



The PERFECT Man

As Seen through the Life of George Whitefield

Following Christ

We have gone through twenty issues of articles attempting to exhort the readers on Building Up Godly Family.

A godly family is made up of godly members. Sad to say, the family unit of today is very much under satan's attack by all his beautifully-wrapped deception. The only way to safeguard ourselves is to cling on to God's Word and to be in much prayer daily.

Today, we examine a real-life example on how we should be if we profess to have acknowledged and accepted Jesus and our personal Lord and Saviour.

The Bible very clearly stated in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Julia Koh
Editorial Team

The word perfect here means mature, as we understand in the context of old English. I thought one way to share on the topic is to understand it through the life of a mature Christian. I have been very touched by the life of George Whitefield – the great English preacher who lived from 1714 to 1770 – and he is a good model for us to learn from. Please allow me to illustrate three aspects of spiritual maturity as seen in the life of this preacher who was greatly used by God.

Learning and Growth

Born of a humble background, George Whitefield was a typical youth who was more interested in day-to-day merry making. It was only after he entered Oxford University at 18 that God did a mysterious working in him and he started to show keen interest in spiritual matters.¹ In particular, he spent time to read the Bible, and did his self-study to get close to the God whom he loved. He also paid attention to fellowship and exhortation, during which he befriended the famous John Wesley and his brother Charles during his Oxford days. It was John Wesley who introduced him to Henry Scougal's *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*², and the reading greatly convicted him of the need for repentance and dedication of his life to the Lord.

It is good if we get to attend formal theological talks or training. But another important form of supplement is self-study. Continuous learning in the Lord is a serious business. It is an avenue for us to further our knowledge of God, and deepen our love in Him. With a humble spirit and self-discipline, we should attempt to read a portion of the Bible everyday, and also some form of Christian literature. This is like spiritual toning and it will keep our spiritual muscles supple, and keep us healthy for the Lord's business. Therefore, it takes maturity for a Christian to pay attention to spiritual up keeping and improvement in the Lord.

Fishermen of Christ

George Whitefield is well-known for his field preaching and for attracting up to 20,000–30,000 in outdoor gatherings. Above all,

The Perfect Man is committed to

1. Continuous Learning and Growth
2. Be fisherman of Christ
3. Resolve Conflict harmoniously and in love and focusing on using the combined talents for the furtherance of God's Work on earth.

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¹ Select Sermons of George Whitefield – Wiyth an acount of his lfe by J.C.Ryle (Pg 14). The Banner of Truth Trust. 1990

² <http://www.ravenhill.org/whitefield.htm>

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the intent of preaching is to bring sinners to Christ. With an evangelistic fervour, he is said to have preached in excess of 18,000 sermons over 34 years of ministry. He was the first to see that Christ's ministers must do the work of fishermen. They must not wait for souls to come to them, but must go after souls, and 'compel them to come in'. He used whatever means he could to systematically reach out to sinners with the soul-saving gospel.

Travelling overseas on a mission trip is not the only way to spread the gospel. Maybe we need to look around us to see that it is a great ocean of sinners for us to fish out. In Mt 4:19 and Chap 10, we read that Christ has ordained his disciples as "fishers of men". The model is to travel two by two to reach out in a systematic and orderly manner. Let us be mindful to heed the Great Commission to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Mt 28:19-20). Let's not be weary in doing good. Our church has set in place Sunday door-to-door evangelism and street evangelism. Gospel Sunday is another golden opportunity for us to invite friends to hear the gospel of grace and life. Therefore, it takes spiritual maturity to take a keen interest in soul-saving business. May the Lord empower us with the evangelical spirit that we may all be fishermen of Christ wherever we can.

Conflict Resolution

George Whitefield is known to pay attention to the truths of Protestant Reformation and

Reformed Theology. In the history of George Whitefield and John Wesley, we know that the two great men had disagreements over theological differences. John Wesley was a committed Arminian, while George Whitefield a committed Calvinist. He found offence in some of the writings published by Wesley, especially on predestination and grace of God based on Arminian teachings. Although Whitefield sought to keep such issues from becoming a dividing point, he was also committed to the truths he espoused. "I embrace the Calvinistic scheme," he wrote, "not because Calvin, but because Jesus Christ has taught it to me." Although their differences could not be resolved in their lifetime, they maintained cordial relationships keeping in view the bigger picture of glorifying God with their gifts than to undermine God's work on earth. They simply agreed to disagree and move on in their respective ministries, in the spirit of Rom 12:18.

As sinners saved by grace, we experience differences of opinions and practices when working together with fellow sinners. It is important to ask for God's grace to keep us pure and humble, loving and not be overly judgmental. When their disagreement had been sharpest concerning predestination Wesley was asked if he expected to behold Whitefield on the Final Day. "I fear not," John had replied, "for George will be so much nearer the throne of grace." It was in the memorial sermon that John spoke most succinctly of his friend: "Can anything but love beget love?". O what humility

in Christian service! O what love in the Lord Jesus! Hence, we see it takes spiritual maturity to accept differences and be able to identify the common grounds for working together.

Conclusion

We see that there are three key areas that a mature Christian would manage well. He pays attention to spiritual learning and growth as a means of grace in furthering himself in the Lord. Next, he pays attention to evangelism and outreach as a direct compliance to the Great Commission. Lastly, he attempts to work harmoniously among Christian co-workers by placing the common strengths together in advancing God's Kingdom on earth. If we could make progress in these three departments of our lives, they would definitely make us a mature and effective servant of the Lord.

Yours truly in the Lord,
Roger Lim

Announcements

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL AGM will be held on Lord's Day 27 November after 1045 Worship Service with lunch preceding. All staff are to indicate their attendance to the DSs by TODAY. All DSs, please give final number of staff attending the AGM and lunch by next Lord's Day 20th.**
- **The Sunday School is currently funding the transportation for ferrying the children and parents from Yishun to attend Sunday Worship. Please pray for this ministry to reach out to those who have yet to believe on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**