

Half Truths: Hearing Grace in a World of Noise

Be Perfect

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the competing voices and narratives that shape our lives. Often, these cultural messages—while well-intentioned—can leave us feeling burdened, anxious, or disconnected. We will explore seven pervasive cultural “half truths” that mislead our understanding of life, identity, and purpose.

This series of Small Group studies isn't about proving who's “right.” Instead, the goal is to discover how Jesus is the truth, and to step into reality where his gospel liberates us from all the little lies that cling so closely. And his gospel is the best tool for healing our bad theology and tendencies to make ourselves little gods.

? What is something you think you are more perfect or better at, than anyone else in the room?

The Half-Truth: Be Perfect

Failure and flaws are the biggest threat to a significant life. It's important that others view me as without error in my speech, actions, and beliefs.

? When has perfectionism paid off in your life? When has it caused you frustration or pain?

Possible answers: I got good grades in school which led to amazing scholarships! I remembered everything I needed to on my driver's test and passed on the first try.

I was so frustrated with myself for forgetting the pie, I was unable to enjoy myself at the party.

? When is a situation when your “having it together” has helped you be a better reflection of Christ?

Possible answers: I was able to call the people at church by name, which allowed them to feel seen and loved in the new place. My unbelieving neighbor appreciated my efforts to care for him well at the anniversary of losing his mom.

Where Do We See This In Scripture?

As you read these scripture passages, consider what they say about this half-truth: be perfect.

Matthew 5:20, 48 (NIV)

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law,

you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 19:16-22 (NIV)

¹⁶ Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?”

¹⁷ “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸ “Which ones?” he inquired. Jesus replied, “‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁰ “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (NIV)

But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



What are these passages saying about being perfect?

Possible answers: it’s OK not to be perfect. We must draw near to God, the perfect one



How does the freedom offered in the gospel speak to being perfect?

Possible answers: God’s power is made perfect in weakness. I don’t have to figure it all out. We need him to both humble us and allow him to be best reflected in our lives. We will never be able to fully rest in the perfect one on our own.



When is this truth hardest for you to believe?

Possible answers: Answers will vary. Take some time to encourage one another in these hard spaces. Remind one another of all the things that are always true - regardless of our own efforts and skills.

How can we draw closer to the one that is the Truth?

For Discussion and Accountability

? Is there an aspect of your life you feel like you're currently failing? What helps you recover when you've experienced failure? How can we come alongside you in this?

? How is your heart believing this half-truth right now? How can we come alongside you in this?