

# The Fruit of Perfect Love

*by John Wesley*

*"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"*  
*Matthew 5:48*

John Wesley was deeply committed to helping all he could to "come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." He recognized that scripture was the standard of God's will and possibility of Grace. Hence he urged all believers to "Go on unto perfection" and carefully directed those who were part of his discipleship classes around spiritual pitfalls and into a true holy relationship with God. Those who professed great grace were carefully examined and faithfully given council to aid their spiritual advancement.

## **JOHN WESLEY'S EXAMINATION OF CHRISTIANS IN HIS LONDON SOCIETY WHO PROFESSED CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.**

Question: What do you think of those in London, who seem to have been lately 'renewed in love?'

Answer: I do not think of them all alike: There is a wide difference between some of them and others. I think most of them with whom I have spoken, have much faith, love, joy, and peace. **Some of these I believe are renewed in love, and have the direct witness of it; and they manifest the fruit above described, in all their words and actions. Now, let any man call this what he will; it is what I call perfection.**

But some who have much love, peace, and joy, yet have not the direct witness; and others who think they have, are nevertheless, manifestly wanting in the fruit. How many I will not say; perhaps one in ten; perhaps more or fewer.

**But some are undeniably wanting in long-suffering, Christian resignation.** They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in everything give thanks, and rejoice evermore. They are not happy; at least, not always happy; for sometimes they complain. They say, this or that is hard!

**Some are wanting in gentleness.**

They resist evil, instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction, without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reproved or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well; they behave

with more distance and reserve than they did before. If they are reproved or contradicted harshly, they answer it with harshness; with a loud voice, or with an angry tone, or in a sharp and surly manner. They speak sharply or roughly, when they reprove others; and behave roughly to their inferiors.

**Some are wanting in goodness.**

They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look and air, in the whole tenor of their behavior; and that to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons; particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own household. They do not long, study, endeavor by every means, to make all about them happy. They can see them uneasy, and not be concerned; perhaps they make them so; and then wipe their mouths and say, 'Why, they deserve it; it is their own fault.'

**Some are wanting in fidelity, a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity.**

Their love is hardly without dissimulation; something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness, they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarce to avoid a degree of fawning, or of seeming to mean what they do not.

**Some are wanting in meekness, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper.**

They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion; they have too much of one, too little of another; or they are not duly mixed and tempered together, so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony.

**Some are wanting in temperance.**

They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food, which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigor of the body: Or they are not temperate in sleep; they do not rigorously adhere to what is best both for body and mind; otherwise they would constantly go to bed and rise early, and at a fixed hour: Or they sup late, which is neither good for body nor soul: Or they use neither fasting nor abstinence: Or they prefer (which are so many sorts of intemperance) that preaching, reading, or conversation, which gives them transient joy and comfort, before that which brings godly sorrow, or instruction in righteousness. Such joy is not sanctified; it doth not tend to, and terminate in, the crucifixion of the heart. Such faith doth not center in God, but rather in itself.

**So far all is plain. I believe you have faith, and love, and joy, and peace. Yet you who are particularly concerned know each for yourself, that you are wanting in the respects above-mentioned.**

You are wanting either in long-suffering, gentleness, or goodness; either in

fidelity, meekness, or temperance. Let us not, then, on either hand, fight about words. In the thing we clearly agree.

**You have not what I call perfection; if others will call it so, they may. However, hold fast what you have, and earnestly pray for what you have not.**

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