

Perfect Τελειος

Τελειος (along with the same root word plus various endings) is translated perfect, mature, and complete in the various translations. The context determines the meaning.

Matthew 5:48 “Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” In the previous 30 verses, Jesus reviewed many of the ways in which people rationalize self-righteousness. So, this perfection has to do with being consistent in all parts of life. Further, since God is Spirit, this perfection is not addressing physical behaviors. Rather, we are to be consistent in our godly character. Of course, that godly character will spill over into our behaviors. Jesus presented this conclusion as though it were an achievable goal.

Passages that associate perfection and people:

- John 17:20 – 23 Jesus prayed that His future followers “be perfected in unity.” Jesus says that He has given them His “glory,” which is His character. This character leads Christians to being perfect. One way this perfect character manifests itself is unity, which is to be evidence that Jesus is the Son of God.
- Hebrews 12:23 The church is populated by “the spirits of righteous men made perfect.” The implication is that God made these spirits perfect because they were not perfect.
- Hebrews 10:14 “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”
- Hebrews 6:1 “Let us press on to perfection.” Due to the image of babies and milk in 5:12 – 14, this use of τελειος appears to be a figure of speech for maturity. There is a different word for “grow up.”
- Colossians 4:12 Epaphras prayed that his friends in Colossae “stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.” The subjectivity of maturity does not fit with the absolute statements of Epaphras’ prayer.
- 1 Corinthians 2:6 “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are perfect.” Verses 10 – 16 describes these perfect people as those who have “the mind of Christ,” referring to believers living on earth.
- Ephesians 4:13 Miraculously appointed leaders were provided “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” “Grow up” (verse 15) is a different word, describing a process. Perfection is the objective. If this perfection does not occur until Judgment Day, then Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20 – 23 failed.
- Philippians 3:12 – 15 Paul uses a play on words, describing himself as having “not already become perfect,” but in the conclusion of the paragraph, includes himself in the group of those who are “perfect.”
- Colossians 1:28 “That we may present every man perfect in Christ.”
- Hebrews 11:40 “Apart from us they should not be made perfect.”
- James 1:4 “And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be made perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
- James 2:22 “As a result of the works, faith was perfected.”
- James 3:2 “If anyone does not stumble is what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.”
- 1 John 4:17 – 18 “By this, the love of God is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in

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love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears in not perfected in love.”

Passages that attribute perfection to God:

- Romans 12:2 Through our behavior (being living sacrifices) we prove what the perfect will of God is.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 “When the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.” The completed Word is described as perfect.
- Hebrews 2:10 “To perfect the author of their salvation through suffering.” Perfection can be expanded.
- Hebrews 5:9 “And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.”

Other passages about perfection:

- 2 Corinthians 12:9 “Power is perfected in weakness.”
- Colossians 3:14 “Now beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”
- Hebrews 7:11 “Now if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood...”
- Hebrews 7:19 “For the Law made nothing perfect.”
- Hebrews 9:9 “Gifts and sacrifices were offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience.”
- Hebrews 9:11 “He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle.”
- Hebrews 10:1 The Law cannot “make perfect those who draw near.”
- James 1:17 “Every perfect gift is from above.”
- James 1:25 “The perfect law, the law of liberty.”
- 1 John 2:5 “Whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.”
- 1 John 4:12 “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.”