

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Story Behind One Perfect Life

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*(The following is an excerpt from a letter John MacArthur recently sent to the Grace to You ministry family about his new book, **One Perfect Life**. We thought you'd enjoy learning a little more about this new resource and how it can spiritually benefit you and your family.)*

In a sense, *One Perfect Life* has been in the works for more than four decades. It's unlike anything you've seen, and I believe you're going to find it as valuable and enriching a devotional tool as any you've used. Allow me to give you some background on the book and why you'll want to read it.

In June of 2011, I finished preaching through the New Testament. That verse-by-verse study spanned forty-two years and produced several thousand sermons. While I preached those messages to the congregation of Grace Community Church, they went much further and wider than our Southern California church. Through Grace to You we've distributed them to every corner of the globe through tapes, CDs, radio, television, and the Internet.

Over those years, no matter what the Bible passage in question, virtually every sermon has been about one Person: The Lord Jesus Christ. The story of the Bible is ultimately the story of the revelation of Jesus Christ. For me, the predominant joy of pastoral ministry has never been the studying, the preparation, or even the preaching. The joy has been in the hours, year after year, of being brought face to face with Jesus as He is revealed in Scripture.

And of course the Person and work of the Lord Jesus is seen most clearly in the gospels. The Holy Spirit-inspired quartet of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is the pinnacle of Scripture because in it, the Lord Jesus Christ is most perfectly revealed and God most clearly manifest. Nothing comes close to the rich reward of understanding the truth and glory of His matchless life.

Fittingly, our congregation has spent more than half of the past forty years focused on the gospels. Because each writer emphasized different themes from Jesus' life, what has unfolded is a profound, powerful composite picture of the Son of God and Son of Man. On the independent testimony of those four witnesses, God established the indisputable revelation of His Son, Jesus Christ. That composite picture has transformed our church.

Yet even though the gospels offer perfectly consistent and complimentary accounts of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of our Lord, they are still four books from four authors. And that's how most people read them and think about them—as four books. As a result, we often fail to see the

cohesiveness of the story and miss the significance of what's happening in a given account.

In response, many Christian scholars have tried to harmonize the story, and traditionally that has meant simply printing the gospels side by side in four columns: One for Matthew, one for Mark, one for Luke, and one for John. The idea is that by jumping back and forth, you can follow the account in each gospel and piece together the narrative.

But that approach falls short. In that format, you still miss how the stories perfectly fit together without contradictions. You also miss the beautiful sweep of what is the one and only divinely inspired biography of Jesus.

I've long wanted to address that limitation by taking the Scripture texts out of columns and weaving them into one, seamless story. That's what *One Perfect Life* does. It takes the four gospels and blends them into one text so you're reading one story, with every component of the life of Christ placed at the point it belongs.

Like *The MacArthur Study Bible*, *One Perfect Life* is built around the text of Scripture and includes explanatory footnotes on every page. Of course the biblical text is inspired by God without error. The harmonization I've done—the interpretive work that makes this resource unique—is the product of twenty-five years of studying the gospels, seeing how they most likely fit together, bringing in other relevant Old and New Testament passages, then testing them against each other. It was a challenging process I could not have done any earlier in my ministry.

What is the benefit you'll find in *One Perfect Life*? It enables you to read the story of Jesus in a way you've never done before. It brings a freshness and a richness, showing you the magnificent consistency and fullness of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ—past, present, and future—in one narrative.

I know this will be an encouraging, intriguing book for you and your family, as you grow in the knowledge and grace of Him who lived “one perfect life,” the Lord Jesus Christ.

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