

Lifelines

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Topic: Waiting for Perfection is Fruitless

Waiting for Perfection By Dr. Ed Jordan © 2026

Have you ever waited so long for everything to be perfect that you missed the opportunities for something great? Many years ago in a church I served, a young person was hired to spend the summer going door to door in neighborhoods close by, seeking to meet people who might respond positively to an invitation to visit our church. However, like many young people, he was very concerned about how he looked, and didn't want his hair messed up by the wind when meeting someone new at the door. Problematic to be sure, because the wind blew every summer day in our city. So when asked about why he wasn't out knocking on doors, the answer was "I can't go visit strangers on windy days because it messes up my hair!" I shared Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT) with this person, which states: "Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest." Needless to say, the door-knocking project didn't work out.

Look around, and you'll find that in every group of people there are some who use the imperfection of the day or moment, as an excuse to not do anything at all. Our culture has migrated from the generation that felt invincible and whose motto was: "If you want something done right, you must do it yourself" to generations who won't do anything unless all the factors regarding accomplishing it, are perfect. Since very few scenarios or situations are perfect, this predisposition doesn't lead to success.

While this seems extreme, this attitude is prevalent today. If everything must be perfect before you will accept a job, you will be unemployed forever. If every work project must be a perfect fit for you, you will never try. You will never accomplish a goal, if the result must be flawless. The delusion of perfectionism leaves one: lonely because a perfect person to date will never be found; in poverty because there is no perfect job, and if you find it and take the job you will not carry out everything perfectly; empty and frustrated because no result is perfect. Nothing that any of us does can reach the level of perfection.

Years ago, a popular song came out, sung by John Mayer, with the line: "Waiting ... waiting for the world to change." I really liked the tune, and the lyrics were rhythmic, and the song was really well done. Truth is, that each of us, as a part of sinful humanity, have contributed to the need for the world to change. God created the world perfect; mankind rebelled against God. His perfect world became imperfect, and humans became dysfunctional. So in the song, the solution is illusive. It does not call on the listener to actually implement change, and you can't make the world change by sitting around waiting for it.

Generally we humans don't expect that we personally can do enough to change the world into a better place. We just hold up perfectionism as some mystic elusive goal. Perfectionism cannot be created by sinful humanity. So perfectionism is the enemy of improvement. But does that mean we just quit? No. The world gets better, and gets moving toward goodness (not perfectionism), one person at a time, and through one action at a time.

There is a story that depicts a man running along a beach, occasionally stopping to pick up a starfish and throw it back into the sea so it wouldn't die. An observer chided the person, saying he

could not possibly save enough starfish to make a difference. Whereupon the man picked up another starfish, threw it back into the water, looked at the critic, and said: "It made a difference for that one!"

We can make our world better with every life that is changed by the power of God, by each time we share the gospel truth about Jesus with others. Every kind word spoken, every encouragement given, every person valued or forgiven, every demonstration of the love of Jesus embodied in our personal relationships, moves the world one step closer to God's original perfect prototype. We will not achieve perfection until Jesus transforms us at His return. But in the meantime we can each contribute to making the world a better place, word by word, smile by smile, and kindness by kindness, making a difference for one person at a time.

Waiting for perfection just leaves us waiting. Demonstrating God's love changes the world in some small way, action by action. Don't wait for perfection to arrive; do something to help people experience Jesus today, for only God is perfect. Just make a difference for someone today!

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