

THREE STAGES OF PERFECTION / *Philippians 3:1*

- Perfect Relationship We are perfect because of our eternal union with the infinitely perfect Christ. When we become his children, we are declared “not guilty” and thus righteous because of what Christ, God’s beloved Son, has done for us. This perfection is absolute and unchangeable, and it is this perfect relationship that guarantees that we will one day be “completely perfect” (below). See Colossians 2:8-10; Hebrews 10:8-14.
- Perfect Progress We can grow and mature spiritually as we continue to trust Christ, learn more about him, draw closer to him, and obey him. Our progress is changeable (in contrast to our relationship, above) because it depends on our daily walk—at times in life we mature more than at other times. But we are growing toward perfection if we “keep working” (Philippians 3:12). These good deeds do not perfect us; rather, as God perfects us, we do good deeds for him. See Philippians 3:1-15.
- Completely Perfect When Christ returns to take us into his eternal Kingdom, we will be glorified and made completely perfect. See Philippians 3:20-21.
- All phases of perfection are grounded in faith in Christ and what he has done, not what we can do for him. We cannot perfect ourselves; only God can work in and through us to “continue his work until it is finally finished on that day Christ Jesus comes back again” (1:6).