

James 1:4

▶ **How To Be More
Perfect Than The
Perfectionist**



James 1:2-4 (ESV)

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ **And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.**

James 1:4

- **(Message)** So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.
- **(NLT)** So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Amanda Jenkins

- “My problem, I’ve recently realized, is the significance I attach to the list—that if I lose five pounds and spend twenty minutes reading my Bible, I’ll be a better, more spiritual, more loving, more lovable person. When I fail to live up to my own expectations, I feel inadequate. Or more specifically (and as my stats frequently read), overweight, lazy, disorganized, and unworthy of the approval I seek.”

Types Of Perfectionism

Type	Category	Definition	Result
Personal	Motivational, Obsessive	the personal expectation of not having weaknesses or flaws	Guilt
Cultural	Sociological	the cultural expectation of being and living right by measuring up to societal norms	Shame
Sinless	Theological	the eradication/removal of the sin nature which falsely assumes the believer cannot sin	Lie (1 Jn 1:8)
Christian	Transformational	the ongoing process of God shaping believers through endurance producing trials to become more like Christ	Maturity

Symptoms Of Perfectionism:

- ***Tyranny of the oughts*** – “could have,” “should have,” “would have.”
- ***Self-depreciation*** – never quite good enough
- ***Anxiety*** – guilt, anxiety, and condemnation.
- ***Legalism*** – rigidly overemphasize externals, do’s and don’ts, rules and regulations.
- ***Anger*** – resentment against the oughts
- ***Denial*** – anger pushed down

The Cure: **GRACE**

- Seamands: "... grace is the face God wears when He meets our imperfection, sin, weakness, and failure. Grace is what God is and what God does when He meets the sinful and undeserving. Grace is a pure gift, free for the taking. The healing of perfectionism does not begin with some initial experience of grace in salvation or sanctification, and then move into a life lived by effort and perfect performance. The healing of perfectionism takes place in day-by-day believing, living, and realizing this grace relationship with a loving, caring heavenly Father." (p. 84)

The 49ers defense is chasing perfection—here's how team says it can actually get better

Jacob Hutchinson

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Review of James 1:2-3

1. **Trials Provide Opportunities For Joy** – ^{2a} *Count it all joy,*
2. **Trials Are To Be Expected For Believers As A Call To Discipleship** – ^{2b} *my brothers,*
3. **Trials Seem Overwhelming But Serve God's Purpose** – ^{2c} *when you meet trials*
4. **Trials Come In Various Ways To Round Us Out** – ^{2d} *of various kinds,*
5. **Trials Will Test The Resolve Of Our Faith** – ^{3a} *for you know that the testing of your faith*
6. **Trials Produce Toughness And Endurance** – ^{3b} *produces steadfastness.*

1. **Perfection Is God's Work,
Not Ours**

- *And let*

2. Perfection Is The Result Of Building Endurance

- ***steadfastness have*** *its full effect,*
- **Steadfastness/endurance** = *Hypomonē* = endurance, fortitude, toughness
- **Have** = “continuation of an action in progress.” (Blomberg & Kamell)

2. Perfection Is The Result Of Building Endurance

- *steadfastness have its **full** effect,*
- **Full/perfect = *teleios***
 - Strong's #G5046 “**brought to its end, finished; lacking nothing necessary to completeness**”
 - “*teleios* ... does not connote moral or spiritual perfection, or sinlessness, but rather refers to that which is **fully developed.**” (MacArthur)

2. Perfection Is The Result Of Building Endurance

- *steadfastness have its full **effect**,*
- **Effect/result = *ergon***

R. Kent Hughes:

- “It is commonly taught that trials bring maturity, but it is not so. Rather, fortitude and perseverance in times of testings produce maturity. In troubled times we must practice spiritual toughness. As we endure ‘trials of many kinds’ – economic stress, disappointments, criticisms, domestic pressures, persecution for our faith, illnesses – the multiple facets of our being are touched with grace.”

3. Perfection Is Maturity In Christlikeness

- *that you may be perfect*
- **Perfect** = *teleios* – mature, without defect, seasoned, experienced, developed
- “Mature: that means **fully grown, fully developed, fully godly**—at the end of the process in **full strength.**” (Donald Sunukjian)

4. Perfection Provides A Well-Rounded Spiritual Life

- *and complete, lacking in nothing.*
- Complete = *holoklēros*
- “sound in every part” (Strong G3648)
- “Complete: that means not lacking anything, having all the parts of godliness in place, with every area of life developed into Christlikeness, and not being deficient in any quality, not lacking in any grace or godly character.” (Donald Sunukjian)

▸ **Our Faith In God Is Supplemented**

- **2 Peter 1:5-8** ⁵ For this very reason, **make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue**, and virtue with **knowledge**, ⁶ and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with **godliness**, ⁷ and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Character Is Matured

- **Romans 5:3-4** ³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope

Our Comfort Is Shared

- **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Conclusion

- Don't quit during your trials – the endurance is in the process of strengthening.
- Don't compare yourself to anyone or anything who isn't Jesus – measure up to Christ alone.
- Being well-seasoned in our faith takes multi-angles to develop our character, our faith, our understanding and our growth. Don't look at one aspect of failure, but multiple applications of growth.

Discussion:

- Name some things that take a lot of time to make or prepare? How does that compare to Christian maturity?
- Why do we prefer to quit when our trials get too hard? Why do we think our alternatives are better than God's path?
- How might we struggle with perfectionism with our own personal expectations for ourselves or with society's/church's/peers'/parents' expectations? How can we shift our standard of measurement to Christ?
- What multiple and varied lessons have we learned from a single trial in our experience? What multiple and varied lessons are we learning from our current trial?
- What areas of our Christian life would you like to see strengthened in the near future?