

Being Perfected in Love

by Alan Martin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being perfected in love, which requires faith and obedience to God's commandments, and results in confidence and trust in God's love, enabling us to live a life of maturity, completion, and perfection.

Scripture: Titus 2:3

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of perfecting love. He emphasizes that God demonstrates his love for us by loving us even when we were sinners. The speaker uses the example of Peter walking on water to illustrate how fear can hinder our understanding of God's love. He encourages listeners to be filled with the love of Christ and to allow that love to overflow in their lives. The sermon concludes with the reminder that as believers, we are called to love others as Jesus loved, even in the face of mistreatment.

Transcript

Father, if there's not any question in our mind that you desire to be known, even as Randy spoke this morning, Lord, you've said the heavens declare your glory and they must have really declared it in a beautiful way this morning. Thank you, Lord, that you've designed your creation so that day after day they pour forth speech and night after night they display knowledge and we know you're trying to communicate with us. We know you long to impart to us the correct understanding so that as we understand who you are, as we understand what pleases you, we can learn to receive your Word until it becomes the very foundation of the way we think.

And according to your will, Lord, just as your servant Paul prayed for the saints that he wrote to, it's our desire here to have the full benefit of complete understanding. We want to understand you. We want to know the great salvation that you've given us.

And we want to be complete. We want to know you as the finisher of our faith. We want to know you as the God who's brought us from unstable, common, foolish, disobedient people, called us to yourself, forgave us of our sins.

We want to know that we want to be known as people who you have taught your way, who you've given a new heart, a people whom you've given your Holy Spirit and taught us to walk and stay in step with your

Spirit, a people who've grown up into this great salvation that you've delivered us from, particularly the salvation from bondage to sin. And by your grace, we want to be a people who live by your Spirit and not by our flesh, so that the righteousness of the law might be fully met in us, as by your grace, longsuffering and mercy, you teach us to walk in your Spirit by faith. We want to be a people who overcome everything in the world.

We want to be a people, according to your will, who overcome difficulty, adversity, tribulation, temptation. We want to overcome the world, sin, and the devil. We want to be a people who prove by our lives that your grace is far more sufficient than anything we face.

We want to be a people who prove by our lives that not ever, not one single time, will you ever allow us to be tempted above what we can bear. That you are faithful and that in your faithfulness, every single time we're tempted, you provide a way of escape so that we can bear up under it. And we know that it takes mature faith, a mature understanding, it takes a mature love for this to be.

And we're seeking you that as a group this morning. And particularly I, as a servant, as a regular brother here amongst this fellowship, I ask that you would bless your own word. I ask that you pour forth on us all, including myself, the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we can know you.

Cause our love to abound more and more in all depth of knowledge and insight so that we can discern the things that are excellent and may become, according to your will, pure and blameless children of God, without corruption. Let us be a people Lord who are not being corrupted by the world, but instead being cleansed by your word. According to your will, in Jesus' name we ask for this.

Amen. That's what we've been talking about of late and the desire, I believe God's desire and the desire upon my heart, is that we become a people mature, finished, steadfast, stable, consistent, strong. I do believe that there are weak, there are such things as immature and weak Christians.

And I have a word to them. Be strong. Grow up.

That's the word. Let the weak say, and now let the weak say. You see, this is, it is a growth by faith in faith unto faith.

It's from faith to faith. So wherever you are, whatever faith level you are, I have a word to you. Grow to the next level.

Grow. Be changed from the degree of glory you have now to the next degree of glory. Be changed from glory to glory.

And I want to talk about a key to this. The key to really becoming mature, to being finished, to receiving all that God would have us to receive. Let's start in this morning by turning to Ephesians, Paul's letter to Ephesus, the third chapter.

So turn to Ephesians 3 and find verse 16. We'll read Ephesians 3, 16-19. Ephesians 3, 16-19.

Follow me as I read. Paul's praying, and he says he prays that God would grant us according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his spirit in our inner man. So that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.

I'm personalizing this. That we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints. We don't want this just for ourselves.

We want all God's saints in every place to be able to understand this. All the saints, what is the width and length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ that passes human knowledge. So that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now let me ask you right off the bat, do you believe it's possible that we can be filled to all the fullness of God? The question is not how full are we? The question is how full does God want us to be? We want a greater measure of the Lord. We want to be stretched. You know, a balloon can be stretched.

You fill it and it stretches and stretches and stretches and becomes larger. And if you do it over time and give it time to stretch, it's an amazing how much air can be contained. We want to be a people who contain as much of God as is possible.

Forget this idea of having only what you need to get by. That's a worldly, carnal, incomplete, unspiritual idea. Spiritual truth says those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be what? Filled.

That's what we want to be. We want to follow Paul's example who said, I forget what lies behind. He said, I may not be perfect yet, but here's what I do.

I forget what lies behind and I strain toward what lies ahead. I want to know Christ. I want to know the power of his resurrection and I want to know the fellowship of sharing in his suffering.

Becoming, what's the goal? Becoming like him. And so if you're not yet fully like Jesus, guess what? There's work to be done. There's things to do.

There's more faith and more of God to receive. Now in this verse here, what's the key? What's the key to even being able to be able to grasp? The word to grasp comes from the Greek word katalambano, means to lay hold of. It is the idea of obtaining for yourselves, of making your very own possession.

We need to possess what we need to lay hold of. In order to lay hold of the knowledge of the love of God, what does it say? Look with me in verse 16. His spirit was empowered, yes and, his spirit empowering us in the inner man.

We won't learn this by human knowledge. This will be learned by being filled, by being strengthened with God's spirit in our inner man. And it's interesting then in verse 17, what, there's two things that depending on your own understanding and interpretation can be taken either two ways.

Because it says being rooted or having been rooted and having been founded or established. Both of these Greek terms have an ending that can be translated in either a passive tense or an active, or a passive voice or an active voice. The difference is if it's passive, you do nothing, God does it.

If it's middle voice, did I say passive or active? I meant passive or middle. If it's middle voice, then it means having rooted yourselves and having established yourselves. Meaning you have a participation because the middle voice is used when the involvement of the subject is being stressed.

Well, Jesus said in the parable of the sower that the third, that the shallow soil, those sown amongst the rocks that sprang up quickly, but said they had no root in themselves. Well, I don't think we want to blame God for people not having root in themselves, do we? I think if we're shallowly rooted, the problem lies

with us. So I'm comfortable here to say that these should be saying having rooted yourselves, middle voice, and having established yourselves in what? Find out, find that for me in verse 17.

What must we become rooted in and established in? The love of God. If you are not rooted and established in this love of Christ, then you cannot have power together with the saints to grasp this great love of Christ. It's very important.

Look at that with me. Turn to 1 John. We'll see some of this in 1 John.

It's really neat today that I heard some of these verses actually quoted in Sunday school and quoted in their time of memory verses. It's kind of exciting to do when I hear these are the scriptures on our hearts. 1 John 4, 16 reads this way.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him. Now both the words here, believed and known are both in the Greek perfect tense.

Let me try to read this, these notes I have because if you don't understand the implication of the Greek perfect tense, you're missing something. I'll just read this to you and then, and if you don't, if I see strange looks on your face, I'll try to interpret what I've read. The Greek perfect tense stands alone in its function.

English really has no corresponding tense adequate for expressing the significance involved because this Greek tense is a tense of completed action and it indicates a process that has resulted in a constant state of being. So I think by what this is saying, by John choosing to use the perfect tense is we have gone through the process and come to a climax where we now, we fully know and believe the love God has for us. And this is the stability of our lives.

We are abiding in this knowledge of the love of God. Because he goes on to say the one abiding in love does what? Abides in God and God in him. John loves to use the present participle.

I love the participle because to me it's a kind of combination of two words, participate and disciple. So it's the one abiding. It's the present participation in the act of choosing to live in the love of Christ.

You must participate in living in this love. It's not automatic. It's a choice and only the one continually, regularly, constantly choosing to abide in the love of Christ really abides in God presently.

And God in that one presently. If you're not abiding in the love of Christ, God does not abide in you. If you're not abiding in the love of Christ, God does not abide in you.

God doesn't abide in people by theological means. God abides in people by faith. Believers.

That's why you find in the book of John, believing in him. The one believing. The one loving.

The one doing. The one hearing. It's always a continual active.

John loves to use the participle and it's extremely important. Now I have a question for you. Is there a condition for continually abiding in the love of Christ? Is there a condition? Does the Bible speak of a condition? Sure it does.

Yes. Well faith is definitely a part of it because you can't do it apart from faith. Without faith it's sin.

Everything without faith is sin. So yes, faith is a part of it. To see the condition, look in John chapter 15.

The gospel of John. Same author, just an earlier writing. John chapter 15, find verse 9. And when you read, when one of you find it, tell me what the condition is for continually abiding.

Look at 9 and 10 and someone tell me the condition that Jesus states is there for continually abiding in the love of God. That's it. That's the condition.

It says that if you obey his commandment, the condition, the main action is based upon is, it would be said this way. The person who practices continually abiding and dwelling in love by obeying and continually obeying his commandments will actually be abiding in the love of Christ. Now, John did not only write this in John chapter 15, turn back to 1 John again if you would.

Back to 1 John chapter 4 again and you'll see he restates this again. Chapter 3 verse 24 is where he states it again. Now he who keeps his commandments abides in him.

When you see the condition in your English language, who keeps, that's the way the translator chose to translate John's use of the participle. John would say this, the one keeping his commandments abides in him. So that's the condition.

Therefore, let's combine these verses from 1 John and John together and I'm going to put it this way. The person continually keeping the commandments of Christ is continually abiding in the love of Christ. And this is the person who God abides in.

One more time. The person continually keeping the commandments of Christ is continually abiding in the love of Christ. And this is the one who abides in God and God presently abides in him.

I'm going to read to you one other verse. I don't want you to turn back and forth because I don't want your eyes to become ping pong balls. Back and forth between John and 1 John.

But let me read you this statement of Christ from John 14 verses 21-23 where he said this. He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you choose to manifest yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus answered this way.

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. With who? With the one keeping his commandments. It's the one keeping the commandments of Christ is the one that God will love and come to and make himself known to.

If you don't keep the commandments of Christ, don't expect to even be able to know the love of Christ. You won't know him. It won't be possible for you to know him.

That's the condition stated. Now, if you're still in 1 John, if not, let's go back there because we're going to be in 1 John just a little bit. 1 John chapter 4. 1 John chapter 4. I want you to notice what results in this.

I'm going to read verse 16. Again, 1 John 4, 16. I want you to look at the first part of verse 17 and realize what happens when a person really is keeping the commandments of God, abiding in the love of God.

See what it results in in verse 17. And we have known and rely on the love that God has for us. God is love and the one abiding in love abides in God and God in him.

And then what's the result of that? That's how love is made perfect. That is how your understanding of the love of God comes to a complete and mature fulfilled condition. It's by continually abiding in the love of God.

That's what brings you to a perfect understanding, a complete understanding of God's love. And what's the result of coming into a complete understanding according to verse 17? Now, when you come to a complete and mature understanding of love, what's the result in verse 17? Confidence! Confidence! You know why some people are not confident in their Christian life? Because they don't have an assurance of God's love. They have an immature, incomplete, unperfected, unfinished understanding of God's love and they're not confident.

The person who has a perfected love has confidence. Now it's interesting. John is saying that continually abiding in the love of God causes love to be mature, completed, perfected and this is what God has always wanted.

Hasn't it? He has always wanted a people who so believe and trust that he loves them that they hear his words, they keep them in their heart and they're careful to continually do them. That's what God has always wanted. When you understand this you're actually living the way God has wanted you to live.

Now, if you look in the next verse, it says, of course, there's no fear in love, verse 18, there's no fear in love, because perfect love casts out fear, because fear hath torment, but he who fears has not yet been made perfect in love. Well, let me back up to verse 17. I skipped a part I want to point out.

Let's read verse 17, the whole thing together and I'll catch it. Love has been perfected among us in this, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. Why will we have boldness in the day of judgment? We have confidence.

Why do we have confidence? It says, because in this world, how are we? How was he? You know how he was very simply y'all. He perfectly trusted his father. He perfectly trusted his father.

He loved the father. Every single thing the father ever spoke to him, he did. He had, he had the most mature, complete, perfect expression of confident trust in the father.

And if we're like that, guess what? If you're like that on the day of judgment, guess what you're going to hear? Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You loved me. You trusted me.

You kept my words. You live by faith. You came into the relationship I long to have with everyone.

Well done. Isn't that what we're all called to be? Every single saint, every single true believer has been called and predestined to what? To be conformed to the image of his son. Every single person, if you're a Christian, you have been predestined to become this.

This is not an exception. This is predestination 101. This is where every single one of us are called to be.

We are called to become as trusting, as loving, as mature and as complete as Jesus Christ and his relationship with his father. That's our goal. And what this does, I have this written in my notes.

When we become what we've been predestined to become, we can hear what I've already said. Well done, thou good and faithful servant. We will have endured unto the end, unto completion, unto maturity, unto what the scripture calls perfection.

Christ will have become for us not only the author of our faith, but the finisher. And that's what we want to see. We want him to become the finisher of our faith.

Now, the result of becoming mature and this complete, perfected knowledge and trusting God's love so as to live the same believing, obedient relationship that Jesus lived with his father, we stated his confidence. And that's why it says in verse 18, and I like the way it really says it in the Greek. I'm going to read it straight from the Greek structure.

Fear not, there is. The Greek syntax is different than English. What it's saying is, there is no fear in love.

So if there's any fear in your life, what is it saying? You're not perfect in love yet. You don't have a complete love yet. You've not yet fully grasped the love of God yet.

Because there is no fear in love, what does fear have to do with? It says. Punishment or torment. The idea behind this Greek word is chastisement, punishment.

Now, why are there punishments and chastisements for disobedience? What's the purpose of a chastisement or punishment? Well, to drive out disobedience. Sure, it's coercion, y'all. It's all about coercion.

Coercing us to not do certain things and to do certain things. It's God's means of saying, here's how I want you to live. And if you don't live this way, there's punishment.

Now, Proverbs 29 and 25 brings this out. Because you have to watch for this. I want you to read Proverbs 29.

It brings out the results of being afraid. See, perfect love drives out fear. Because fear has to do with punishment.

Let's look at this element of fear for just a few minutes. Proverbs 29, 25. Would someone read Proverbs 29, 25 for me, please? How about that? You see, the fear of men produces a snare.

Now, what's a snare designed to do? Trap you. Now, is it designed necessarily to kill you? Not necessarily. Animals are trapped not only to be killed, they're trapped to be used.

Do you realize what this is saying? This Hebrew word is also used, can be used, the nose ring in a bull. I've never put one in there, so I don't think I know what they're for. But Kenny's here, so Kenny, why do they put nose rings in bulls? Why? Is that because it's a tender spot? So, even though this big big animal's got all these huge muscles, you grab him by the nose, can you make him go where you want him to go? One of the two.

Do you see what fear is going to do in your life? If you've got an element in your life of fear because you've not yet been perfected in love, the enemy's going to come along whenever he wants and he's going to grab you by the nose ring of fear and he's going to pull you up, you're going to say things with your mouth you should have never said, you're going to say things to your husband or say things to your wife, or you're going to act out because you have been manipulated by the fear of the enemy. Your husband may be doing something wrong and you just think you've got to tell him, you've got to tell him right now. Whereas if you had faith, you could have just prayed for him.

You see, we want to take care, we don't want this fear in our life because fear gives the enemy an ability to snare us and to lead us about where he wants us to go and we don't want that. The only fear that's appropriate for the believer is the fear of the Lord that leads to life. There is no fear appropriate in the life of a saint except fear of God.

I'm going to tell you right now, stop fearing terrorists, don't fear them. Don't fear Chinese, don't fear Russians, don't fear Muslims, don't fear any man, fear God. The only thing some terrorist can do to you is send you to heaven early if you know Christ.

That's all they can do. Jesus said, fear not those who can kill the body and after that can do what? No more. Fear him who after destroying the body can throw both soul and body in hell.

I'm not saying be careful, I said don't fear. Be sober, be smart, but don't be fearing. We don't fear men.

What can men do to us? In all these things, what did Paul say we are? More than conquerors, that's exactly right. Let me read you some verses just for speed sake in the Old Testament. I'll tell you where they are.

Whenever God called the people to himself, he always included in that calling these instructions, don't fear. This is in Leviticus 26.6. It says this, I will grant you peace in the land and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. No one will make you afraid.

This is also what he said in Deuteronomy 1.17. I'm just going to read you several just to lay this out. Do not show partiality in judging, he says. Here both small and great alike, do not be afraid of any man for judgment belongs to God.

What happens if you fear one man over another? Yeah, you're partial. You become partial. God says don't fear anybody.

The only one you're to fear is God or else it's going to affect the way you make decisions. He also says in Deuteronomy 20.1, he says this, when you go to war against your enemies and you see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them because the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt will be with you. And it says in verse 3, and actually verses 2 and 3 goes on to say, when you're about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army.

And here's what the priest is to say. He shall say, hear oh Israel, today you're going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted.

You know what the Hebrew word for this is? Don't be tender. Don't be soft. What is tender and soft? It's pliable.

It gives in. Don't be impressed by their strength. Don't be fainthearted or afraid.

Do not be terrified. The word terrified here is don't be startled. Don't panic.

And it says neither do not give way to panic before them. The idea of that word is don't be in awe or dread of them because it says the Lord your God who is with you goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you the victory. And then if that's not enough, this will be the last verse I read from the Old Testament in this regard.

Get this. Get these final instructions. After the priest's work was finished, the officers were to come forward and they were to make this statement.

Then the officers shall add, is any man afraid or fainthearted? What do you think you would tell them? Is any man afraid or fainthearted? What? Get. Go home. Go home.

Look, if you don't think it's possible to walk with Christ in total obedience, go home. If you don't think you can overcome sin in this life, go home. If you don't think that God wants us to be filled to all the measure of the fullness of God, go home.

We're not to fear. We don't base our decisions and faith by the size of the enemy. It's by the strength of God.

Because it says, those who feared, it says, he goes on to say, let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened. What it says is so that the heart of his brothers won't melt. We need to be careful.

We need to be careful how we can affect one another in other words. Now, fear of man, fear of circumstances is a manifestation of what? What is fear of man or fear of circumstances a manifestation of? It's a manifestation of unbelief. And this is due to an incomplete, immature, immature imperfect comprehension of the love of God.

Now, you remember the story of Peter walking on the water? Remember all the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water coming to them and they thought he was what? A ghost. And so they cried out, it says, in fear. And Jesus told them, be of good cheer.

It is I. Stop being afraid. The Greek would be stop yourselves from fearing. And so Peter said, oh, Lord, that really is you.

Let me come to you on the water. So Peter got down out of the boat, dropped down on the water, began to walk, and he began to walk to Jesus on the water. And then he noticed, it says, when he noticed the strength of the wind, that's the Greek expression, when he noticed the strength of the wind, what do you think it follows that with? Three words.

He was afraid. And what do you think it says right after he was afraid? He began to sink. Do you see it? What happens to us in temptation when we begin to fear, what happens when we begin to notice the strength of the wind instead of the power of Christ? You begin to sink.

You want to sink. You want to go underwater. You want to get soaked.

It's going to happen because you pay attention to the circumstances around you instead of the great power that God has. You've got an incomplete faith. Because Jesus had mercy on him, and aren't we glad that Jesus has mercy on us? He didn't condemn him, but neither did he pat him on the back and say, pretty good.

What he did was, he said, Peter, why did you doubt? Why did you fear? Why did Jesus say, Peter obeyed one commandment, but disobeyed another? What commandment did he obey? Come to me. He obeyed that one. What commandment did he disobey? That's exactly right.

Jesus had told him, stop yourselves from fearing. Listen, it's good to come to Jesus, but you better be not afraid when you come. And the circumstances have nothing to do with it.

As a matter of fact, I do want you to turn to this first. Turn to Revelation chapter 21. This is sober all of us.

All of us want to live in this glorious place called heaven. All of us. I want to be there.

I want you to be there. And this is a list of those who are not going to be there. I'm going to start in verse 7. Revelation 21 verse 7 says this.

It says, the one overcoming, I will give all these things. And I will be his God and he shall be my son. But then it lists those who are on the outside, the ones who are not going to make it.

And what are the two first things on the list? The fearful and the unbelieving. Can you see why? I don't want there to be any fear in the saints. I don't want you to have any fear in your life.

I want you to live in heaven. I want you to go to heaven. I want you to overcome.

Get rid of all fear. It has no place in a believer's life. We're not to be fearful.

We're not to be unbelieving. We're to be complete, mature, perfected in the love of God. Circumstances and trials and tests are all sent for the same purpose.

You know what they're sent for? That we, James says, they're sent so that patience can have her what kind of work? Her perfect work. So that patience can bring us to perfection. We can be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

This is what God wants. He wants us to be mature and complete, lacking nothing. So, this is, now, we have several, we have only a few infants here.

We have one, the Davises have an infant, and let's see, I guess that's about the only infant here. Tell me one thing about an infant. What happens if I do this? What would that do to an infant? Startle them.

Husbands, whatever your children do, whatever your wife does, stop being startled. Don't panic. Make sure gracious, kind, loving, merciful words come out of your mouth.

Wives, I don't care what your husband does. You make sure you don't get startled into some unbelieving, fearful, ungodly words. You make sure you're out of, in your mouth, like the Proverbs 31 woman, is the law of kindness.

And don't give yourself an excuse for reacting any other way. Call it unbelief, call it immaturity, call it incompleteness, and repent. And say, God, fill me with the Holy Spirit, fill me with the love of God, until, when I'm squeezed, what comes in, what's in there will come out.

If you're filled with the love of God, and your husband steps on you, what's going to come out? Love. If you're filled with love, and you get stepped on, love's coming out. And if something else is coming out first, it's probably because, like they say, water is, oil is lighter than, well, I don't know, I better stop that analogy, I don't think it's going to work.

Anyway, if there's other stuff in there besides love, it's probably coming out first. You know what, reason I, I don't want to pick on anybody, but I want you to acknowledge that even the Bible acknowledges that weak ones tend to fear first. Weak ones tend to fear first.

You want to see that? Turn to 1 Peter. I'm trying to wrap this up, but I've only got a little more to cover. Turn to 1 Peter, and I want you to see that the Bible acknowledges that the weak ones tend to fear first.

Now, as you're turning there, according to the scripture, who's considered the weaker vessel between a husband and a wife? Okay, now, is some apostle picking on women? No, he's just stating a reality. Okay? Now look here and see it. It says, I'll read from 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 5 and 6. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves being submissive to their own husbands.

Then verse 6 says, and Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters you are, if you do what's good and don't do what? Don't give into fear. Why? It's not enough to just try to do what's good. Don't give into fear.

Whatever your husband does, whatever your children does, whatever circumstances you find yourself in, don't give into fear. Now, knowing that this was a tendency, Paul enlisted some help for women. Women, there's good news for you if we just do this, because the Lord knows you're weak and you need help.

And Paul enlisted some help for weak women. How did he do this? You want to see how he did this? He did this in his instruction to Titus. Turn to Titus chapter 2. The Lord's going to send you ladies some help.

Titus chapter 2. Now look with me in verses 4 and 5, and I'm going to have to, I am going to have to go into the Greek a little bit just so you can really fully grasp this. Okay? Titus 2, 4 and 5. Well actually I'll start with verse 3. Older women, likewise, need to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not giving them much wine, teachers of good things, so that they can admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, toemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Evidently if you're not these things, ladies, what's going to happen to the word of God? Ladies, can I ask you that again? If you are not these things, what's going to happen to the word of God? It's going to be blasphemed, it's going to be spoken against.

Someone will be saying, I would become a Christian, but that person claims to be one, and I ain't going to be like her. If that's what a Christian is, I don't want it. But when they see these things in your life, the word of God won't be spoken against, it will be spoken.

And now what these older women are actually to do, let me kind of help you see it in the Greek, because it's not as obvious in English, and I can understand translators having a difficulty in this. Verse 4, it says, that they may admonish or urge the young women. The Greek word here is *sophronizo*.

It comes from the root of the word, the middle of the word comes from the word *phraeno*. It was first used as a term for reining in chariot horses. You kept them under reign, *phraeno* was to reign in.

Now ladies, and gentlemen, ladies, what do you need to reign in? What do you need to keep under reign? My feelings. But you don't understand my feelings. No I don't.

Most men don't. God does. God does.

Look, ladies, don't let your feelings go dragging you to the mud. Keep your feelings under reign. Keep your thoughts and emotions under reign.

It's saying, it's saying literally, older women, teach younger women to stay under reign. To stay reigned in. Not to be dragged around by their feelings and emotions.

And that's actual, the same Greek word is found in verse 5. And it's, now some of your Bibles will say, use the word discreet. What are some of the other words there in verse 5? Huh? Self-controlled or chaste. Guess where this same word is used? This same word, both in verse 4 and verse 6, the same word, keeping reigned in, guess where it's used? It's used in Paul's instructions to Timothy.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of what? A sound mind. A sound mind. A sound mind.

A sound mind. Do you know what? Older women, now there's quite a few here, but I guess I shouldn't call your name because that might get you, get me in trouble, right? You may not want to be in that category. But if you want to be an older woman who instructs the younger women, let me tell you what you need to instruct them.

Honey, get a hold of it. Get a hold of your thoughts. Get a hold of your feelings and keep, by the power of God, keep your thoughts and feelings under reign.

And make sure what comes out of your mouth is faith and kindness and love and purity. The Bible says, let no unwholesome talk proceed forth out of your mouth but only that which is good for building up according to their needs and does what? Ministers grace to the hearer. Mothers and fathers, you shouldn't say a single word but that which brings grace and edification to your children, to your mate and to your spouse.

And I don't care what they do. Squeeze you, punch you, neglect you, hurt you, and out of your mouth should come grace, mercy, peace, love and blessing under the reign of the Holy Spirit. That's what adorns the teaching of God with power.

That's what makes being a follower of Christ attractive. When they see you are not as the rest of the world, the Spirit of God in you has given you an ability to reign in your mind and your emotions. And how this is done? This is done, what we said originally, by comprehending what? That regardless of what your husband doesn't do or does, or husband, regardless of what your wife does or doesn't do, regardless of men, of what your boss does or doesn't do, regardless of what others are doing, who is there loving you perfectly, every situation, every day, all the time? God is.

So if your wife's not loving you, meeting your needs, is God? Wife, if your husband's not loving you, meeting your needs, is God? Will he let you go without? Will he ever let you be tempted above what you're able, even one time? No, never. So any time you act out, any time something other than the law of kindness comes out of your mouth, any time you get startled and panicked and there go your emotions and they start dragging you down the road, what has happened? You've shown you're not yet perfected in the love of Christ. You've shown you don't yet fully understand it.

And you need to be strengthened with power, where? By the Spirit in your inner man. So that you can lay hold of this great love of Christ. So that you can be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

And when you're filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, when you get squeezed, what's coming out? God. Love. God is love.

So if you're filled with God, you get squeezed, what comes out? Love. This is our goal. Are we there? I didn't say any of us were.

Is this what we're predestined to be? Yes. In this world, we are to be as he is. And when they spit in Jesus' face, what did he do? He loved them.

When they ripped the hair out of his face, what did he do? And they beat him over the head, what did he do? Every time they did anything to him, he loved. It's his Spirit that dwells in you. Does his Spirit dwell in you? Is his Spirit consistent? If his Spirit is filling you, and if you're under the power of his Spirit, then when any man does anything to you, out comes love.

That's our goal. And that's how to become a people who are steadfast, whose spirits are steadfast, who've been brought to a completion, a maturity. And you know what? Take courage.

It is from one degree of glory into another. And this is where the love of God is really being a blessing to us right now. Because you know what? If these words weren't being spoken constantly here in this place, would we really believe it's possible? How does faith come? By hearing.

Do you see why we're to be to one another? We're to be constantly speaking the Word of Christ to one another. As we grow in faith, we'll grow in love. As we grow in love, we abide deeper and deeper in God.

As we abide deeper and deeper in God, God abides deeper and deeper in us. As we are filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, what you begin to see is mature sons and daughters led by the Spirit of God. Consistently not doing the deeds of the flesh.

Because the Bible says, if we walk by the Spirit, we will not do this. We will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Anytime you see fear, anytime you see instability, incompleteness, it is because you're not yet made perfect in love.

Now what a wonderful thing. Now I'm going to wrap this up and I don't have much time left, but I don't want to leave us with this. How are you to be made perfect in love? Can I point it out very simply to you? Give me about five more minutes, please.

Actually this is the quietest part of the service, so enjoy. We should enjoy this a little bit. Listen to this.

How can you really know this love of God? Well, get this. God demonstrates His own love toward us how? Can anybody finish that verse? But God demonstrates His own love for us in that what? While we were yet sinners. Now wait a minute.

If God demonstrated His love for you while you were yet a sinner, why should you now that you're a son have any problem thinking God's going to let you down? It's not possible. It says, He who loved us so much that He spared not His only begotten Son, but gave Him up for us all, how not more will He not graciously give us all things? Come on, y'all. If God loved you while you were a sinner, now that you're a son, what do you have to fear? When you stumble, when you mess up, when you don't do what's right, is He going to pour His judgment on you? No.

What is He going to do? He's going to do what every father who genuinely loves his son does. What's He going to do? He's going to discipline you. He's going to chasten you.

He's going to say, stop acting like that son. Grow up. Be a man.

Be strong. He is, there is just no reason for a saint to be insecure about the love of Christ. There's just no reason.

As long as you abide in His love, His love is going to abide in you. That's all. You need to settle this.

And then you can say like Paul, no matter what you're facing, like Paul you can say, in all these things we are what? More than conquerors through what? Through Him who loves us. You see? You're conquerors through the One who loves you. Because you realize, even when your wife doesn't understand, or your husband doesn't understand, or your friends don't understand, or your pastor doesn't understand, the One who loves you perfectly understands.

And He's there. And when He's there, how much more help do you need? Thank you. You don't need any more help do you? You see, this is what maturity is.

When we really come to the place to where He's in us. So we can say, we can receive what the Lord told Paul. Paul was in trouble one time and he said three times, Lord, please, what? Take it away from me.

I can't handle it. What did the Lord tell him? My grace is sufficient for thee. Okay.

And he went on to say, my strength is made perfect, what? In your weakness. Okay, huh? Believe. Completely believe the grace of God is sufficient.

And we'll be steadfast. We'll be unmovable and we won't be like that former generation who set not their hearts aright and whose spirit was not steadfast. Let's just close our eyes a minute and meditate on this and let's finish this out before the Lord.

Let's be still a moment. Lord, grant us stillness in your presence a moment or two. Father, we together, as a people, we come.

We approach when we're so glad. You're the one who said, let us draw near the throne of grace. We come again, not on our own merit, but on the grace of the Lord.

We come again on the merits of your perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ. We dare not approach you without His blood upon us. We know we can come near because of the blood of our sacrifice and our Lord.

And we come to receive not justice. We come to receive mercy. And we come to find grace to help us in our time of need.

And the first thing we're going to do, Father, as a people this morning, is we're going to acknowledge your faithfulness. We're going to acknowledge and we're going to thank you that you have never let us be tempted above what we could bear. Thank you.

And then we're going to turn around and confess, Lord, any time this last week we've been startled, we've become afraid, we've spoken out of fear or unkindness or ungracious or not edifying things, it's because we're not yet complete. It's not your fault. And we know, we also know that you're not interested in condemning us.

You're interested in completing us. So we're asking you to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, especially the sin that so easily besets us, that sin of unbelief. And we're asking you, Father, for your own namesake, for your own will, finish us.

Bring us to maturity. And we know that your process of doing that, Father, is you use suffering. That's how you perfected your Son through the things that he suffered.

And we know, Father, that you send tests, trials, difficulties, temptations, pressures, persecutions, all as mercies, severe though they may be, to strengthen us, to teach us to live by faith instead of our feeling, to teach us to fix our eyes not on what we see but on what is unseen. And we want to be a people. We want to be a part of the people in the earth who trust you in the way you're worthy to be trusted, who love you in the way you're worthy to be loved, and who abide in your love.

So would you, Father, for your own namesake and according to your Word, cleanse us, purify us from all that unrighteousness that is so displeasing to you. And would you help us be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Would you continue to fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Strengthen us with your Spirit in our inner man. Enable us, Lord, to grasp this great love that so surpasses knowledge so that we can come to the fullness. In Jesus' name I pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11004.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/alan-martin/being-perfected-in-love/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net