

## Apostolic Advice

May

*Apostolic Perfection*

Jesus promoted the idea of *perfection* in Matthew 5:48, "*But you are to be perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect*". Perfection or completion then, is the goal of sons, and the result of the *preaching and teaching* of the Word as Paul stated in Col.1:28, "*Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man **perfect** in Christ Jesus*".

Jesus was the model of a *complete son*, perfected in love and a representation of the Father. This is the whole idea behind *being perfect as the Father in Heaven*, so that we may say as Jesus said, "*If you have seen me, you have seen the Father*". Sons are to re-present the Father to this world so that they may know Him. According to Apostle John, God sums up His whole being in *one word*, "*Beloved let us love one another, for love is of God: and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for GOD IS LOVE*". 1 John 4:7-8

Paul takes up the theme of perfection in 1 Cor.13, especially verses 10-13. "*But when that which is perfect has come, than that which is in part will be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things*". Those who believe that "*perfect*" is speaking of the Bible, also say that we no longer need the Gifts of the Spirit now that we have the *perfect Word of God* which gives us complete knowledge. That would put the Gifts of the Spirit in the category of "*childish things*", wouldn't it? I don't think that is what the context implies or the apostle intended. The theme here is *Christian maturity or completion*, in other words, *being perfected in love*. This is also a theme taken up by Apostle John in 1 John 4:17-18, "*He who fears has not been made perfect in love*". I believe we can sum up maturity as *being perfected in love*. As my old Pastor used to say, "***Love is the true barometer of spirituality***". If we want to test our maturity, we should ask ourselves, who can we love? Can we "*love our enemies*" as Jesus said in Luke 6:27-28, and those who despise and use us? When we have reached *perfection* in Christ we can.

Paul goes on to say in 1 Cor.13:10-13 that being perfected in love will bring us into the most intimate relationship with God. "*But now we see in a mirror dimly (when we are children), but then face to face*" (when we have matured in love). We know as we are known, we know God who is love and we see a reflection of Him in the mirror, "*As Christ is so are we in this world*". Having a *face to face* relationship with the Father means we are so near to Him we can hear the *whispers* He speaks in secrecy to us His beloved. When I want to whisper a sweet something to my wife, I draw near and get *face to face*; I don't shout it from across the room. Being perfected in love is the goal of the Christian and the highest mark we can aim for.

*Dr. John*