

BEING PERFECTED TO BECOME PATTERNS AND TO LIVE OUT A CORPORATE MODEL OF THE GOD-MAN LIVING

- We need to perfect one another in the groups to become patterns to one another of living a priestly life and a shepherding life
- Our unique goal in the church life needs to be not around activities or formalities but of helping one another corporately live out all the details of a God-man living in our daily life, family life, and church life
- The responsible ones in the groups need to focus on raising up a corporate model within their groups of practicing such a priestly, shepherding life

Perfecting Faithful Ones in the Groups to be Patterns to One Another

We need to enter into the apostle Paul's thought when he talks about the perfecting of the saints. The thought of his word concerning the perfecting of the saints is that God's intention is to have every believer able to do the things that the gifted persons do. Every believer should be able to do the work of the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the shepherds and teachers...There is a capacity in the divine life that the believers possess and enjoy, and this capacity needs to be developed unto their ability...A little infant has the capacity to see, but if his eyes are always covered, he will become blind because his seeing function has never been practiced or developed. To cover the infant's eyes is to annul the seeing function. For the function to be developed, there is the need for the growth of life and practice. An infant learns to speak by practicing and by the growth of life.

We all need to give ourselves to be perfected. We should not be Christians just in name but Christians in reality. Every Christian is a gift. The heavenly Head, Christ, constituted Paul the apostle a gift to the Body, and He made Paul an apostle directly. The Lord, however, constituted Timothy a gift to the church in a different way. One day under His sovereignty, He placed Timothy under Paul, and Paul taught Timothy and perfected him all the time. As a result, Timothy became an apostle, but he was not an apostle appointed by the Head directly. He was an apostle under the perfecting of the directly appointed apostle. This shows us that the gifted persons should bear the responsibility to perfect all the saints to do what they do.

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, "The things which you have heard from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who will be competent to teach others also." The verb perfect is a synonym of the verb teach. Paul charged Timothy to commit what he had heard from him to the faithful ones, who would be competent to teach others. In other words, Paul perfected Timothy, and he charged him to teach others, which means to

perfect them. Then these faithful ones would also teach others, perfect others. Paul perfected Timothy, Timothy perfected the faithful ones, and the faithful ones bore the burden to perfect the other saints. Eventually, the entire church would be perfected in this way.

Before this kind of perfecting work, one brother may have been the unique person who knew how to set up the churches, how to preach the gospel, and how to teach the truths. [Within his group¹, that brother] must perfect some "Timothys". Then his "Timothys" will perfect some competent ones, and these competent ones will [be able to] perfect others. Eventually, all the believers there will be able to do what the gifted brother can do. Then instead of being the unique one among them who can preach the gospel, set up the churches, and give the definition of the truths, he becomes one among many who can do the same work. Therefore, there is no clergy and no laity. Because there is no clergy, there is not the possibility of building up a hierarchy. Instead, all the saints are enabled to preach the gospel, teach the truth, and set up churches.

Some who [are in a group¹] may feel that they need some gifted ones to come to make a decision [for them and lead them]. This is like some saying...that they do not know how to cook. Because they do not know how to cook, they want someone to come to cook for them. Even if the saints there feel that they do not know "how to cook," it is best for them to try. Eventually, they will learn how to cook by trying and making mistakes. We must see that there are two different kinds of concepts concerning the Lord's service. One is the traditional concept of Christianity, and the other is according to what is revealed in the Bible, the God-ordained way.

All of us...should practice to perfect ourselves. In order to perfect ourselves we must first begin to live a priestly life. We should pray, "Lord, I want to be perfected by You to live a priestly life. I want to be a priest on the earth." Regardless of whether we are a businessman, a professor, or a housewife, we should live a priest's life. The life of a priest is a victorious life, an overcoming daily life. The first practice of the priestly life is to visit sinners to get them saved. We need to ask the Lord, "Lord, lead me and guide me in using my time to fulfill the first item of the priesthood in getting sinners saved to make them the sons of God and the members of Christ." I believe that the Lord will lead us.

As we practice, we will perfect ourselves to such an extent that we will be able to conduct the group meetings to the highest degree. In our meetings we should have the living singing, the living praying, and the living fellowship. We

¹ The original context of this example was pertaining to saints being perfected to migrate to a new city; it is adapted here to the concept of saints being perfected within their respective groups

have to learn to set up a pattern for others in the group meeting...When we come together, we have to learn how to fellowship. Our fellowship will bring in some interceding for one another. As we practice these things, we will perfect ourselves. The interceding and praying for one another will bring in the mutual care. The group meeting will issue in the shepherding of the saints...As we practice, we will learn and get ourselves perfected. Then we will become a pattern, and our pattern will be a perfecting to others...All of us should practice to be the pioneers in the practice of the present advance of the Lord's recovery...We can put this fellowship into practice to perfect ourselves, and spontaneously we will set up a pattern for others to follow. As we practice, this pattern will be improved all the time. (*The Advance of the Lord's Recovery Today*, Chapter 5)

Our Goal in the Church Life Needing to Be to Raise Up a Corporate Model of the God-man Living

I recently fellowshipped with the co-workers and elders by speaking a very frank word to them. I said, "Brothers, many of you still work for the Lord by doing affairs. Your kind of taking the lead among the saints is not according to the spirit, but...making a number of formalities, asking others to perform formalities"... So we need a turn.

For such a revelation which is so high, deep, and profound, the Lord needs a model. He needs a corporate people to be raised up by His grace through this high peak of the divine revelation to live a life according to this revelation. Then they will be the model. Even for pray-reading, we did not set up a strong and proper model. Where is the model of living a crucified life that we may live Christ? Even among us, this is not too prevailing. Where is the model of living Christ and magnifying Christ by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ? Where is this life?...Paul even tells us that we should pursue Christ not only by our own individual calling but also by our corporate calling with others who call on the Lord from their sincere and pure heart. This indicates that we do not only need to call on the Lord and pray-read the word of the Lord as the Spirit individually. We also need this corporately. In all the churches there should be groups of ten or fifteen saints who come together often to call on the Lord...This is my strong burden I would fellowship with the [responsible ones]. Every local church needs this. Do not invent many formalities. You yourself should practice calling on the Lord. You yourself should practice pray-reading the word as the Spirit. You need to practice the unceasing prayer. You need to practice never quenching the Spirit, but rather, fanning the Spirit all the time into flame. You need to practice not despising any prophesying. The elders [and responsible ones] should take the lead to practice this. First, you be

the model. Then your practice in such an intimate way with the Lord will influence the saints in your church.

This should be and this must be our church practice from today onward. If not, we are practicing something in vain. Our practice is not merely to have a church life in which everything is according to the Bible, a church life in which we baptize people by immersion, forsake the denominations, practice head covering, and have the Lord's table, absolutely according to the Bible. Some have come into the recovery because of these practices. They appreciate our family life, the church meetings, and the way we train our young people. However, these things should not be the goal of our practice. The goal of our practice should be to live the life of a God-man. This is the goal we should reach...The highest family life, marriage life, and social life come out of such a life. This life is the life of the church and the life of the Body of Christ. Such a life is the reality of the Body of Christ. Such a life, like that of Jesus Christ in His thirty-three and a half years on the earth, saves us from all negative things, from small things and big things. In our marriage life it saves us from separation and divorce. In the church it saves us from opinion, division, despising, criticizing, and murmuring. In this life there is no criticism, no despising, no partiality, no division, no dissension, no opinion. In such a life we live the life of a God-man.

Dear saints, this is my burden. We all need to live such a life—the older ones and the young ones, the brothers and the sisters, the elders and the common saints. If we do, we are faithful to what we have heard. Then the Lord will have not a model only by individuals but a model by a group of us...If we practice what we have heard, spontaneously a model will be built up. This model will be the greatest revival in the history of the church. I believe that this revival will bring the Lord back. (*Living a Life according to the High Peak of God's Revelation*, Chapters 4-5)

Fellowship Questions:

1. What is particularly instructive to us about the way Timothy became an apostle? Who are the faithful ones among us we should focus on perfecting? What are some ways in which we can be perfected?
2. How can we perfect ourselves and the ones in our group? What experiences or examples do we have of such perfecting?
3. What should our unique goal in the church life be with our family and the fellow members of our group? Consider ways in which your group can put this fellowship into practice.