

**HWMR: LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, (Week 7)**

*Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:48; 1 John 2:5; 4:12, 16-18*

**BEING PERFECT AS THE HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT  
BY BEING PERFECTED IN HIS LOVE**

Matthew 5:48	You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.
1 John 2:5	But whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. In this we know that we are in Him.
1 John 4:12	No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.
1 John 4:16	And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
1 John 4:17	In this has love been perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
1 John 4:18	There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.

**Day 1**

*Matthew 5:44-45* - But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, So that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens, because He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

*Matthew 5:48* - You therefore shall be *perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*.

**I. At the end of Matthew 5, to conclude an exceedingly high section of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens (vv. 17-48), the Lord Jesus said, “You therefore shall be *perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*” (v. 48):**

- A. The kingdom people, the audience for the Lord’s decree of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens, are the regenerated believers of the New Testament, as the title *sons of your Father* in verse 45 indicates:
  1. They are the Father’s children, having the *Father’s divine life and divine nature*.
  2. Hence, they can be *perfect as their heavenly Father is*.
- B. The demand of the new law of the kingdom is much higher than the requirement of the law of the old dispensation (v. 22, footnote 2); this higher demand can be met *only* by the *Father’s divine life*, not by the natural life:
  1. The kingdom of the heavens is the highest demand, and the *divine life of the Father* is the *highest supply* to meet that demand.
  2. The demand of the new law of the kingdom is actually the expression of the *new life*, the *divine life*, which is within the regenerated kingdom people; this demand opens up the inner being of the regenerated people, showing them that they are able to attain to such a high level and to have such a high living.
  3. We become God’s regenerated children by the *coming of the Spirit of God into our spirit to regenerate us* (Rom. 8:16; John 3:6) and to make our spirit the dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:22); if we walk according to our regenerated human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the divine Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), we are living by God’s life to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law (Rom. 8:4).

## Day 2

*2 Peter 1:3-4 - Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue, Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.*

- C. For the kingdom people to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect means that they are **perfect in His love** (Matt. 5:44-45); love is the nature of **God's essence** (1 John 4:8, 16):
1. Through the precious and exceedingly great promises given by God, we, the believers in Christ, have become **partakers** of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) in an organic union with Him (John 3:15; Gal. 3:27; Matt. 28:19).
  2. To partake of the divine nature is to **enjoy** what God is.
  3. The virtue of this divine nature carries us into God's glory (2 Pet. 1:3), into the full expression of the Triune God; we receive the divine life by **believing**, and we continually enjoy the divine nature, which is the substance of the divine life; the more we enjoy the divine nature, the more we have His virtue, and the more we are brought into His glory.
  4. Our enjoyment of the divine nature is **both** for the present and for eternity—Rev.22:1-2.

Just as we are constituted physically of the food we eat, so we, believers in Christ, **should be constituted of the God of which we partake**. This should be our experience day by day. If we enjoy God and partake of Him, we shall be constituted of Him. We shall be **thoroughly** constituted of **God's nature**.

We all are constituted physically of the food we eat. For example, someone may eat so much fish and be constituted of fish to such an extent that he even smells of fish. In like manner, we may become so constituted of God that we express God in all that we are and do. We may even give off a divine "fragrance." If we partake of God day by day, eventually we shall partake of Him unconsciously. When others contact us, they will see in us the expression of the Triune God. **All the saints need to be saturated with the nature of God.** The more we are **saturated with God**, the more we shall **express Him**.

To be a partaker of the divine nature is to be a partaker of the elements, the ingredients, of God's being. When we partake of God, the **aspects of what God is become our enjoyment**. This is to enjoy the constituents of the divine nature. (The Conclusion of the New Testament: God, Christ, and the Spirit, Volume 1, chapter 7)

## Day 3

*Genesis 17:1 - And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him, I am the All-sufficient God; / Walk before Me, and be **perfect**.*

*2 Corinthians 12:9 - And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is **perfected** in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me.*

- D. To be perfect is to have **God added to us**, as seen in God's word to Abraham in Genesis 17:1—"I am the All-sufficient God; / Walk before Me, and be perfect":
1. The divine title *All-sufficient God* (*El Shaddai* in Hebrew) reveals **God as the source** of grace to supply His called ones with the riches of His divine being for the fulfillment of His purpose; the Lord's grace being sufficient for us is the **Lord's power being perfected** in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13; John 15:5b).
  2. To walk before God is to walk in His presence, **constantly enjoying Him** and His all-sufficient supply.
  3. To be **perfect** is to have **God added to us** as the element and factor of perfection; practically, it means that we do not rely on the strength of the flesh but trust in God as the all-sufficient Mighty One for our life and our work.
- E. Before God gave Moses the law, He spent time to **infuse** Moses with Himself—Exo. 24:16-18:
1. God's intention is to **infuse us with Himself** so that He will have a way to do everything in us and for us to fulfill the commandments He gives to us.
  2. The emphasis in the Bible is that we need God to come **into** us and **do everything in us and for us**—Phil. 2:12-13.
  3. The requirements of the law in the Old Testament were given to prove that **man is not able**, and the requirements of the commandments in the New Testament were given to prove that **God is able**; outside of us He gives us many commandments, but inside of us He is keeping all these commandments for us—Heb. 13:21.

In the New Testament we can find out the significance of circumcision. The spiritual meaning of circumcision is to **put off the flesh**, to put off the self and the old man. Colossians 2:11-12 says, "*In whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, buried together with Him in baptism, in whom also you were raised together through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from among the dead.*" Circumcision is a matter of putting off the flesh, the old man; it is not a matter of dealing with sin. In a strict sense, circumcision has nothing to do with the dealing with sin; it is a matter of being **crucified and buried with Christ**. Circumcision means to **terminate your self**, to terminate your flesh. Abraham exercised his flesh in Genesis 16, but here, in Genesis 17, God wanted his flesh to be cut off. In Genesis 16 he had energized his natural strength, but in Genesis 17 his strength had to be terminated. This is circumcision.

The problem is the same today. As long as our natural strength remains, **it is difficult for God to come in to be our everything for the fulfillment of His purpose**. God wants to come into us to be everything to us, but our flesh, our natural being and strength, our old man and our old self, are a frustration to God's being everything to us. This self, this old man, must be terminated. It must be circumcised, that is, crucified. I want to tell you the good news that our old man has been crucified already. With Abraham, it was to be crucified, but with us, it has been crucified already. We all must see this, reckon on it, and take it by faith. By faith we can declare that our flesh, our natural man with its strength, has been crucified. "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). We all need to live with the realization that the old man, the self, has been crucified. **If we declare this and live according to it, then the God of resurrection immediately has the way to come into us and to be everything to us for the carrying out of His economy.** (*Life-Study of Genesis, chapter 47*)

## Day 4

- 1 John 2:5* - But whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been **perfected**. In this we know that we are in Him.
- 1 John 4:12* - No one has beheld God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is **perfected** in us.
- 1 John 4:17* - In this has love been **perfected** with us, that we may have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.

## II. We need to be **perfect** as our heavenly Father is perfect by being **perfected in His love**—1 John 2:5; 4:12, 17-18:

- A. “Whoever keeps His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected”—2:5:
1. Here *the love of God* denotes **our love toward God**, which is generated **by His love within us**.
  2. **God’s love is His inward essence**, and the Lord’s word supplies us with the divine essence, with which we love God and love the brothers; hence, when we keep the divine word, the divine love is perfected through the divine life, which is **God Himself** and by which we live.
- B. “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us”—4:12:
1. Here *His love* denotes **God’s love within us** that becomes **our love toward one another**, and it is with this love that we love one another.
  2. In God Himself the love of God itself is **perfect** and **complete**; however, in us it needs to be perfected and completed in its manifestation:
    - a. God’s love was manifested to us in God’s sending of His Son to be both a propitiatory sacrifice and life to us—vv. 9-10.
    - b. This love is perfected and completed in its manifestation when we **express it in our living** by habitually loving one another with it.
    - c. Thus, in our living in God’s love, others can behold God manifested in His essence, which is **love**.
- C. “In this has love been **perfected with us**, that we may have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love”—vv. 17-18:
1. Here *perfect love* is the love that has been perfected in us by our **loving others with the love of God**; such love casts out fear and has no fear of being punished by the Lord at His coming back—Luke 12:46-47.
  2. Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is.
  3. First John 4:12 and 17 speak of God’s love needing to be **perfected in us**, and verse 18 speaks of our needing to be perfected in love:
    - a. This indicates that **we and the divine love are mingled**; when love is perfected in us, we are perfected in love; we become love, and love becomes us.
    - b. Through God’s dispensing of Himself into us, we become love in the sense of being **constituted with God as love**.

The love in verse 5 is both **God's love for us and our love for God**. This is God's love becoming our love through our enjoyment of the divine love. When God's love becomes our love, we have within us a love toward God. Through our experience of God's love, the love that **comes from Him now returns to Him**.

We have pointed out that in verse 5 John speaks of the love of God being perfected in the one who keeps His word. **In itself God's love is absolutely perfect**. There is no need whatever for God's love to be perfected, for it is already perfect and complete. However, **God's love becomes the love with which we love Him, and this kind of love does need to be perfected**. We love God by the love that is generated in us through our experience of the divine love. Although we may have this love and may love God with this love, our love is still very limited and far from perfect. Therefore, **our love for God needs to be perfected**. As we grow in the divine life, our love for God also will grow.

Our love for God actually is not our own love. It is still God's love, but it is God's love becoming our experience and producing a love in us for God. Through our experience and enjoyment of the divine love, we love God. Now this love needs to be perfected. (*Life-Study of 1 John, chapter 15*)

### Day 5

**2 Corinthians 13:11** - Finally, brothers, rejoice, be perfected, be comforted, think the same thing, be at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

**2 Corinthians 13:14** - The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ and the **love** of God and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**III. The genuine Christian perfection taught in the New Testament is according to God's New Testament economy that God wanted to become a man that many men may become the God-men for the producing of the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:23) to consummate the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2) as God's ultimate goal (Eph. 3:8-10; 1:9-10):**

- A. Such a **Christian perfection** is the issue of the dispensing of the processed and consummated Triune God into the believers—the God-men:
  - 1. This dispensing is by **God the Father** as the **source**, the origin—Matt. 5:48; Rev. 21:18b and footnote 3, 21b.
  - 2. This dispensing is with **God the Son** as the **element**—2 Cor. 13:3, 5, 9, 11; Rev. 21:21a and footnote 1, first paragraph.
  - 3. This dispensing is through **God the Spirit** as the **fellowship**—2 Cor. 13:9, 11, 14; Rev. 21:18, 21 and footnote 1, second paragraph.
- B. Second Corinthians 13 was written to encourage the believers to be **perfected by the experience of Christ as life** and the enjoyment of the processed and consummated Triune God in the **Father's love**, with **Christ's grace** as the expression of the Father's love, and through the **Spirit's fellowship** that dispenses the Father's love in Christ's grace into the believers—vv. 5, 9, 11, 14.
- C. This kind of Christian perfection is for the **building up of the Body of Christ**, and the perfecting ones are the gifted persons, such as the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the shepherds and teachers—Eph. 4:11-12.

## Day 6

- 2 Peter 1:7* - And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, *love*.
- 2 Peter 3:11* - Since all these things are to be thus dissolved, what kind of persons ought you to be in holy manner of life and godliness,
- Revelation 21:18* - And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

- D. In 2 Peter we see that the **divine love**, *agape*, is the ultimate development of the divine nature (1:7), and holiness is the manner of life that partakes of the divine nature (3:11):
1. We believers have received the divine life with the divine nature (1:4), which **is God Himself** for us to enjoy; when we enjoy this divine nature to the uttermost, love will be the consummation; then **we become a being of love**.
  2. The **divine love** sanctifies us, separates and saturates us, to make us a people who are fully holy, utterly golden; we become pieces of “gold” put together to be a golden lampstand (Rev. 1:12), bearing the testimony of the “golden” Jesus, and consummating in the New Jerusalem, a city of pure gold (21:18), for the accomplishment of God’s economy.
  3. Our teaching and shepherding of the saints in the church life should be according to **God’s economy** for the working out of the New Jerusalem.

If you have been born of God, you have received His **divine life** with His **divine nature**. Now for you to enjoy God is to **enjoy the divine nature**, which is constituted mainly with love as the essence and light as the expression. When you enjoy God in His divine nature, you enjoy Him as love and as light. **Love** is the consummation of your enjoyment of God’s divine nature. **As you enjoy and partake of the divine nature, you live a life of love, and this life has a manner.** This is a life fully separated from the common life, a life that is distinct and different. In your community, your neighborhood, and among your relatives, colleagues, and classmates, you must give people an impression of distinction. They should realize that you are not common. This distinction comes from your being a person of love. Because you are a person of love, you do not quarrel, argue, or fight with anyone. You do not hate anyone and would never be mad with anyone.

In conclusion, the central thought of Peter’s writing is this: **we believers have received the divine life, and with this divine life we have the divine nature, which is God Himself for us to enjoy.** When we enjoy this divine nature to the uttermost, love will be the consummation. Then we become a loving being, a being of love. This love makes us different, just as Jesus was different and distinct when He was on this earth. He was altogether distinct, different, and separated from the others. He was a piece of gold among the “muddy” people. Even the twelve disciples in the Gospels were “twelve pieces of mud.” Only Jesus Christ was golden. He was a person of love. The divine love, the noble love, *agape*, made Jesus Christ distinct among all the people, which means that He was holy. Peter saw this in the Gospels, and after Pentecost he experienced this. In his two Epistles we see that love is the consummation of the enjoyment of the divine nature and that this love has an expression—holiness. Therefore, love is the essence of the divine life, and holiness is the manner of this life. (*God’s New Testament Economy, chapter 32*)