

The Biblical Understanding of Perfection

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The subject of perfection in Scripture is often taught in error by a wide variety of leavened (i.e. corrupt) preachers because they have little understanding of the philosophy (i.e. way of thinking) that the Lord Jesus Christ has taught us, and this is because they do not understand how the Word of God defines the doctrines of Jesus.

[Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy](#) [a way of thinking] [and vain deceit](#) [useless lies], [after the tradition of men, after the rudiments](#) [first teachings] [of the world, and not after Christ.](#)
-Colossians 2:8

When I was a young Christian, I was led astray on this matter because of certain false teachers that I used to listen to, and thanks to the kindness and longsuffering of the Lord God, He has led me out of their leaven and shown me the fullness of this very important doctrine.

[Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.](#)
-Matthew 5:48

Countless times, I have heard preachers quote Matthew 5:48, and say something similar to the following: "We are called to be perfect, but no one is perfect." Of course, if we reason the matter out, such a statement is an obvious contradiction because, on one hand, Jesus commanded us Christians to be perfect, and on the other hand, these preachers tell us that we cannot keep His commandments, which leaves listeners confused.

[In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.](#)
-Psalm 71:1

[For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.](#)
-1 Corinthians 14:33

For example, corrupt TV preacher Walter Hallam of *Abundant Life Christian Center* taught that perfection is not making mistakes:

["Have you ever noticed that not everybody, nor everything, is perfect in life? And if you live long enough, you know what I'm saying. People are going to make mistakes. You're going to make mistakes. I'm going to make mistakes. If you think I don't make mistakes, you can just ask my wife. She could easily tell you about all of my mistakes... One thing's for sure, no one is perfect in life."](#)

-Walter Hallam, "No One is Perfect - 7 at 7 with Walter Hallam," *Abundant Life Christian Center*, Aug 13, 2020, retrieved Jan 7, 2021, [https://fb.watch/2SP1Yga_j1/]

In another example, corrupt preacher R.C. Sproul taught that perfection is righteous living:

["The human dilemma is this: God is holy, and we are not. God is righteous, and we are not. To be sure, it is openly admitted in our culture that 'No one is perfect.'"](#)

-R.C. Sproul, "None Righteous," *Ligonier Ministries*, retrieved Jan 7, 2021, [ligonier.org/learn/articles/none-righteous]

And in a final example, corrupt preacher Jon Bloom of *desiringGod* taught that perfection is not even a commandment:

["But to understand and believe this, we must first understand something Jesus said that sounds contradictory: 'You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' \(Matthew 5:48\). This sure sounds like a demand for perfection on the face of it. And it is, and therefore it isn't."](#)

-Jon Bloom, "Lay Aside the Weight of Perfection," *desiringGod*, June 9, 2017, retrieved Jan 7, 2021, [desiringgod.org/articles/lay-aside-the-weight-of-perfection]

Based on what we just read from these corrupt preachers, we have been taught that Jesus commanded us to be perfect, that no one is perfect, that no one can be perfect, and that perfection both is and is not a commandment at the same time. Without going into detail, I would add they taught many more absurdities than just these few nonsensical statements. As I looked over the teachings of these men, there was a lot of reliance on worldly sources (e.g. lexicons, concordances, and Greek grammar dictionaries), relying on the writings of men instead of the doctrines of God in His Word, quoting from the Bible little, if at all, which is one of the major reasons they get this vital doctrine so wrong.

(Read "[The Dangers of Using Lexicons and Concordances](#)" & "[The 'Original Greek' Scam](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

The key to understanding the doctrine Jesus taught on perfection is to know how Scripture is supposed to be studied. Thankfully, God was kind enough to teach us how to study His Word:

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

-Isaiah 28:9-10

In other words, the Word of God is not organized with color codes and bullet points, and is purposefully designed in a way that the fullness of a doctrine can only be understood if all the pieces are aligned, and most often, those doctrines are located throughout various books in the Bible. We are to read God's Word "*precept upon precept*," meaning that we take each commandment in correlation with other commandments, "*line upon line*" meaning that we need to read it in its context, and "*here a little and there a little*," meaning that we need to compare Scripture with Scripture and correlate them together.

Then, God goes on to explain why He did that:

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

-Isaiah 28:13

The reason God set it up this way was so that men who would read and attempt to understand God's Word would never be able to fully understand it. Therefore, they would be led down false paths, teach false doctrines, and we would be able to spot the counterfeit teacher more easily (i.e. they would "*fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken*"), which is why the Bible says such men are "*ever learning*," but never able to gain understanding of God's Word because they have not been born again to receive the Spirit of God.

*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power [i.e. authority] thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, **Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.***

-2 Timothy 3:5-7

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.***

-1 Corinthians 2:14

Part of the reason many people today are confused about perfection in Scripture is because they use casual or common definitions of words and phrases, instead of studying Scripture to find out how God defines the words and phrases He used. If we go to a modern-day dictionary to define the word 'perfect', we get a definition that gives the impression of flawlessness:

perfect (adj): conforming absolutely to the description or definition of an ideal type; excellent or complete beyond practical or theoretical improvement

(See 'perfect', *Random House Dictionary*, 2021, [dictionary.com]; See also *Collins English Dictionary*, 10th Edition, William Collins Sons & Co, 2012)

Now we can see why there is so much confusion coming from the corrupt preachers; they are using worldly sources for their definitions, instead of using the Bible for definitions. For someone achieve perfection according to this definition, they would have to be flawless (i.e. "*beyond practical or theoretical improvement*"), or in the context of Scripture, they would have to be sinless, and the Bible clearly tells us that no man is without sin:

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
-Romans 3:23-24

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
-1 John 1:8-10

Clearly, there is a contradiction between the modern-day usage of the word perfection, and the commandment of perfection in Scripture. As we read earlier in Isaiah 28, we should read the Bible in its context (i.e. "*line upon line*"), and to read correlating Scriptures (i.e. "*here a little and there a little*") to get a full understanding, so let's go back to Matthew 5 to read more details, starting in verse 43:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
-Matthew 5:43

Jesus is partially referring to ([Leviticus 19:18](#)), but I want to emphasize that he was only referring to this *IN PART*. The Word of God (in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible) certainly does teach "*thou shalt love thy neighbour*," which we follow to this day, but **the Torah does NOT teach that the children of Israel were to hate their enemies**; rather, that was a cultural doctrine that was taught by men of corrupt minds who added their own twisted perspectives to the Scripture, and sadly, that corrupt doctrine is still taught in many places today.

As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever.
Amen.
-2 Peter 3:16-18

Continuing on with Matthew 5 in verse 44:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.
-Matthew 5:44-45

The Lord God is kind and patient, even to those who hate Him, which is evidenced by the years of life He gives to many of them, by the blessings of children and prosperity, and even to the fact that the rain falls to the ground and the sun shines on the plants to grow crops and feed those who hate Him. Therefore, just as children are supposed to be a reflection of the teachings and character of their father, so are the spiritual children of God supposed to be a reflection of the teachings and character of Him.

*For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?
-Matthew 5:46-47*

The word 'salute' in this passage is not meant in the sense of saying "hello" to someone, but rather, it is used in the sense of genuine friendly wishes of kindness upon someone. A publican is a tax collector, or a man sent with governing authority who took advantage of the people for money, and though we have some very corrupt men and women in our governing authority who take bribes and commit many other illegal acts which abuse their authority, I would not wish for any evil thing to befall their household; rather, I would pray that they would be safe and blessed with all their needs according to the will of God, as stated in this passage.

*Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.
-1 Peter 3:9*

And finally, in verse 48, Jesus commanded:

*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.
-Matthew 5:48*

So after reading these six verses of context in Matthew 5, what is perfection? To put it simply, here are a few examples of how that verse could be read:

- Be ye therefore loving, even as your Father in heaven is loving.
- Be ye therefore peaceful, even as your Father in heaven is peaceful.
- Be ye therefore longsuffering, even as your Father in heaven is longsuffering.
- Be ye therefore gentle, even as your Father in heaven is gentle.
- Be ye therefore temperate, even as your Father in heaven is temperate.

This is based on the fruits of the Spirit, as mentioned in Galatians:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
-Galatians 5:22-23*

We could also say that we should be merciful, even as our heavenly Father is merciful, which is exactly what Scripture teaches us if we look at the correlating verses (i.e. "here a little and there a little"). The following is the same passage we read in Matthew 5, but this is from Luke 6:

*But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.
-Luke 6:35-36*

Therefore, according to Scripture, perfection is to be that which we are intended to be according to the finished work of Jesus Christ. By the example Jesus set for us, we are intended to be charitable because charity is the fulfillment of the law and prophets.

(Read "[The Biblical Understanding of Charity](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.
-Matthew 7:12*

Considering the many sins we have committed in our lifetimes, how would we like to be treated by other men? How would we like God to treat us? Do we want mercy from others? Therefore, if you would expect men to give you an abundant amount of mercy and understanding when considering our wrongdoing, we should also give mercy and understanding freely and abundantly to others, and that is what it means to love your neighbor as yourself (i.e. you already love yourself, and now you need to practice loving others in the same way), and that is what it means to be perfect.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

-Matthew 22:37-40

To be perfect before God is to be charitable in all things, so for example, when our passions grow hot within us, but we remain temperate and calm, we are charitable with our neighbor, and therefore perfect (i.e. as we are intended to be) before our heavenly Father. When our enemy speaks ill of us and attacks us, but we treat them fairly and kindly, and we show them mercy and charity in their time of need, then we are perfect before our heavenly Father. When we demonstrate ourselves, through words and actions, to be loving, joyful, peaceful, longsuffering, gentle, doers of good works, faithful, meek (i.e. humble and lowly), and temperate, we have followed the commandments of Jesus unto perfection.

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

-Psalm 18:30

Of course, this does not mean that we are sinless; rather, the opposite is true because the wicked heart of the flesh has many selfish desires, and to our shame, we sometimes give in to those things and commit sin. There is no Christian who is without sin. This is why it is so important to have established a heart of repentance upon salvation (i.e. no man can be saved without repentance), because that grief and godly sorrow of wrongdoing brings us back to our knees to seek God's mercy, that He would forgive us of our sins and continue to teach us His perfection.

(Read "[Is Repentance Part of Salvation?](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

-Jeremiah 17:9

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

-Proverbs 28:26

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to preach repentance and remission of sins unto the whole world:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his

name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
-Luke 24:44-47

A repentant heart (i.e. a heart established in godly sorrow of our wrongdoing) is part of perfection, for not only is it a requirement of salvation, but it establishes us in humility before God and men. Therefore, if we want to be perfect, we should be established (i.e. founded, and well grounded) in the basics of Christ and His salvation.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles [prophets] of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles [i.e. the basic understanding and first teachings] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.
-Hebrews 5:12-6:3

Please do not misunderstand, when the Bible says "*leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,*" it is not saying that we are abandoning those principles, but rather, we are moving on from those principles because they have been established in our roots, and we move forward into a deeper understanding of the doctrines of Scripture. Those who have been born again in Christ have a good understanding of the principles of the Word of God given unto them by the Holy Ghost.

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
-Matthew 13:23

Therefore, we are not made perfect by our own efforts, but through the perfect work Jesus Christ has done in us, namely, giving us repentance to acknowledging of the truth, we have been regenerated, and now have the capability of living perfectly before our Heavenly Father.

It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.
-Psalm 18:32

Many years ago, I did some investigation into a pastor here in Indiana named William Swesey for the sake of a friend, and I began to listen to some of his teachings to get a better idea about who he is and what he believes. Keep in mind, at the time I was investigating him, he had been a pastor for over 40 years. It took me six minutes of listening before I knew there were serious problems because not only did he state that the teaching of "*thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*" was a *NEW* interpretation of Scripture that the Jews had never heard before (despite the fact that [Leviticus 19:19](#) directly teaches it), but he also stated that perfection was exclusive to (i.e. only found within) the New Testament, which is not true because it was also taught in the Torah.

Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.
-Deuteronomy 18:13

In fact, God taught Abraham this same doctrine all the way back in Genesis 17:

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.
-Genesis 17:1-2

Those who believe and teach that perfection is absence of sin, or rather, that perfection is complete obedience to the law, simply do not understand the Scripture. Again, this is why turning to Bible commentaries and Greek grammar dictionaries is so dangerous because we have the Word of God to define these matters for us, and in His Word, He told us that perfection cannot be achieved by the Levitical priesthood under the law:

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec [i.e. the priesthood of faith under Jesus Christ], and not be called after the order of Aaron?
-Hebrews 7:11



If observance of the law were the key to perfection, then how did Abraham achieve it before the law was given? Furthermore, how did Noah achieve it without the law of God?

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.
-Genesis 6:9

It is by the guidance of God that we are made perfect; that we are given charitable hearts to do what is right by Him:

God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.
-2 Samuel 22:33

To further prove that flawlessness is not perfection according to the teachings of the Bible, we need only look at God's description of King David. In First Kings 15, the Bible documents the reign of Abijam, one of the sons of David:

And he [Abijam] walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father. Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.
-1 Kings 15:3-5

David had Uriah killed so he could steal his wife, Bathsheba, thereby breaking all of the commandments of God. David wept in repentance of his wrongdoing, and accepted the punishment God gave him for his sins, and yet, God still said he was perfect, despite his sins and errors.

On the other hand, the Bible says that when Amaziah reigned as king over Jerusalem, he did that which was right according to God's commandments, but he did not have a perfect heart of charity, to love the Lord God first and his neighbor as himself. This clearly demonstrates that there is a difference between keeping the laws of God and living perfectly in the sight of God, and that those who keep the law (or claim to keep the law) are not automatically the children of God.

(Read "[False Converts vs Eternal Security](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.
-2 Chronicles 25:1-2

We should take notice of those who have been given that perfect heart of charity, meekness, temperance, and peace for consideration of the works that God has done in them.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.
-Psalm 37:37

However, such men who live according to the perfections of the Spirit of God are often attacked from all sides. Their enemies hide in the shadows, waiting for their chance to strike, having no fear of the judgment they will receive from God's wrath upon them.

Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity: Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
-Psalm 64:1-4

This is why it is such a grievous thing when a false preacher like Steven L. Anderson makes a public statement during one of his corrupt teachings in which he targets sinners and unbelievers, saying, "*I hate them with a perfect hatred,*" making reference to Psalm 139:

For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.
-Psalm 139:19-22

The proper understanding of this is not to hate their person, but to hate their works. The heart of a perfect man hates the works of iniquity (i.e. sin), and demonstrates love (i.e. makes selfless sacrifices in kindness) towards his enemies.

I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.
-Psalm 101:2-3

However, Anderson hates the person, as we can see when he preached his leavened message about queer, cross-dresser Bruce Jenner. Keep in mind as you read this, Steven Anderson does not believe that homosexuals can be saved:

Steven Anderson's Hatred and Wrath

<https://archive.org/details/CLAndersonwrath>

"I hate him with a perfect hatred. I have no love—NO LOVE!!!—FOR THIS BRUCE FREAK! I hope he dies today! I hope he dies and goes to hell!"

(See Steven L. Anderson, "Steven Anderson's Hatred and Wrath," [https://archive.org/details/CLAndersonwrath])

He also made statements about Barack Obama in the same manner:

"And I'm going to tell you something: I hate Barack Obama! You say: Well, you mean you just don't like what he stands for. No, I hate the person! Well, you just don't like his politics. No, I HATE HIM!... You say: Are you just saying that? No. When I go to bed tonight, Steven L. Anderson is going to pray for Barack Obama to die and go to hell."

(See Steven L. Anderson, "Pastor Steven L Anderson Is Gonna Pray For Barack Obama To Die And Go To Hell," Jim Pence, Sep 8, 2009, retrieved Jan 12, 2021, [https://youtu.be/k9zyLRaX7jQ])

Please do not misunderstand; I cannot hardly tolerate even hearing Barack Obama speak because he is such a wicked man who has done horrible things, but I still pray that (if at all possible) the Lord Jesus Christ would bring him and his family to repentance (i.e. godly sorrow) of his sins and faith in Christ before it is too late, and I pray the same for Anderson and his family. Anderson is my enemy, and an enemy of Christ's church, but I still pray that God would show him as much mercy as He has shown me. In order to hate with perfect hatred, one must first understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His doctrine on perfection, having knowledge of charity in the Spirit of God, but sadly, Steven Anderson has no understanding of it because he does not have the Holy Spirit to understand it in the first place.

(Read "[Wolves in Costume: Steven Anderson](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details on Anderson's hypocrisy and false doctrines.)

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
-1 Corinthians 2:14

To be perfect before your Father in Heaven means that you become as you are intended to be, and you are intended to be as your Heavenly Father, not in the sense of being flawless and holy (i.e. without sin) as God is, but in the sense of charity, showing kindness, love, meekness, understanding, and faithfulness, which, if we do those things, we become true disciples, and show ourselves to be like our Master.

The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.
-Luke 6:40

In Galatians, Paul poses a great question:

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?
-Galatians 3:3

Please do not misunderstand Paul's meaning here. This is not to say that perfection comes through the flesh, or in other words, that perfection comes through the works of the flesh or obedience to the law, but rather, we were founded in the Spirit of God, and through the Spirit of God we are made perfect, having righteousness imputed to us through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of God, we are also given a heart of charity that He teaches us over time, so that as we grow as Christians, we become perfect in His sight.

Therefore, it is foolish to believe that someone can achieve perfection by the works of the law, and furthermore, it is doubly foolish to reject the doctrine of perfection completely by claiming it is not achievable. Such foolish things are spoken by men who are in no position to be teaching anyone, let alone trying to interpret the doctrines of God's Holy Word.

However, as we read earlier in Isaiah 28, God designed His Word in this way on purpose for our protection against those who might twist the words of Scripture to lead us away from the Bible. I thank the Lord God for His mercy and protection for us that, through the study of Scripture, He reproves and corrects us ([Pro 15:10](#)) so that we would be made perfect in our service unto Him.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
-2 Timothy 3:16-17