

### **SINLESS PERFECTION? (Part-three of a four-part study)**

Make no mistake, God expects every Christian to pursue a life of spiritual growth. It consists of a process which leads to deeper levels of Christ-like maturity. This is how the word “perfect” is used in the New Testament; indicating advancement rather than flawlessness, as confirmed in James 3:2. Our spiritual development, resulting in an ever-increasing maturity, is often described as progressive sanctification. It involves a transformation of the Christian, in becoming conformed to the image of their Savior, in a manner that is gradual and ongoing (Romans 8:28-29). The result is that we sin less, but never to the point of becoming sinless! A description of this process is provided by the apostle John in 1 John 2:12-14 –

**“I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”**

This passage reveals to us a progressive sequence of spiritual growth to which every Christian must aspire. It resembles the normal non-spiritual growth of every human being. However, in each stage of development, there is room for improvement; with no indication by the apostle John that the most advanced stage of spiritual maturity (fathers), involves a state of sinless perfection. The larger context of John’s first epistle confirms the very opposite, especially in 1 John 1:8-10, where we read the following –

**“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”**

The apostle’s repeated use (7x) of the first-person plural (“we”) in these verses, demonstrates his own forthright admission regarding the reality of sin within, and the ongoing struggle with it. Surely, John viewed himself as having attained the highest level of spiritual maturity, in being a “father” spiritually. Nevertheless, he gives no indication of being in denial about his sin. Instead, he “owns” it. He takes responsibility for it. Therefore, we can conclude that the positive end result of meaningful and progressive sanctification, is a life-long walk with our Savior where we sin less, without ever reaching a state of sinless perfection.