

Heart to Heart

Week Two — “I’m Fine!” and Other Lies We Tell in Church;
Dealing with the Perfectionism Syndrome

Hebrews 3:10,12,13

Tell your children that you’re not perfect. Let them know early on you are not God!

Each generation *ought* to improve on how the last generation did life.

Psalm 18:30; Jeremiah 9:23, 24

syndrome: a predictable pattern of behavior that typically occurs under certain circumstances

Why we get caught up in the perfection syndrome?

1. Religion/ Wrong Thinking

Ephesians 2:4-10; Psalm 19:7-11

2. Judgment

II Corinthians 4:16-18

3. Performance-based

I John 4:15-19

4. Self Absorption/Pride

Romans 12:2, 3

5. Comparisons

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Heart-to-Heart Pledge:

“I promise to be myself and nothing but myself so help me God.”

Romans 8:1

Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perform (perfect) it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Matthew 5:48 "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

I Corinthians 4:7-10, John 16:13

John 8:31, 32 "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 14:16,17

Luke 3:16; I John 5:6; II Corinthians 3:17

Acts 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

John 14:26 AVB "... the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you."

Jeremiah 29:4-14 (read in the Amplified Bible www.biblegateway.com), I Corinthians 6:19, 20; Ephesians 1:13 & 4:30; Titus 3:4-8

What can you do to help your children deal with perfectionism?

by Juliana Semeniuk, Psychologist, Toronto, Canada

1. **Teach them positive self-talk.** Teach your child to calm themselves using reassuring comments, such as, "I'd like to get a perfect score, but it isn't the end of the world if I don't"; "It's OK to make mistakes, since everybody does"; "I can do my best without having to be perfect"; "Mom and dad will still love me even if I mess up."
2. **Resist the temptation to let your child check and re-check his work multiple times.**
3. **Point out the many worries that do not come true.** "You worry that mommy will get hurt, but I come home every day from work and I am fine"; "You worry that I will get really mad at you if you don't get a perfect score. But guess what? Daddy's not upset with you."
4. **Point out areas of your child's life where she is not a perfectionist** (e.g., playing games), and that she seems to enjoy those activities: "I noticed you just had fun playing your game with your friend and were not trying to make everything perfect. If you don't try to be perfect at school, you might enjoy it more and worry less about it."
5. **Share with your child times when you made mistakes, and it was no big deal.** With a highly perfectionist child, you might want to purposely spill a glass of water, so you can demonstrate it's "no big deal."
6. **Parents, whatever you do, remember to praise your child's overall performance and don't criticize small details.** Do not use language which constantly conveys a sense of urgency ("Hurry up!"), sharp criticism ("I'm very disappointed in you!"), or fault-finding ("You spelled 2 words wrong on your French test"). This will only serve to worsen your child's degree of perfectionism. Finally, *remember to ease up on yourself when you make a common mistake.* Your child hears what you say, and will learn from your reaction what is OK and not OK.