

**The Spiritual Life: Perfection Is neither Possible nor Required but Rather the Aspiration to Improve One's Behavior, Character, & Lifestyle**

19. It is also noted by Kittel that the Greek word for virtue, *aretē*, is virtually synonymous with *dikaiosunē*: “the thinking of a judge” [TDNT, 1:459]. “In the ethics of Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 5), δικαιοσύνη occupies the place of honor among all virtues” [TDNT, 2:179].
20. Consequently, the believer with virtue is able to avoid sin when tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13), avoid discipline by judging himself (1 Corinthians 11:31), and rebound when necessary (1 John 1:9). For him, resident doctrine becomes an internal governor – or judge – that maintains virtue.
21. It must be pointed out that neither should you nor others expect you to be perfect in the execution of the Christian lifestyle. The objective is to aspire to the higher standard while remaining oriented to the fact that we fail.
22. Judaism aspires to perfection with regard to the Mosaic Law, but its followers recognize that they do not live up to its standards and so does God Who revealed the Law to Moses. This is why God mandated observance of *Yom Kippur*: the Day of Atonement.
23. Consequently, when Catholic, Protestant, or independent churches require moral perfection of their members, they are in actuality imitating the first-century Judaizers that contended faith in Christ was not sufficient for a Gentile's salvation but he also must observe the rite of circumcision as per the Mosaic Law.
24. The issue is not perfection, for perfection is not possible. The issue is virtue: the possession of the divine mandates, principles, and doctrines from which to reference over the course of one's Christian walk.
25. Failure is unavoidable as attested by the presence of rebound passages in Scripture. My emphasis in this study is to define the system that God has provided us to grow in grace and *improve* our behavior, character, and lifestyle, not *perfect* them.
26. When perfection is demanded of a believer it results in him becoming frustrated that he still sins, or convinced rebound does not work, or deluded he no longer sins.
27. The system we have been presented allows the believer to aspire to higher things yet remain realistic that perfection is unattainable.
28. This is driven home by the doctrine of imputed sin: we were born with Adam's original sin imputed to our sin nature, a condition called spiritual death: separation from fellowship with God establishing the need for a Savior.