**The Pursuit of Perfection**

It was two months after my wedding and I can still feel the sinking feeling of my heart as I clicked through image after image from the big day. Pictures of family, bridesmaids, groomsmen and wedding guests scrolled across the screen as I became more and more disappointed.

Now, don’t get me wrong, there were some beautiful images that were captured that day. But, the fact that our photographer was battling a nasty sickness on the day of our wedding (bless his soul for still coming to capture the day), and topping that off with an unseasonable 110-degree day in *September* did not make for the best photos. Bridesmaids were miserable in their long, black dresses. We were racing the clock and being pulled in ten different directions. I didn’t fall in love with a single image of myself in my dress. This was supposed to be the perfect day! Of course I wanted those precious moments to be captured flawlessly.

Welcome to the world of *perfectionism*. Anyone that has scrolled through my album entitled ***“The Best Day Ever”*** on Facebook would probably tell you that I’m crazy. In fact, I hear this all the time from my family, friends and my husband. But, in my constant pursuit of perfection, I loathed them all.

There are so many things that I used to dwell on and *regret* about my wedding day. The ceremony, reception, and decoration itself was more than I could have asked for. My parents and wedding coordinators did an outstanding job. But…. then there was the fact that my wedding dress didn’t fit me right at all on the big day. I lost close to 20 pounds before my wedding, and my chest seemed to take the brunt of it. I was pulling up on my strapless dress all day. How frustrating. I don’t remember spending any time at all with friends out on the dance floor that night. I was too worried about getting around to make sure everyone else was having a good time. ARGH. These thoughts continued to fill my head until it made me sick. Long story short: maybe if I wasn’t so focused on losing weight to have the “perfect body” for the wedding, my dress would have fit “perfectly”! UGH. See where I’m going here?!

Perfectionism is a tough thing. All of my life I have grown up in pursuit of perfection, and it is not fun. I have spent countless hours writing and rewriting thank you letters to potential employers because my handwriting was a little crooked. I used to go to the hair salon every three weeks because the sight of my dark roots coming through drove me nuts. One chip in my nail polish, and it’s all coming off!

It wasn’t until a couple of months ago during a devotional that I realized, Jesus did not take my place on the cross in hopes that I would be in a constant state of worry and perfectionism, let alone the fact that it is *humanly impossible* to be perfect.

Jesus reminds us in 2 Corinthians: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor 5:21).

How cool is that?! We essentially received the perfection of Jesus when he took up OUR sin on the cross. Now, don’t get me wrong- we are still called to be “Christ-like”. But, I think we should know the difference between living life in a constant state of striving for perfectionism, and living in a Christ-like manner to bring others to know Jesus.

Did you know? The Greek word for “perfect” = “teleios”. In the old testament, the word perfect is originally presented as completed, or finished. Even though Jesus knew that no one would ever achieve being perfect in our human lives, He emphasizes having maturity and full completion in our faith.

So, Jesus would rather me seek His kingdom above all!?... YES! Remember a special certain verse from Matthew?

“[31](http://biblehub.com/matthew/6-31.htm)“Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’[32](http://biblehub.com/matthew/6-32.htm)“For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. [33](http://biblehub.com/matthew/6-33.htm)“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matt 6:31)

Maybe for you, it’s the pursuit of a perfect body, to be the perfect mom, to have a perfect marriage, or the perfect kids. There are many ways in which “perfectionism” can creep up in your life and lead to other things like depression, anxiety and self-doubt.

Be encouraged that no one but the Father is or ever will be perfect. Find peace and comfort in that He already took our place on the cross so we don’t have to strive for perfection anymore - and look forward to eternal life where we won’t know anything *but* the perfect Kingdom that He has already prepared for us. As for our earthly lives, He will provide and give us everything *we truly need*.

At the end of the day- I’m still married to my best friend, my soul mate. There is nothing more “perfect” that that! <3

***“Perfection will only come on the day of our death or at Christ’s return, whichever comes first. The same idea applies here.  It’s not perfection that Jesus is asking for but its completion; completion of the duty to love God above everything and everyone and to love others. “***

 ***– JACK WELLMAN***

*---Haley Duckworth is the creator and contributor of The Beloved Bride, an encouraging new lifestyle blog focused primarily on empowering others and sharing the Good News of Jesus. Haley is the Community Engagement Director at a Christian nonprofit in Evansville, Indiana. She is a newlywed and enjoys spending time with her husband, and their three fur babies.*

*Instagram: @thebelovedbride*

*Facebook:* [*https://www.facebook.com/thebelovedbride*](https://www.facebook.com/thebelovedbride)