

Be Thou Perfect

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Has God ever asked any man to do something that he cannot do? You might say yes! He asked us to keep the Ten Commandments and He knew we could not keep them. But He also told many people to do other things which it was humanly impossible to do; yet they were done.

Take for example the following:

- God told Moses to cross the Red Sea with a multitude, which included feeble men, women and children. This seemed suicidal to many. Yet it was done and none but the pursuing Egyptians perished.
- He told Moses to strike water out of a dry solid rock with a mere rod which was humanly impossible. Yet he did and a spring was born.
- He told Sarah to have a son when she was well into menopause and the fruitfulness of her womb had passed. Yet she obeyed and though it was humanly impossible she did conceive and bore a son.
- He told the leper Naaman to go and dip seven times in the River Jordan to cure his disease which was humanly impossible and impractical. Yet he did and was healed.
- Jesus told the lame and cripple to get up and walk; “take up your bed and walk”, He told one man and he did. How possible is that? And if you think that was impossible then think about the next.
- He invited Peter to walk on water! And guess what? He did. How humanly possible is that?!

In every example cited about, God gave a command which He knew it was humanly impossible to do. Yet in every one of those instances, it was done. What is the common primary conclusion we can draw from the above? Well I think it would be that when God gives a command He also gives the enabling power to effect it, irrespective of how humanly impossible it may seem.

Therefore if God gave the Ten Commandments to fallen humanity to keep, He therefore must have provided the means and the enabling to carry them out and He has through Jesus Christ His only begotten Son. The whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament was to inspire faith in the slain Lamb of God. Had all of Israel understood this and acquired such a faith, they would have kept the Ten Commandments and all the other commandments of God through the enabling power of the life of the slain and resurrected Lamb of God.

Did Abraham keep God’s commands? He was accounted righteous for having faith in God. Can anyone be righteous while disobeying God? I think not! Therefore Abraham was obedient to the commands of God. Could he have done it without the enabling of God? He was just like anyone of us; subject to the same weak body of flesh and with like passions. But he believed that God would do it in him, and it came to pass. Therefore Abraham was obedient to the commands of God through faith in Jesus. Jesus said of him: **“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”** (*John 8:56*). Abraham, through faith, saw that God provided a new life for him in Jesus Christ. He saw that the victorious, resurrected life of Christ was available to him and he believed God; and received it. He was accounted righteous; he had the new life of the second Adam. Abraham did not just believe that God would give him a son, or that he would be the father of a great nation, or even that through him the Messiah would come, but he believe that through the promised merits of the

sacrifice of Jesus, he was enabled to live Christ's righteous, victorious life and to obey the commands of God.

Of all the commands that God gave Abraham, the one that epitomized them all is found in Genesis seventeen and verse one. ***“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” (Gen 17:1).*** This was not the first command that God gave him. He had called him out from his country, in Ur of the Chaldees. ***“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: (And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen 12:1-3).*** Abram was a big man of seventy five years when he obeyed the call of God to leave his home and he sojourned in the land of promise; the land which was promised to his seed and to a great nation. He was now ninety nine years old and still yet not a sign of any child by Sarai. This was when God appeared unto him and commanded him to be perfect. He (God) said ***“I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”*** I will ask this question, can any human be perfect? Impossible with us but with God's command it is possible for he enables every command he gives to us. He provides the means before he commands. He provides the lamb for the sacrifice. If God therefore commanded Abram to be perfect, what did Abram have to do to make it to happen? Nothing! But what did he have to do for it to happen? ***“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness”. (Gen 15:6).*** The answer is: Simply believe God! Therefore he was called the friend of God; he trusted God. ***“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” (James 2:23).*** (See also 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isa 41:8).

Was the command to be perfect given to Abraham alone? Certainly not! In fact we are all commanded to be perfect. Jesus in Mathew 5:48, has commanded all to be perfect. But only a perfect person can obey the 'Ten Commandments' which is the perfect law (Psalm 19:7). This is humanly impossible because we were born in sin and shaped in iniquity. Yet God expect us to obey for He has provided the enabling through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:” (Col 1:28).*** ***“But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (James 1:4 NKJV)***

Therefore Jesus has commanded all of humanity to be perfect. How perfect? Perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Mathew 5:48) ***“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” (Lev 19:2).***

Why do we find then, that people generally shy away from wanting to be perfect? You are familiar with stigmatic statements such as: “You think you are perfect” or “no one is perfect” as if something is wrong if you should have the ambition to be perfect. In fact aspiring to be perfect is discouraged by the culture in some communities in Western societies and sometimes scoffed upon by many. In spite of that, many have tried to be perfect in their own ways and by their own means. Of these persons, many have lost their lives in this world and the world to come trying to be perfect in some way or the other. Many, after exhausting all humanly possibly means, in frustration have taken their own lives.

Yet we all can be perfect and God did not leave us ignorant of the means by which he has designed to make this a real experience. You see, God's enabling is found in His Son Jesus Christ; in the obedient and victorious life which is to be found no where else. A life which is obedient that even led to the death of the cross. A life fuelled by a love ineffable; the love of God. (See John 3:16). This

enabling life is available to every man woman and child on this planet. “For God so love the world that He gave”... Gave what? He gave the life of His Son, not just to die! but He gave the life of His Son to us; to the world; that we may have his life in us and have it more abundantly! God had already provided the water in the rock before Moses struck it, as He has provided the living water from the Rock of Ages from the foundation of the world for the world; long before we were created. He has provided the righteous life of Christ for our thirsty souls. This is God’s enabling and it can be seen in His preparation for mankind in Christ Jesus.

God wants us to be perfect and He knows that it is humanly impossible for us to achieve this on our own. We were born in sin and shaped in iniquity; “all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”. (*Isa 53:6*) So he has provided the means and the enabling power through His only Begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. And as it was for Abraham so it is for us today. We need only to trust and believe God and take the prepared victoriously obedient enabling life of Jesus in exchange for our defeated and forfeited life of sin and darkness. So remember when you hear the words of God saying: “***I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect***”, remember, He has already empowered and enabled you through the perfect life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May God help us to trust and believe Him that He may bless us all in Christ Jesus. ¶