

Chasing Carrots 3 - Perfection

Chasing Carrots: Perfect Bumper Vid

Welcome back to Redemption Church in Plano Tx. My name is Chris Fluitt. Thank you for joining us today.

We are in the 3rd week of of our Google Search series... Wait that's not right... Let me start again...

We are in the 3rd week of our Chasing Carrots series and today we are talking today about chasing the carrot called fame... Let me try it one more time...

Hello. My name is Marshal Blessing...

Chasing Carrots

I'm just having some fun with you, but if I am being "real" with you, there is a desire to be perfect. Perfectionism is a huge burden and source of stress. The desire to be perfect is the carrot we are talking about today.

Perfection

When we mess up, we often beat ourselves up. When we achieve something less than perfection we often feel shame. We feel unworthy.

This has been a real struggle for me. I believe it is a struggle for you.

We can always justify our perfectionism. I am just trying to better myself... this is the price to be the best. You just don't understand my drive to be better. I am going from good to great.

And society of course dangles this carrot.

You need a pinterest worthy home.

You need Instagram worthy looks.

You have to be the perfect mom & dad, perfect spouse, perfect Christian, perfect employee...

We plan a day where we do something with the kids... maybe take them to the zoo, but we often say these words... "I want it to be the PERFECT DAY." Don't just throw a birthday party, there is this drive to throw the PERFECT BIRTHDAY PARTY. Don't just cook dinner it must be the PERFECT DINNER.

We place unrealistic expectations on ourselves. We try to live in unsustainable circumstances.

We know it is hurting us... but we tell ourselves “this is the price you pay for success.”

Is this you today? Are you following a carrot of perfectionism?

My spouse needs me to be perfect, my kids, my friends, my job, ...and God needs me to be perfect.

Oh yeah.. this ought to make matters worse... God asks you to be perfect.

Matthew 5:48 (NIV2011) Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Yikes! No pressure there right... Just be as perfect as your heavenly Father...

What kind of perfectionist are you?

3 Types of Perfectionists

- **Self Oriented Perfectionist** - You hold unrealistically high expectations of yourself and battle with feelings of guilt, often obsessing to the point of inefficiency. You're prone to procrastinate and struggle with deep feelings of inadequacy.
- **Externally Oriented Perfectionist** - You believe others expect you to be perfect. To cope with the pressure, you often use self-deprecating humor as a defense. You often feel alone, depressed and desperate because you know you will never be enough.
- **Others Oriented Perfectionist** - You expect others to live up to your impossible standards. Because you tend to lack empathy, you often tear others down or use abrasive and demeaning humor toward those who don't meet your standards.

Is this drive to be perfect self oriented, externally oriented, or others oriented.

Perfection

You may feel like perfectionism is a psychological problem... that it is only a problem in the mind. Perfectionism finds its root in the Spiritual.

Perfectionism is a mask or covering for anything imperfect.

Adam & Eve were in the Garden. They were surrounded by perfection and didn't even know it. We have no record of Adam & Eve ever feeling insecure or unworthy... they didn't struggle with depression or live under a burden of stress... They lived in a perfect world.

But when Adam & Eve tasted of the forbidden they realized immediately that they had done something wrong. They went and hid themselves. They realized they were naked and suddenly felt insecure. What did they do with their insecurity? They tried to cover it. They took leaves and tried to fashion clothes to cover their shame.

Adam & Eve realized they were not perfect but tried to cover up their imperfection. Perfectionism is a mask or covering for anything imperfect.

Perfectionism is not just a thought problem. **Perfectionism is a carnal, physical, sinful response to a spiritual condition.**

Adam & Eve were imperfect, yet they stood in the presence of a perfect God. When something imperfect stands in the presence of something perfect it creates pressure. This perfection pressure forced Adam & Eve from the garden.

The Perfect Law

We aren't standing in the garden but we are standing in the presence of perfection and it causes pressure on us. God's Word is perfect. The law, the commands of God are perfect and we are imperfect.

God has given us his perfect law. There are 613 laws in the Old Testament. They are perfect and they put pressure on the imperfect.

Romans 3:20 (NIV2011) ...no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law...

We, the imperfect, have been given the perfect law of God. But no one has been able to make themselves perfect/righteous through the law... The perfect law of God puts pressure on us, the imperfect.

Now let us read the rest of Romans 3:20.

Romans 3:20 (NIV2011) ...no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

The law is perfect, but you cannot make yourself perfect through the law. You will not be able to cover or mask your imperfection with the law... just like Adam & Eve were not able to hide their nakedness with leaves.

Instead the law applies pressure. The scripture says the law makes you conscious of your sin.

I am a sinner. You are sinner. We know it because the law tells us.

613 laws are hard to even think through. Think instead about 10 laws. Have we kept the 10 commandments? When we look at the 10 commandments do we see how perfect we are, or does it reveal our imperfection?

- Do not lie? Fail
- Do not steal? Fail
- Do not covet? Fail
- Do not take God's name in vain? Fail

We fall short. We are sinners. The perfect law of God shows us how imperfect we are. We are sinners.

Until you see yourself as a sinner – You won't see your need of a savior.

Your perfectionism cannot make you right with God. You cannot on your own effort solve your imperfection.

What is dangerous is that your perfectionism may allow you to mask and hide your sin. But even if you hide it really well, it is still there.

How are we made RIGHTeous?

Romans 3:22 (NIV2011) ...righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

The imperfect cannot make themselves perfect. RIGHTeousness is given to the imperfect by the PERFECT ONE. He gives this righteousness through faith in Jesus.

Perfectionism says

What I do

About me

If I obey God will love me
obey

Win God's approval

Grace says

What Jesus has done

About Jesus

Because God loves me I can

Live in God's approval

Trying to be perfect brings so much pressure, but what Jesus has done for us takes the pressure off.

The pressure is off

You don't have to live under the burden of perfectionism. Jesus can make you righteous RIGHT NOW.

Jesus does not dangle a carrot... If you work hard enough, long enough, pray enough, give enough... then you will become righteous. NO! You can become righteous right now by faith in Jesus. REPENTANCE!

Because the pressure of perfection is off it changes how we treat ourselves and others.

We get to choose people over perfection

There were 2 sisters, Mary & Martha. Jesus was coming to their house in Luke 10. Talk about pressure, the most important person on the planet is coming to your house!

Martha was trying to make everything perfect. Martha was cleaning, cooking, working, and sweating, and Mary was just kicking back with Jesus. Here is what Jesus said to Martha.

Luke 10:41-42 (NIV2011) "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus wants us to choose people over perfection. Our perfectionism keeps us from having relationships with people. Jesus says what Mary has chosen is BETTER!

When you get into that perfectionist mindset you need to stop yourself and say IT IS BETTER...

It is better than I just relax and be me.

It is better that I receive people in whatever state they are.

It is better to choose people over perfection.

Because the pressure is off...

We get to choose Perfect Love over Perfect Performance

Now wait... didn't Jesus tell us to be perfect? Remember this verse?

Matthew 5:48 (NIV2011) Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

This verse reads different when you understand the context. This verse is about Perfect Love.

Let's read it in context beginning at verse 43.

Matthew 5:43-44 (NIV2011) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 5:45 (NIV2011) that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Matthew 5:46-48 (NIV2011) If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Now you tell me are these verses about being error free perfect in performance, or about being perfect in love?

Because Jesus has taken the pressure off we get to choose perfect love over perfect performance.

In fact the word for perfect is the Greek word Telios. Telios does not mean to be without error or sin. Telios means to be complete & whole, no longer lacking.

God wants your love to be complete, whole, and not lacking. This is why Jesus says the most important laws of God are... LOVE GOD and LOVE PEOPLE.

Love God Love People

Jesus says that loving God and loving people will fulfill all the law of God.

Musician

Just last week I was driving around town doing some errands. While I was driving I had this overwhelming fear and sense of inadequacy. I started saying out loud.. I'm not good enough. I can't do this. I am not able to be a father, a husband, a pastor... I feel like such a loser. I ought to be able to do this but I can't. I feel so lame.

Perfectionism is all about me... and this was all about me. I felt this dark belief settling in on me, but then something rose up within me.

I am not good enough, but my God is. I am not strong enough or smart enough, but my God is. I am not perfect but I am perfectly loved by God.

The very next day I was talking to someone who is also a follower of Christ. They asked me how I was doing and I felt the Lord tell me to tell them the truth. When I told them about my fear of inadequacy they started to cry... they thought they were the only one struggling with this.

Friend you are not the only one struggling. The altar is for those in a struggle. Why don't you come today.

This altar is for imperfect people. Why don't you come today.

The pressure is off because of Jesus. He loves us perfectly.