

Chasing Perfection

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Life does not promise a steady stream of positive experiences, an ever-improving situation, or a constant sense of comfort and peace. Indeed, to suggest such a thing is laughable. And yet the critique offered by many in their youth arises from just such a utopian vision of this world. As a result, youthful vigor chases that elusive perfection in whatever form current worldly wisdom can project. Sometimes it appears in political circles masquerading under the guise of hope. Sometimes men present it as a falsified version of Christianity. Sometimes people give up on the idea of perfection and accept with nihilistic defeat the problems of the world as if they are the ideal. But David, who experienced far more ups and downs in life than most could ever imagine, never wavered in his passion for the perfect, because He recognized its existence in the character of God. Therefore, after decades reigning as king over Israel, David could pen the words of Psalm 145 with a heart for God rooted not only in youthful hope, but in mature experience, and thus declare God, his King. This we also should do—after steady reflection and years of contemplation—so we can see God as He truly is, and thereby understand ourselves.

Our God sits on His throne in heaven, but we must regularly bow before Him and consider His majesty to remind ourselves of His authority and power. More than that, such reflections should swell our hearts with enough thanksgiving to last a lifetime and pour over into eternity (Psa. 145:1). Yet, rather than storing up thankfulness, which is all too soon forgotten, we should cry out daily to the LORD to acknowledge what He has given, building up an appreciation that motivates and increases our praise (Psa. 145:2). The LORD's greatness is unsurpassed; no one even approaches it. Therefore, the worship we offer does not exalt Him beyond measure; it only acknowledges to a small degree the extent of His true glory (Psa. 145:3). Passing this sense of awe on to the next generation becomes our responsibility (Psa. 145:4). Therefore, it is essential to take the time to stop and reflect on who God is and what God has done (Psa. 145:5), to then speak what we have learned boldly (Psa. 145:6), and then commit these reflections to memory so that they might stir up our hearts to worship regularly (Psa. 145:7).

When the LORD passed before Moses and gave the Law the second time, He described Himself (Ex. 34:6). That description still applied, hundreds of years later when David wrote, and it remains true today. The LORD's character has neither changed nor diminished, nor will it. Thus, all that He reveals of Himself provides a glimpse into eternity and beckons His people to follow. The LORD wants to favor us because He cares about us. His patience and longsuffering, made necessary and obvious by our sin, demonstrate the depth of His mercy. He offers good and pleasant things to His creation because all of His creation matters greatly to Him (Psa. 145:8-9). He has proved this time and time again by what He has done (Psa. 145:10), eliciting praise and appreciation for what He has made possible, but most of all for His kingdom (Psa. 145:11-12). That King David spoke in terms of God's kingdom rather than his own bears witness to David's faith in God's promises. For the true glory of the kingdom depends upon the LORD's reign, ultimately fulfilled in every way by the coming of the Messiah (Psa. 145:13; 2 Sam. 7:14). Appreciating the greatness of God begins with humility built upon the recognition of our need (Psa. 145:14). It grows into expectation and reliance on God's providence for what we have and enjoy in life (Psa. 145:15-16). It matures in recognizing justice in the LORD's will and kindness in all He does (Psa. 145:17). And all of this God does to draw us near to Him, so that we trust Him and place ourselves under His care by submitting to Him and His will (Psa. 145:18; Jas. 4:8; Rom. 10:13; Acts 22:16). Our God wants to save; He listens and watches for the opportunity to

do so, to see if people will do His will and follow Him (Psa. 145:19). But judgment will ultimately come, and the distinction between those who have acknowledged the greatness of the LORD, have submitted to Him, and have become His people and those who have neglected their opportunity will become evident in the preservation of the righteous in the presence of God and the destruction of the wicked who acted as if they did not need Him (Psa. 145:20). Our God does not require perfection of us—only faithfulness (Rev. 2:10). But this is possible because He is indeed perfect, and therefore worthy. Let us then also say with David, “My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, And all flesh shall bless His holy name Forever and ever” (Psa. 145:21).