O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing: Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

LOOK

According to wikipedia, "perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting excessively high performance standards, accompanied by overly critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. It is best conceptualized as a multidimensional characteristic, as psychologists agree that there are many positive and negative aspects."

1. You may be or know someone who is a perfectionist. What are the positive and negative aspects of this character trait?

2. How might the desire to be perfect affect our spiritual lives? How does God deal with our very real imperfections?

BOOK

Matthew 5:38-48 We are digging deep into the heart of Jesus' sermon on the mount!

1. And you thought the law was hard to keep! How does Jesus up the ante?

2. What does it say about God that he makes the sun rise on both the evil and the good?

3. "Perfect" is a loaded word for us. Some translations substitute the words "be compassionate" or "be unstinting in your generosity" instead of "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". What word(s) would you substitute for "perfect" to help you understand what Jesus is really asking of us?

TOOK

Perfect doesn't mean without sin. If that were the definition then Jesus is asking the impossible of us. Since creation, God has been using imperfect servants to accomplish his perfect purposes.

1. What imperfection do you have that can actually *help* you do God's work in the world?

2. Praise be to God that he loves us unconditionally! Who needs that kind of love this week? How will you share it?