

The Nature of God Consistent versus Flawless

- Matthew 15:1 – 20
 - Mark 7:1 – 23 adds more details.
 - (2) The Pharisees complained because Jesus' disciples ate without first washing their hands.
 - (3 – 6) Jesus did not respond directly to the hand washing, but to ways in which the regulations of the Pharisees circumvented the purpose of the Law.
 - (7 – 9) Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 to describe the attitude of the Pharisees as those who focus on execution but neglect the heart.
 - (10 – 11) The theme: not what goes into a man defiles, but what comes out.
 - (12 – 14) The disciples report that the Pharisees were offended, implying that they understood the point. Jesus said to leave them alone; inconsistency is self-destructive.
 - (15 – 20) Peter asked for an explanation. Jesus made the point more plainly.
 - The Pharisees were focused on being flawless in execution but neglected being consistent with character.
- Proverbs 23:6 – 8
 - “As he thinks in his heart, so is he.”
 - Solomon recommended staying away from people who say one thing and think another.
- For this discussion,
 - *Flawless* refers to physical things such as actions or physical qualities.
 - Sacrifices were to be *without blemish* or *without spot*.
 - The Hebrew word translated *without blemish* is also translated *perfect*.
 - The same word is also translated *complete* or *whole*.
 - Leviticus 23:15 When seven sabbaths are *complete*
 - Leviticus 3:9 And the *whole* rump.
 - Joshua 10:13 The *whole* day.
 - Literally, the word means *whole* or *complete*.
 - Figuratively, the word means *physically flawless*.
 - *Consistent* refers to the connection of intention and action, heart and hands.
- God is described as *perfect* in only two places in the Old Testament
 - Deuteronomy 32:4
 - The Song of Moses
 - The details are all character traits describing His work, so the point is that God is consistent from character to action.
 - Psalm 18:30
 - The focus of the psalm is the character of God.
 - The psalmist trusts in God's consistency rather than His skill.
- *Perfection* is ascribed to God in these places in the New Testament
 - Romans 12:2 “The perfect will of God” The *will* of God is better translated the *desires* of God. The context describes many character traits and associates many actions with their motives rather than their physical features. The focus is being

- consistent* as a living sacrifice rather than the physical requirements of being *without spot*.
- 1 Corinthians 13:10 “When the perfect comes” When the transmission of the gospel was completed, the evidence required of the inspired writers would pass away. The gospel is about character, not practices, unless we want to be like the Pharisees.
 - Hebrews 2:10 “To perfect the author of salvation” If perfect means *flawless*, then there was a time when Jesus was flawed. Rather, the point is that Jesus was made *consistent* from character to action by facing death.
 - Hebrews 5:9 “Having been made perfect.” The same point as 2:10.
 - That which is physical is never flawless
 - Romans 8:18 – 22
 - The universe was created to be imperfect, so even the sacrifices that were supposed to be *without blemish* were not *flawless*.
 - The universe (I suspect an hyperbole for the part of creation that thinks) has an earnest expectation (hope) of adoption and redemption.
 - Any sacrifice could be found to be flawed, which was the foundation for the High Priest’s franchise system for acceptable sacrifices.
 - If we look hard enough, we can find a flaw in anything we do.
 - Legalists find it necessary to invent a standard of acceptability.
 - The faithful look for consistency between character and action.
 - Any choice can be nit-picked to death. If we make a choice by whatever maturity of faith that we may have, then the choice is acceptable to God, even though, in hindsight, we may see a way that we could have done it better.
 - The objective is consistency
 - That which is consistent is acceptable. (Hebrews 12:22 – 23)
 - Even when our characters are a work in progress (2 Peter 1:5 – 11)
 - When we have a gracious nature, we are acceptable (Hebrews 12:28)
 - Living sacrifices are acceptable (Romans 12:1)
 - Those with different practices are acceptable (Romans 14:3, 15:7)