truth  
-we cannot live a life that is worthy and pleasing to God unless we believe that we are worthy and pleasing to God  
-we are children of God based on believing that we are saved through the work of Jesus Christ  
-do we believe that we are children of God  
-how much do we believe it  
-belief in the gospel secures us for salvation but does not prevent us from believing lies as it did the Colossians  
-what they believed was ultimately reflected in the way they lived their lives

- what we believe is ultimately reflected in how we live our lives
- having a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord establishes our identity as children of God but if it is not maintained we open ourselves to lies and falsehood
- Eg seminary acceptance**
- We are acceptable, we are worthy and pleasing to God
- Love becomes practically meaningless and irrelevant apart from acceptance apart from the belief that we are worthy and pleasing to God through Jesus Christ at all times
- if you are a Christian then you are as worthy and pleasing to God as his son Jesus Christ
- this is what Paul means when he tells the Colossians that they are qualified and redeemed by God
- if we do not trust that we are totally acceptable in God's sight we will have trouble approaching Him in prayer or Bible Study.
- We will avoid meeting Him in fear like the Colossians did, believing that our worth is determined by what we do or don't do
- Paul's message to the Colossians and God's message to us is that Because we are in Him we are totally acceptable to him. We are totally worthy and totally pleasing
- our actions and words and beliefs like the Colossians might not be acceptable to God. But God does not judge us by these nor does he see us

according to what we do or say we are judged through the merits and life of Jesus Christ.

- God sees us as worthy and pleasing as his Son
- because of this we are always and at all times worthy and pleasing to God no matter what we do good or bad

**Without a Firm belief in who We are our Attempts to Please God will be Legalistic**

- the term legalism, for those that don't know, is a belief that the following of rules and regulations can make one worthy of God and will please him
- every religion in world apart from evangelical Christianity has a degree of legalism
- that is rules and regulations one follows in order to please God
- legalism is the opposite to what Paul is teaching that is grace
- grace is the belief that one is worthy and pleasing to God because of faith in Jesus Christ not by following rules and regulations
- the Colossians were taken in by false teaching after having believed the truth
- they had received the gospel from Epaphras and were standing firm for a time
- other teachers that professed a knowledge greater than the gospels infiltrated the church and infected their beliefs
- the truth of the gospel was overruled
- and these false beliefs were reflected in their lives
- they prioritized following rules and regulations in

the hope that it would please God  
 -their identity in Christ was shaken  
 -Christians are capable of falling into the same trap as the Colossians  
 -and when we do it often goes without notice  
 Eg rich man “I don’t need a job I need a savior”  
 -As Christians our work for God is out of gratitude for him choosing us to be his children  
 -if our reason for working is based on fear or a desire to be worthy or please God we welcome guilt and frustration because always in the back of our mind is the knowledge that we could have done better  
 -if we are lacking a belief that we are and always have been worthy and pleasing to God since the day we chose him to the day we die. all we do for him will be based on fear and a false understanding of what makes us worthy and pleasing to God  
 -if we have been a Christian for a long time we must be careful not to be arrogant by thinking that we have a solid understanding of who we are in Christ  
 -such a belief opens the door for thinking that worth and value is found in better places  
 -you see the Colossians were definitely Christians  
 -they had a solid foundation as to who they were but their lack of diligence in maintaining that belief welcomed heresy  
 -it is impossible to please God or to live in a manner that is worthy of Him without believing and prioritizing that we are worthy and pleasing to God

through Jesus Christ always and forever no matter what

## **Conclusion**

Eg. Marg

Christian Radio call in show A woman named Marg called

“I just want to ask,” she said in a quiet voice, “if it’s possible for a Christian to commit suicide and still go to heaven.”

It’s a frightening thing to be put on a spot like that anywhere much less on nation wide radio. Judging by her voice tone there was no mistaking her meaning . Marge wasn’t asking out of mere curiosity. She was considering taking her own life. Christians are not immune to such thoughts or desire. In fact their despair can in some ways be deeper because Christians are supposed to have found the answer to life’s problems. When you have come to know God and still can’t get your life straightened out then where else can you go?

Marg had been a Christian for about six years. In the early days she lived on a continual high of joy in the Lord. She immersed herself in the enthusiastic worship at her church, attended many seminars. There was great emphasis on victory at this church with an attitude that Marge described as “you and Jesus can defeat anything”

“The only problem,” she explained, “was that it wasn’t working for me. I would go to the service and get all pumped up but then get back in my

problems the next day. So my life became like a roller coaster: all excited at church, but down in the dumps at home and at work.

The Speakers all taught that if there's some problem you can't beat, it's because you're not doing the right things. They all implied, "If your studying your Bible enough, if you're praying and fasting enough, if your giving enough, then God will deliver you from your problems." But I was giving and I was studying, and I was praying and fasting and seeking God! But I still had financial problems. I was still a single mother raising a teenage son. I was still lonely. I was still struggling with being overweight. I was still angry. What was wrong I was taught that if I did all the right things then God would deliver me. But he didn't. The only thing I could assume was that God was rejecting me. He was refusing to help me for some reason.

When I told the teachers about my struggles, they would always go back to me. They'd say that I must be allowing Satan to have a place in my heart. So back I'd go to confessing my anger and my overeating as sins, and to promise God to try harder to pray and fast and seek him."

Marg's cyclical pattern of work, failure and depression deepened to the point where she said "I was ready to put a gun to my head. I would get up and start driving to work only to find myself weeping uncontrollably. I'd turn around and drive home, draw the curtains and collapse on the couch

for the day. Since I was afraid to kill myself, I prayed every night to God that I wouldn't wake up in the morning. Since he hated me so much I couldn't see any reason why He wouldn't at least answer that prayer

-Marg got to a level of depression and despair that is deeper than most people the root of her bondage is a very common one

She believed that she had to make herself worthy and pleasing to God. And that God accepts you according to what you do or don't do. Marg got better. It did not happen overnight but she did get better. It was a process that involved not doing right things but believing the right things.

If you are struggling in your faith

if you can relate to Marg

please take this insert it is a list of who you are in Christ

Read through it regularly

I have, It can help

**The believers identity in Christ is not a side issue; it is central to experiencing the real Christian Life**