



## The Ark Community

# 99: PERFECTIONISM

by Cher **Caolo** (RSA)

**What is a perfectionist?** The perfectionist has a fixed self-concept where worth is conditional on performance. And is a ruthless judge of perceived failures, belittling every minor misstep. It is a disposition to feel that anything less than perfect is unacceptable. It is rooted in the need for control and affirmation.

[Matthew 10:39] **"He who finds his life shall lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake shall find it."**

Theologically, perfectionism is the destructive belief that people can be equal to God. Perfectionists think they should be all-knowing (*omniscient*), i.e. know everything and so beat themselves up for mistakes. Be all-powerful (*omnipotent*) i.e. be totally powerful and become upset when things are out of their control. Be everywhere at once (*omnipresent*), and generally without human frailty, i.e. accomplish the work of ten people in a given day and become depressed over what little they have accomplished.

[Isaiah 46:9-11] **"For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, "My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure"; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it."**

**How does perfectionism start?** Perfectionism starts in childhood, and, like almost everything psychological, stems from our core beliefs. At some point in our childhood, we learned that we received more appreciation and respect for what we **DID** rather than **WHO** we were. It comes from trying to please a parent who was unable to be pleased psychologically.

[Psalm 139:14] **"I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Your works; and that my soul knows very well."**

Over time, experiences reinforce this concept until, finally a core belief develops that we are not worthy of love or respect just for **being yourself**; you have to **do something**, and the better we do it, the more respect and love we'll receive. In this we become **"Human Doings instead of Human Beings"**. In more extreme cases, people develop the belief that if any mistakes are made at all or they fail to be better than everyone else, then they are not worthy of respect or love at all. These people were probably given '**conditional love**' at some time in their lives; that is, only if a standard was met was reward and acceptance given. This is NOT a healthy nor a Christian love – it may be questioned whether this kind of love is love at all – as conditional love hurts and makes monsters out of us.

Being a perfectionist is both good and bad. Having high standards and doing your best is a good thing, but making yourself sick with worry because of a minor mistake or avoiding things you enjoy because you might not be the best at it is not healthy. Anxiety and stress from perfectionist beliefs can cause health problems.

[Philippians 4:6-7] **"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**

[Proverbs 3:6] **"In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."**

Therefore we thank God for His healing Love which accepts us for **WHO** we are – **"He loves us because He loves us."** A gift of Grace, a gift of Life and Hope – We are accepted by the Creator of the Universe – Believe it and RECEIVE it. Amen+