The Christian and Perfection
Phil 3:12-15

Introduction:
A. Class teacher said “Only one perfect man ever lived”
B. “Perfect” in two senses (vv. 12, 15)
   1. Relative: Complete in its parts – whole – mature (v. 15; cf. Matt. 5:48)
   2. Absolute: Without fault or blemish – like mostly used today (v. 12; cf. Jas. 1:25)
C. Three attitudes toward perfection found among Christians:

Discussion
I. “Mission Impossible” – Forget It!
   A. So, no need of trying for it? – wrong (v. 13).
   C. So, console self with “nobody is perfect” or “I can’t be perfect.”
      1. Gives us excuse to hang on to a beloved sinful or harmful habit.
      2. Gives us excuse to neglect critical duties.

II. Close Enough – Coast In!
   A. Set goal short of perfection – reach goal and coast.
   B. Become satisfied with certain level of growth and stop.
      1. Cease efforts to learn.
      2. Cease efforts to correct (cf. Jas. 1:25)
      3. Cease efforts to improve character (cf. 2 Pet. 1:5-11)
      4. Cease efforts to improve skills and develop new ones (Heb. 5:12-14)

III. Never Reaching It – Always Reaching for It.
   A. Paul had not reached it, but was always reaching for it (Phil. 3:12-14)
   B. “God does not require perfection, but does require faithfulness.”
      1. Faithfulness requires reaching for perfection.
      2. Both babes and mature in the faith can and must “go on unto perfection.” (Heb. 6:1)
      3. Will not be lost for not being perfect, but for not wanting and trying to be perfect.
   C. Our’s is a life of refining and perfecting.
      1. Our faith (2 Thess. 1:3).
         a. By studying the source of faith (Rom. 10:17).
         b. By profiting from adversity (Jas. 2:1-4)
      2. Our knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18)
      3. Our holiness (2 Cor. 7:1).
      4. Our abilities (Heb. 5:12-14)
      5. Our positions and dispositions (Eph. 4:2,31,32; Col. 4:6; Jas 3:13-18; Tit. 3:3)
   D. Sincerely reaching for perfection but unable to attain it makes us depend on the Lord more.
      1. For help (Heb. 4:16)
      2. For strength (Phil. 4:13)
      3. For forgiveness (1 John 1:8-2:1)

Conclusion:
A. Let us not forget nor coast – but let us always work toward perfection.
B. Let us not become frustrated at failure to reach perfection, but turn to God’s grace to fill in the gap.