

# Matthew 5:48

*God is Perfect*

## Open your Bible to...

Matt. 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

## Pray

## Intro

✓ God is perfect

Speaking of mankind, the Bible tells us that...

*“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”*

*Romans 3:23*

The Greek word translated into the English “*sinner*” here in Romans 3 means to “*miss the mark*.”

Think of an archer who is aiming for the bullseye, yet despite their very best efforts just cannot hit that bullseye with any consistency.

Even Olympic Gold medalists can't hit the bullseye every time.

The point here is that the Bible is telling us that despite our best efforts that every single person who has lived since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit will miss the mark...

...we all fall short of perfection.

Everyone that is except for God! That's because God alone is perfect...

Perfect in everything He is, everything He does, and everything He thinks.

God hits the bullseye every time!

## God is Truth ~ a Definition

✓ God is Perfect

When we say that God is perfect, we mean that He is absolutely and eternally perfect in every aspect of His Being.

Perfect in appearance with no rival to His beauty.

Perfect in power with no contender to threaten His rule or undermine His will.

Perfect in love so that nothing in all of Creation can separate us from His affection.

And so, it goes with the expression of every attribute of God—God is perfect.

✓ Moral perfection

While we'll touch on various ways in which God is perfect in our study this morning, we'll focus most of our time on God's moral perfection...

...which in brief means that He is perfect in character with no moral deficiency.

The fancy word that theologians use to describe God's moral perfection is the term impeccability.

Impeccability means that God is not able to sin.

Not simply that He chooses not to sin, but rather, that He is not capable of sinning.

For example, James informs us...

*“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” ~ James 1:13*

And the Apostle John writes...

*“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” ~ 1John 1:5*

So, God is flawless, complete, blameless and without any blemish in His being, His ways, and His thoughts because...

...God is perfect.

## The Biblical Foundation that God is Truth

✓ God is Perfect

Next, let's look to the volume of the Book, that is the testimony of God's word for we want to have the same attitude as did the noble Bereans...

In that while we are quick to believe that God is perfect nevertheless, we will always check the scripture to see if what is claimed is true!

And as we do check the scriptures, we find that Moses affirms the truth that God is perfect when he writes...

*“He is the Rock, His work is perfect...”*

*Deuteronomy 32:4a*

To which the Prophet Samuel adds...

*“As for God, His way is perfect...”  
2 Samuel 22:31*

As he considered the sky, Job’s friend observed that creation testifies of...

*“(The) wondrous works of Him who  
is perfect in knowledge?”  
Job 37:16*

Isaiah declares that...

*“Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise  
your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done  
wonderful things, things planned long ago.”  
Isaiah 25:1 NIV*

James tells us that God’s word is perfect as he describes...

*“the perfect law of liberty...” ~ James 1:25b*

And finally, Jesus commands...

*“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is  
perfect.” ~ Matthew 5:48*

In summary, the scriptures we’ve looked at tell us that God is perfect in His...

Works  
Ways  
Word  
Knowledge  
Faithfulness  
Being

God is perfect in all He is, all He does, and in all He thinks.

## Objections to God's Moral Perfection

✓ Objections

You won't be surprised to learn that not everyone agrees with the testimony of scripture.

There are many, both unbelievers as well as some Christians who struggle with the idea that God is morally perfect.

The most common objection to God's moral perfection is the existence of evil. That is, thinking people and critics ask...

*"If God is Morally Perfect, then why is there evil in the world?"*

And that's a legitimate question because the presence of evil in the world would suggest that...

Either God is not morally perfect and therefore responsible for the creation of evil.

Or if He is morally perfect, then He must lack the power to put an end to evil, which would mean that He is not omnipotent (all-powerful.)

Either way God would not be perfect for if He was not morally perfect or lacked the power to put an end to evil then He would have some deficiency in Himself.

So, we need an to be prepared to give a reasonable answer to the presence of evil in the world to help unbelievers come to faith, and to encourage believers who are in the midst of suffering and struggling to reconcile their pain with God's moral perfection.

√ The Biblical response

We respond by acknowledging the truth that there is fact injustice and evil in the world today...

But we point out that the presence of evil today does not mean that evil will ultimately triumph.

Rather we look back to the Bible which clearly tells us that the story being played out on earth is not yet over!

That God has promised that a day is coming when ultimate justice will prevail (Revelation 20).

That God has shown us the end of the story where we can see that Jesus will be victorious over every evil being, thought and behavior (Revelation 19-22).

Furthermore, we know that God is omnipotent (all-powerful)...

Therefore, He can overcome all injustice by His perfect infinite power.

We also know that God is just...

Therefore, we can be confident that He will overcome all injustice and evil by His righteous judgment.

And because God is omnisapient (all-wise)...

He knows the best way and the perfect time, to bring an end to evil and injustice.

Finally, because God is Morally Perfect...

He cannot overlook evil and injustice but must put an end to it.

Therefore, the God who is perfect in justice, perfect in power, perfect in wisdom, and Who is Morally Perfect...

Can, will and is morally obligated to bring an end to evil and injustice...

...and will do so at the perfect time!

Since the Bible perfectly and accurately predicted the 1st Advent of Christ down to the very day that He entered Jerusalem...

...then we can be confident that His promise to bring an end to all injustice and evil is true and will come to pass because He is perfect in all He does.

## The Implications because God is Truth

✓ The implications because God is Truth

Think about this...

- 1) Because God is perfect no charge against His character will stick

That is, because He is morally perfect, He must therefore be perfect in the expression of all of His attributes...

That is, He is perfectly holy, righteous, just, loving, etc.

He is perfect in His judgement, wrath, wisdom, knowledge and ways.

Additionally, since God alone is morally perfect it follows that He alone cannot sin or do wrong for He has no potential to sin.

Therefore, we cannot rightly lay any charge against God's Character in the expression of any of His divine attributes.

Nor can we truly blame Him for any injustice or mistreatment we experience or observe in the world.

That's important to understand because as just stated many people reject the concept of the God revealed in the Bible based on the evil they observe in the world.

But God's moral perfection tells us that He is not the One responsible for the evil in the world.

Rather, all of the evil we experience in the world including...

Famine  
Violence  
Racism

Can all be traced back to the sin of that first couple in the Garden of Eden.

When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they opened the door for evil to spread and infect every person and place on earth.

Yet, while God is not responsible for the evil in the world, nonetheless He demonstrates His perfect love by providing the means to deliver us from that evil...

...and has promised to one day do away with all the evil consequences that sprang from that original sin.



Ap. Test of doctrine

In view of God's moral perfection, we reject any manmade doctrine that claims that God creates or does evil.

So, when you hear or read that a famous pastor or teacher says that God ordains the rape of children (James White).

Or that He created sin (R.C. Sproul Jr.).

And that by His power God brought about the systematic murder of 6 million Jews in the Nazi gas chambers (Mark Talbot, John Piper & Justin Taylor).

We recognize that these men are in error and have by their manmade doctrines stained the reputation of God who is morally perfect.

These men are like the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked...

*“...for the sake of your tradition (i.e. the Rabbinical interpretation of Scripture) you have made void the word of God.”*

So too the men that I quoted are so committed to their manmade system of theology that they will do violence to the Word of God even if it means tarnishing God's character.

If your doctrine or system of theology contradicts the character of God as revealed in Scripture, and the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels...

...then toss your manmade theology and embrace a biblical theology!

The God of the Bible does not create evil, nor does He cause people to sin because He is pure in His motives, thoughts, and actions...

...there exists no evil in God.

2) Perfection is a communicable attribute

That truth is revealed in Jesus' command to...

*"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." ~ Matthew 5:48*

First, notice that Jesus' command infers that the heavenly Father is already and eternally perfect.

That is, perfection is an inseparable aspect of God's eternal nature—He was, is and always will be perfect.

He can't be anything but perfect!

Second, Jesus calls us to be perfect like God.

The implication is that we are not perfect for if we were perfect then Jesus would not have called us to be perfect like the Father.

Here's the point, while God is presently and eternally perfect, we are not.

Rather perfection is something God is, while perfection is the goal for God's people—you and me.

And to whatever degree we manifest some level of perfection in our lives we are reflecting the nature of God Who is perfect.

Jesus' statement ought to catch our attention because seldom can we humans be like God in any tangible way...

Yet here He calls to be perfect like the Father.

Any time the Bible calls us to reflect some attribute of God in our lives we call that trait a communicable attribute of God.

That is, there are attributes of God that can be transmitted from Him to us as we cooperate with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Attributes like love, holiness, mercy and others.

These are distinguished from non-communicable attributes like power, knowledge, and wisdom.

Ex. God never says, "*Be eternal as I am eternal.*"

That's because eternity is an attribute that we can never obtain because we are created beings with a beginning—only an uncreated Being can be eternal.

But God does tell us to be perfect like He is and to love like He loves (ref. John 13:34-35).

While we cannot ever match God's *moral perfection* nor His perfect *agape* love, we can reflect a measure of His perfection in our lives.

And per the command of our Lord it is our duty as followers of Jesus to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives to produce those Christ-like qualities in us.

Ap. Communicable

Communicable diseases like a cold or the flu are transmitted by proximity—that is, you have to be near an infected person to catch that cold.

So too if you want to reflect the communicable attributes of God like His love, mercy, perfection and holiness...

...you have to get close to Him!

We do that by daily getting into His word and surrendering ourselves to the sanctifying work of His Spirit.

Secondly, Jesus' command to be "perfect" also reveals that placing our faith in Him is only the beginning of the work that God has planned for lives.

He never intended for us to stay in the same spiritual, emotional and mental condition that He found us.

Rather, He's called us to follow Him on the journey of sanctification by which He transforms us from our old sinful nature into the new nature of Christ to reflect the character of God to a lost world.

As He said here in Matthew's Gospel, He's calling us to perfection—to be transformed from the wretched condition in which He found us...

...into the child of God that looks more like Jesus than the world!

Ap. Not perfect yet

Having said that it's important that we understand that while we work with the Spirit toward the heavenly call to perfection that we will not obtain perfection this side of glory. As the Apostle Paul confessed...

*"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold*

*of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of  
me.” ~ Philippians 3:12*

Clearly if the Apostle Paul after some 30 years of walking with and serving Jesus wasn't yet perfect...

Then neither will we reach perfection in this life!

Rather, as Paul reveals in 1Corinthians 15 we won't be perfected until the Rapture of the Church and Resurrection of the saints.

Then in the “*twinkling of an eye*” we will exchange this imperfect body—the last remnants of the curse...

...for an immortal and perfect body fit for Heaven and spiritually tuned to dwell in perfect harmony with God.

So, we heed Jesus' call to be perfect through our daily surrender to His will...

...and extend grace to ourselves and others knowing that we're all a work in process and not perfect yet.

### 3) The presence of evil proves God's existence

While most if not all human beings find the presence of evil and injustice in our world to be stumbling block to faith in God...

...the existence of evil and injustice is what ultimately penetrated the atheistic armor of C.S. Lewis and brought him to faith in Christ!

*“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? ... I could have*

*given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own.*

*But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies. Thus, in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist ... I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality—namely my idea of justice—was full of sense.*

*(C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, Book Two, Ch. 1.)*

Lewis' point is that all the evil and injustice in the world forced him to acknowledge that there must exist a perfect moral standard by which he was comparing these evils to.

That is, how would he know that something was evil or unjust unless he had a perfect standard by which to compare it?

And Lewis confessed that standard would have to be a perfect moral law established by a perfect Moral Law Giver!

Thus, the presence of evil actually proves God's existence—we call it the "*moral argument*", which many Christian apologists and philosophers believe is the most powerful argument we have for God's existence.

✓ Other atheists

Lewis isn't the only deep thinker to be won to faith God by the moral argument.

Francis Collins the head of the prestigious Human Genome Project was won to Christ after reading Lewis' argument for the Moral Law Giver.

And Dr. Sarah Irving-Stonebraker, Senior Lecturer on History at Western Sydney University also read Lewis' moral argument in his book *Mere Christianity* and testified...

*"...after a couple months of attending church, I knelt in my closet in my apartment and asked Jesus to save me, and to become the Lord of my life."*

My point is that while the Devil, human philosophers and critics, love to use the existence of evil in the world as a scourge to drive people away from God, ironically the evil that Satan is responsible for...

God is able to use that same evil to reveal Himself as the Moral Law Giver.

For evil isn't just some social construct whereby people have agreed to call one thing right and another thing wrong...

...rather, evil and injustice are real and are universally understood by the testimony of our conscience that there is a moral law given by a Moral Law Giver.

## **The Blessings & Benefits because God is Truth**

√ Blessings & Benefits

- 1) God's moral perfection ensures that He will always do what is best and right for us

Because God is incapable of sinning, or doing wrong, we can be sure that all of His motives and actions toward us will always be pure.

That is, unlike the false gods and goddesses worshiped around the world that take advantage of and mistreat people...

...the true God who is morally perfect will never do anything that won't ultimately produce good in our lives.

Therefore, we should seek and surrender to His will knowing that His plans for us will always produce the best of all possible lives.

That doesn't mean that His chosen path for us will be smooth, or that we won't suffer loss—think of John the Baptist and Jesus.

If Jesus hadn't submitted to the Father's perfect plan, which involved great suffering, then we wouldn't be saved.

But following the Lord's plan for our lives does mean that because He knows the unique way in which He has wired us that we can trust Him to pick the best path for us.

Ex. Martyn-Lloyd Jones

Chose a career in medicine and served for a time as assistant to the Royal Physician to the King of England but found himself conflicted as he felt called to the ministry.

*"I would say that the only man who is called to preach is the man who cannot do anything else..."*

While Dr. Jones could certainly do "*anything else*", but he discovered that God's path for his life as a pastor and teacher superseded even the highly favored appointment to serve the Royal Family of England.

Ap. We don't even know what we really want in life!

I distinctly remember a quiet moment in my office at the church in Arkansas where God showed me that what I thought I wanted in ministry...was really not what would bring me joy!



That was a revelation because it set me free from my false expectations of ministry so that I could enjoy the unique position that He called me to serve in the Body of Christ.

I don't have to be like Billy Graham, or Pastor Chuck, or even like our dear Pastor Damian.

I just need to be the man that God called me to be.

Let God, the God who loves you perfectly and knows you perfectly show you the path He's called you to walk in life...

...you can trust that it will be the best path because He is morally perfect.

2) His moral perfection provides us with a perfect sacrifice

Because Jesus—God the Son is morally perfect His sacrifice is more than sufficient to remove our sins! That's the point of the author of Hebrews when he wrote...

*“And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man (Jesus), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ...For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”*

*Hebrews 10:11-12, 14*

That is the God who is morally perfect did for immoral sinners what we could never do for ourselves...

Offer a perfect sacrifice that would satisfy the just and perfect demands of God's Law!

Jesus' sinlessness then is not just testimony of His divine nature but is the essential requirement of the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world!

That is, if Jesus wasn't morally perfect then He would not be qualified to save us from our sins for even one tiny blemish to His character would have disqualified Him as the Lamb of God.

But because God is morally perfect, He could provide the sacrifice to take away our sins whereby...

God the Father initiated the perfect plan to save us  
God the Son carried out that perfect plan to save us  
God the Holy Spirit revealed that perfect plan save us

And that salvation is only possible because Jesus—God the Son is sinless. The author of Hebrews tells us...

*“(that Jesus) was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” ~ Hebrews 4:15b*

And Peter adds...

*“Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth” ~ 1Peter 2:22*

Praise the Lord for His moral perfection for without it we would be lost forever in sin!

## Close

√ God is Perfect

As we close our time together, I'd like to share a thought about God's perfection that I stumbled across and hope you'll find it a blessing.

One author, (*Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth*) suggested that as we think on God's perfection we should...

Look to Jesus, and He will exceed your highest hopes.

Look to Jesus, and He will surpass your expectations.

Look to Jesus, and you will find yourself in the presence of utter perfection.

As I stated at the beginning of our time together when we speak of God's perfection, we mean that He is...

Perfect in appearance with no rival to His beauty.

Perfect in power with no contender to threaten His rule or undermine His will.

Perfect in love so that nothing in all of Creation can separate us from His affection.

Take some time this week to think deeply on the other attributes of God, His power, wisdom, unchanging nature, etc.,

Then jot down your thoughts as to how God displays His perfection through each of those attributes of His Nature.

Then spend some time in worship of Him for those perfections and how each perfection of God is a blessing in your life.