

Theme: What does God demand of you? God demands that I be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

I. Intro - Responsibility of Privilege & Position

- A. Key principle - position and privilege bring responsibility
- B. Humans alone are created in God's image
- C. Spiritual - internal; subjective; free; personal; alive
- D. Gives us incredible potential, authority, & responsibility
- E. What does God expect and demand of His image bearers?

II. What God Demands

A. God demands perfection!

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

1. This is not hyperbole! It is the demand of God!
 - a. Some try to reduce to 'mature' or 'complete'
 - b. Telos can mean this - but not when applied to God
 - c. The entire point of the Sermon on the Mount is not to reduce the law of God, but to show the perfection it demands
 - d. Includes outward actions & inner desires & motives
 - e. We are to be perfect AS GOD is PERFECT
2. God is perfect - and we were created in His image!
 - a. We were made to be like God - and He is PERFECT
 - b. God is not requiring us to be infinite, eternal, Sovereign, etc - because as creatures we can not be those things

- c. But He made us to be like Him in character - and demands it of us!

B. God demands perfect holiness, love, and integrity

Question 7:

What is God's character like?

God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Question 8:

What does God demand of you?

God demands that I be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

1. God demands that I be perfect in holiness - like Him
Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: **'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'** Leviticus 19:2

But **just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;** ¹⁶ **for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."** 1 Peter 1:15-16

- a. To be holy means that we desire and act in a way that is just, righteous, good, pure, abhorring and set against all sin
 - b. This command is central in the holiness code
 - c. God is holy, and He demands that His image bearers be like Him - perfect in holiness
2. God demands that I be perfect in love - like Him
But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ **Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.** Luke 6:35-36

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1–2

- a. To be loving means that we desire and act in a way that is kind, merciful, gracious, compassionate, and forgiving of others sin.
- b. Because God is loving, we are to be loving
- c. Remember this is part of the two greatest commands - love God and our neighbor
- d. Also note that our love is linked to God's love - we love as God loves and because God loves us.
- e. God is love, and He demands that His image bearers be like Him - perfect in love.

3. God demands that I be perfect in integrity - like Him
Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. Leviticus 19:11

No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence. Psalm 101:7

- a. To be perfect in integrity means that that our words and actions are true, faithful, without falsehood or lying, that we keep our promises, and that we do not change.
- b. Because God is a God of integrity, we are to be people of integrity.
- c. Satan is called the father of lies; to speak or act in a manner that is deceitful or lacks integrity is to walk in the image of Satan, not God.
- d. Those who do not walk in integrity will not dwell with God or come into His Presence.

e. God is Perfect in integrity, and He commands His image bearers to be like Him.

C. Conclusion: what God demands of us

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? ² He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart ³ and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, ⁴ who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, ⁵ who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken. Psalm 15

1. Who can come before God and worship? The blameless - holy (righteous), love (does neighbor no wrong), integrity (truth)
2. This is what God demands of us!

III. Law and Gospel: What God Demands and Gives

A. The Law shows what God demands - perfection!

1. God has revealed what He demands - absolute perfection!
2. This can not be changed because it flows from the very character of God
3. Because God is perfect in holiness, love, and integrity He demands this of us.
4. Because we were made in the image of God we were to be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.
5. God's nature, His creation, His law, and our very nature all demand that we walk in perfect holiness, love, and integrity.

B. The problem - we are NOT perfect in holiness, love and integrity!

1. Any human who thinks they meet this demand is severely deluded!
2. We are therefore tempted to change the very character of God to save ourselves
 - a. We change God's character so that He is not holy, we redefine His love, and we say that He has changed - but all of this is false!
 - b. We redefine the demand from perfection to 'good enough' or 'close enough for government work'
 - c. But Jesus came and cut through all of that, demanding perfection not only in outward action but in inward desire!
 - d. He summarizes this by saying "be perfect as God is perfect"

C. Where can we find hope? Only in the Gospel of Christ!

1. The law does not give us hope - it condemns us!
Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3:19–20
 - a. The Law thunders and silences us - we have no excuse and no hope in the law
 - b. We will not be justified or declared righteous and innocent by the Law.
 - c. The Law simply diagnoses our problem: sin

2. The Gospel comes and gives us hope and salvation
But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:21–24

- a. We get the righteousness we need FROM God, not ourselves
- b. This is ALWAYS what the Old Testament pointed to - never salvation by works but by faith in the Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ!
- c. We receive this righteousness not by our efforts but simply by faith.
- d. Through Jesus we are justified - declared fully righteous as if we had never sinned and as if we had positively obeyed the Law
- e. This is true because Jesus did it in our place - and gave it to us!
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. ² Corinthians 5:21

D. What God has demanded, He has given to us in Jesus Christ - perfect holiness, love, and integrity! This is the Gospel!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Have I heard God's demand and let it do its work?
1. We are tempted to alter and reduce God's demand
 2. This is the path to destruction, not salvation

3. If we have heard God's Law thundering His demands, we will be silent
 4. Do I see that God DEMANDS perfection?
 5. Do I see that I must be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity?
 6. Have I admitted that I fall FAR short of this in desires, thoughts, words, and actions?
 7. Have I despaired of justifying myself before God?
- B. Have I received God's gift of perfect holiness, love, and integrity through the Gospel of Christ?
1. This is the Gospel - we are counted perfect in holiness, love, and integrity because Christ is and He has given His perfection to us!
 2. What God demands in the Law, He has given in the Gospel!
 3. When you despair because of sin, look to Christ!
- C. The Table of Provision
1. This Table is a visible representation of God's Law and Gospel - His demand and provision in Christ
 2. Come confess His demand, your failure and receive His provision

The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

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Communion

Numbers 6:24–26

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