

You are not perfect. On these four words, billions of advertising dollars are spent each year. And spend as we might, it still doesn't solve the problem. You are not perfect. On these four words lies much social and psychological anxiety. When your dad yelled at you, when your mom gave you that disappointed look, when the report card was sent home from school, when you were turned down for a date, when you didn't make first string, when you forgot your spouse's birthday, when you were passed over for a promotion, you were reminded you are not perfect.

Scripture reminds us of the same. Noah followed the Lord and built an Ark, but afterwards, he drank a little too much. Abraham was a great patriarch, but he was not above lying to save himself. God used Moses to deliver his people from slavery, but Moses didn't always resist the temptation to change God's orders. David was God's chosen King, but that did not stop him from abusing his power. And these are the heroes of the Bible!

How do you handle your imperfection? People try all sorts of things. Some double down on trying really hard and become perfectionists, but that doesn't really bring any peace. Some go in the completely opposite direction and reject moral standards, since they can't live up to them anyway. That can seem fun and even liberating for a time, but it leads pretty predictably to self-destruction. The fatal flaw in perfectionism and the fatal flaw in a "no rules" philosophy is they put the focus on the self and leave God out of it, which is where all imperfection starts. And then, the problem multiplies, because in the language of the apostle Paul, the natural self is alienated from God, because the natural self is not perfect, and God is. If that sounds like a lot to overcome, you are correct. In fact, our imperfection problem is so profound that we cannot fix it on our own. I am not perfect, and no amount of work on my part is going to change that. That's the bad news.

Is there good news? Well listen. Colossians chapter one begging at verse 21: “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard...”

Did you hear it? The problem of our imperfection has been dealt with. All of the symptoms of our imperfection—alienation from God, hostile thoughts about God, evil deeds that we've done—they've all been cancelled. How is that possible? This tells us. “He (Jesus) has now reconciled with you in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.” Let those words sink in. Jesus has done all the work to repair the relationship. Where there was alienation and isolation, Jesus crossed the divide in order to reconcile with us. And to make that work, he had to do something extraordinary. He didn't just swallow his pride and take the first step; he didn't just extend an olive branch of peace. To make it work, he had to die, in a horrible fashion, isolated and alone, on a Roman cross.

How does that help our imperfection problem? Here's how: Jesus is the only person who ever lived a perfect life. This is one of the astonishing claims of Christian truth. And rather than treat that as a personal achievement, Jesus gave his perfect life as a sacrifice on the cross, so that His perfection could be applied to you (and me). This is how the problem of our imperfection has been solved: Jesus' perfection has been credited to your account, and you receive it by faith. That's why Paul writes in verse 22: "in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith..."

Do you realize, those words describe you right now? In God's eyes you are holy, blameless, above reproach because Jesus' perfection covers you. This is how you are presented to him. That is such an interesting phrase, "in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach." Have you ever been presented anywhere? Have you ever been formally introduced, or in a situation where all eyes are on you? How did you prepare for that moment?

Chances are, you took some time to look and feel your best, so there was some grooming that took place. You carefully chose your outfit. You wanted that moment of presentation to shine. You might think of a bride on her wedding day, and that might in fact be the image that Paul had in mind when he wrote these words. Here's the image. At the moment of truth, when you are presented to God, He sees nothing but beauty. He sees someone who is holy, blameless, and above reproach, because you are wearing the perfection of Jesus by faith. He died to clothe you in his perfection—it's a priceless gift. Do you know that this is how much he treasures you?