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## Imperfection Makes Perfect

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Written on: October 26, 2006

Right away I can tell that many of you are most likely intrigued and equally confused by the title of this article and that's okay. Just take that confusion and set it aside for a moment and think about this... Do you desire perfection? Perhaps not total perfection (although it would be nice), but maybe perfection in a specific area? Conquering a lingering temptation? Lust? Anger? Whatever it is, that's fine as long as you are honest with yourself; there is going to be a lot of self-evaluation in this article.

Now answer this question, when you fail, do you "beat yourself up" about it? Do you tell yourself in your mind that you are worthless or a loser and that you will [not only] never conquer the issue but that you will never amount to anything at all? If you answered yes, it's time for a change... partly because by speaking those words about yourself you are setting yourself up for failure, and partly because your mind is in the wrong place to begin with.

You've probably heard it said before in movies or what have you that "the battle is yours, but the war is far from over". Well, it's the same with conquering whatever you desire to conquer and instead of looking at each failure as the end of the war, simply chalk it up to experience and move forward. As long as you still draw breath on this earth, the war is not over, and you can still fight back.

### Falling to rise

A man was once learning to ice-skate. He was taking group lessons in the morning and then had a block of time reserved at night for free skating where he could experiment all he wanted. A few days went by and he ran into his skating instructor at a local restaurant. His skating instructor asked him "how are your lessons going?" to which he replied "fine." Then his instructor asked him: "How many times did you fall during your free skating?" The man excitedly replied "None!" To the man's surprise the instructor frowned and said "That's a real shame... I thought you would try harder."

You see, the instructor understood the value of stretching the man's limits. If the man learning to skate had actually pushed himself beyond his perceived limits, he would certainly have fallen at least a few times. Then if he was the man of character we all hope him to be, he would've brushed himself off and continued trying, and every single time he got back up he would be slightly better at skating than before.

What I want you to take from this story is that you need not see your perceived failures and losses, but instead see them as opportunities for advancement; because in actuality

that is exactly what they are. It is the enemy that tries to convince you that you are worthless. It is the enemy that tries to tell you that you have already lost, and it is the enemy that the Bible identifies as a liar. Do not forget that.

### **Purified by fire**

Once several years ago a lady went to visit a famous silversmith. She watched as he stuck the silver into the fire and waited. As they were waiting he explained how the intense heat of the fire purifies the silver but that if he leaves it in too long the silver would be ruined. Looking somewhat perplexed the woman asked the silversmith “How do you know when to remove the silver from the fire?” The silversmith smiled and replied “When I can see my reflection in the silver.”

The Bible explains in Ephesians 2:10 that we are “God’s workmanship”; and in Zachariah 13:9, God explains how we are *purified by fire*. Sometimes the hardships, tests and trials that we encounter are meant to remove our impurities so that God can see the reflection of Jesus in us.

There are plenty of examples where struggles are required for growth...when a baby is learning how to walk, it inevitably stumbles a few times, but that hardship is necessary for growth.

A caterpillar has to struggle and fight its way out of the cocoon when it transforms into a butterfly. Without the long struggle it would not have enough wing strength to fly and it would fall to the ground.

It is the same with us. Our struggles may seem insurmountable, unfair, and never-ending, but none of that is true, it is simply our perceptions that must change. We must remember that God is not a God who takes pleasure in our suffering, but like a good parent sometimes will let us experience things for our benefit – even if we can not see it at the present time.

It’s never fun to watch a child fall when learning how to ride a bicycle, but it is a necessity for the child to eventually leave behind the training-wheels.

### **Conclusion**

At the start of this article I said that there would be a lot of self-evaluation... well here it comes: I would challenge you to evaluate your own situation and your perceptions. Have you been struggling with a situation and been utterly depressed and feeling defeated when you fall? Change your perception. Instead of viewing your problems as an impassable wall, view them as doorways for improvement.

Have you been angry at God for the problems in your life? Change your perception and realize that maybe you are being prepared for something in your future that you can not see yet. In my own life I can tell you that I went a lot of hardships to prepare me for

where I am now; and at the time I couldn't understand why. I prayed and complained to God every night and asked the age old question "why me?". But now I understand and the life experienced gained from those troubles has served me very well time and time again.

God has not abandoned you. Remember that He never promised life would be all perfect and free of problems. He did promise, however, to stay with you through the problems, and to never give you more than you can handle, and that *all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purpose.* (Romans 8:28).

So I challenge you today to change your perceptions and realize that God has a divine plan and purpose for your life. I challenge you to change your thinking to understand that sometimes the struggles we face are meant to make; us stronger and that we are sometimes purified in God's holy fire so that we may reflect the glory of our Heavenly Father.

May this knowledge aid you in so that you may Rise to the Challenge!

James