

## The Fight of Perfection!

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Perfection. Excellence. Unsurpassed Accomplishment. We all strive for those traits at some point in our lives, some of us more often than others perhaps. But what if that need to be perfect, to be the best pours into what we expect of others around us? Not just the obvious people like our children but co-workers, parents, friends, or spouses?

Are the standards we place upon ourselves so high that they make others feel they cannot be near us for fear of being a failure simply by being who they are? Are the clothes they wear, the way they look, the way they walk or talk, (or just the fact that they do things differently than we would do them) not meeting the level that we would expect from someone in *our* circle? I learned that the hard way with my husband when we first got married. I folded towels a certain way. Nice. Neat. No edges sticking out. All the same size and shape. He didn't. It drove me crazy. Until one day I came home to a laundry basket filled with clean, unfolded towels. I quickly realized I was more satisfied with a husband who did laundry than I was upset that he didn't fold them *my* way.

As women, I believe we set our standards high unintentionally. We live in a world where men still make more money for doing the same job and although "homemaker" is the toughest job in the world if one had to dish out what it would cost to replace her many roles he could never afford it. Yet still, we women try to "do it all" to "be it all". We aim for the crown of perfection. After all, everything falls on the woman. If his shirt is wrinkled his wife didn't iron it. If the kids are obnoxious she didn't discipline them. If the house is messy, she didn't clean it. If the kids are too skinny, she didn't feed them. And it goes on and on!

But why do we set our sights on being the best mom, the best wife, best homemaker, best party planner, best lover and so on? Love? Acceptance? Value? Where did this era of people of perfection begin? I couldn't find a single one of Jesus' friends in the Bible that were perfect. So where? There are even churches out there that only seem to want "perfect Christians" sitting in their pews. Why? Why have we allowed this "perfection" to prevent us from really seeing the people around us?

A portion of a poem by Marianne Williamson called "Our Greatest Fear" states, "*We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.*"

Yes, the Bible tells us to strive to live a righteous life in Colossians 3:23-24. *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

But isn't it comforting to see that God doesn't expect us to be perfect. But he does want us to be genuine. If perfection were a prerequisite for Jesus' friendship we would never be friends with him. Because of God's grace we know in Matthew 11:19 that Jesus is "a friend of sinners" and while we are trying daily (as apparently so is everyone else) to "keep on keeping on" we can remember that if we were perfect- we'd be the ones that walked on water. But since we're not, we must remember we have friends in High places and no matter what we wear, how we walk or talk or fold a towel, our playing small does NOT serve the world for His glory!

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