

Get on the Path: The Way to Perfection

(From an address by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "The Probationary Test of Mortality." delivered at the University of Utah Jan. 10, 1982)

We don't need to get a complex or get a feeling that you have to be perfect to be saved. You don't. There's only been one perfect person, and that's the Lord Jesus, but in order to be saved in the Kingdom of God and in order to pass the test of mortality, what you have to do is get on the straight and narrow path – thus charting a course leading to eternal life – and then, being on that path, pass out of this life in full fellowship. I'm not saying that you don't have to keep the commandments. I'm saying you don't have to be perfect to be saved. If you did, no one would be saved.

The way it operates is this: You get on the path that's named the "straight and narrow." You do it by entering the gate of repentance and baptism. The straight and narrow path leads from the gate of repentance and baptism, a very great distance, to a reward that's called eternal life. If you're on that path and pressing forward, and you die, you'll never get off the path.

There is no such thing as falling off the straight and narrow path in the life to come, and the reason is that this life is the time that is given to men to prepare for eternity. Now is the time and the day of your salvation, so if you're working zealously in this life – though you haven't fully overcome the world and you haven't done all you hoped you might do – you're still going to be saved. You don't have to do what Jacob said, "Go beyond the mark." You don't have to live a life that's truer than true. You don't have to have an excessive zeal that becomes fanatical and becomes unbalancing.

What you have to do is stay in the mainstream of the Church and live as upright and decent people live in the Church – keeping the commandments, paying your tithing, serving in the organizations of the Church, loving the Lord, staying on the straight and narrow path. If you're on that path when death comes – because this is the time and the day appointed, this is the probationary estate – you'll never fall off from it, and, for all practical purposes, your calling and election is made sure.