

LIFE GROUP #3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – THE “PERFECTIONIST”

1. Share with us your name, something you are very particular about – what is something where you feel strongly things need to be done “the right way” – such as the food you eat, your clothes, keeping the house clean, loading the dishwasher, manners such as thank you cards, taking care of your iphone, snowboard, car, etc. Can you think of a rule you have that other people think is ridiculous ?
2. When do you feel most most satisfied with yourself? What is really important to you to do well ?
3. This past Sunday we talked about “The Perfectionist” – Remember the images of the perfectly organized groccerystand and cookie jar, but also talking about how another type of extreme perfectionist could be a hoarder who has so many rules about the right way to do things that they get paralyzed and don’t do anything ? Did any of you get the sense you might be that personality type, or did someone in your life come to mind when you heard the description ? If so tell us about that person, or what you see in yourself that leans towards the Perfectionist
4. All of us are tempted to be overly critical of ourselves or critical of others. Which comes easier to you ? Where are you most tempted to be critical of yourself ? Where are you most tempted to be critical of others ?
5. In your life, what techniques do you use to fight against that inner critical voice that is always scolding you or blaming you or telling you that you are defective or stupid or bad?
6. We talked about how a perfectionist who is harsh and judgemental towards others is often even harsher and more judgemental towards themselves. Does this give you any sympathy for a particular difficult person in your life ? If so, tell us about it.
7. Read **ROMANS 7:15-8:2**
15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.
16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.
17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing.

20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;

23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

25 Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

NIV Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

- a. *How could verses 15-18 be both a challenge and a relief to a Perfectionist's perception of themselves?*
 - b. *How much patience do you have for imperfection and chaos and things not being done right ? How hard is it for you to deal with a world that is in disarray and people who don't come through the way you think they should ? What percentage of the frustration, resentment or anger in your life is due to people or yourself not living up to your standards ?*
 - c. *What does Paul think is the reason that he can't consistently do what he knows is right, even though he wants to ? Do you buy his argument?*
 - d. *How hard is it for you to accept verse 8:1 for yourself at the deepest level of the way you really see yourself?*
 - e. *In verse 8: 2 Paul tells perfectionists they only have two choices for the set of laws to live under. If you are honest which one do you think you live under in everyday life ?*
 - f. *As you look at your own situation right now, what tendency, habit, or thought do you most need to resist and stand firm against?*
 - g. *As you think about that thing, what do you think Paul would want to say to you right now ?*
8. How can we pray for you this week ?

ENNEAGRAM Sermon Notes: “The PERFECTIONIST” #1

The need to be perfect *“Hey, do I have to do everything myself?”*

Core Desire: To be good/balanced/ have integrity

Core Fear: Being Corrupt/Defective/Deeply Flawed

Self-Image: The Reformer

Primary Temptation: never ending search for perfection

Root sin: anger

Perfectionists are **conscientious, ethical** and ordered with a strong sense of right and wrong. They are idealists in the sense that they bring to all of their experience an implicit sense of “how things should be.” Ones are people of action. They are driven by standards and they naturally **critique** and **judge** firstly themselves and then others. Afraid to make mistakes, they are driven to perfection by the frame that they are deeply flawed, and they need to prove to the world that they are not.

PAUL SAID: “If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” – Philippians 3:4-6

JESUS SAID: The Pharisees... tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders... "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness... "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness....

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing..." - Matthew 23:4-37

PAUL SAID: “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do... I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out...making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members...What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! ... Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” - Romans 7:15-8:1

STEPS A “PERFECTIONIST” CAN TAKE:

1. To awaken self-compassion, try to capture in a journal the typical things your inner critic says to you and then read them aloud.
2. Resist the urge to give other people to-do lists or to redo their tasks if you think they haven't met your standards. Instead, catch the people you love doing things right – and tell them how much you appreciate them for it.
3. Pick up a hobby you enjoy but are not especially good at doing – and just do it for the love of it.
4. When you are ready to correct an injustice or right a wrong, first ask yourself whether the passion you feel for that issue is really misplaced anger about something else.