

CHASING CARROTS—3 PERFECTIONISM

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48
NIV

THREE 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.

THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF PERFECTIONISM

For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. Romans 3:20
NLT

... The law simply shows us how sinful we are. Romans 3:20 NLT

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. Romans 3:22
NLT

Perfectionism

What I do
About me
If I obey, God will love me
Winning God's approval

Grace

What Jesus has done
About Jesus
Because God loves, I can obey
Living from God's approval

BECAUSE THE PRESSURE IS OFF

- **Choose people over perfection.**

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details!"⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."
Luke 10:41-42 NLT

- **Choose perfect love over perfect performance.**

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ...⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:43-44, 46-48 NIV

TALK IT OVER

In what ways might perfectionism mask an insecurity? How have you seen this play out in your own life?

Read Romans 3:20-22. Why might it be difficult to accept that we are perfected, not through our own efforts, but through our faith in Christ?

How can we focus on Christ and the work He's doing in our lives rather than on our desire to make ourselves better on our own?

Look for ways to prioritize giving love and grace to those around you this week rather than pursuing perfectionism.