



Elementary Principles of Messiah, Part 19
Moving on to Completion
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{Title slide} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. — — Well, here we are, Part 19 of our sermon series on the “Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua.” When I started researching Scripture and the needed content for this series, I thought we were going to finish in 12 messages, but the LORD wanted me to keep going into more and more depth, and so that’s what we’ve done. I could probably keep talking about each of these elementary principles for the rest of my life, but perhaps that would be counterproductive, particularly considering the underlying message of our theme passage in Hebrews 6:1-2, which explains that we’re meant to move on from the basic concepts of Messiah and develop a more mature faith. My hope is that I’ve given you a comprehensive study of the “Elementary Principles of Messiah” at a basic level, if that makes sense, and I’ve done this intentionally so that you can stand on the solid ground of good doctrine as followers of Yeshua, particularly as you mature in your faith. With that, I’ve called today’s message “Moving on to Completion,” and perhaps you thought this simply meant I was going to wrap things up in the series today before we move on to what’s next. That much is true, but the title has so much more meaning than something so transient, and so the idea of “moving on to completion” is what we’re going to cover today as we wrap up the series.

{New slide} Now, if we are truly walking in the faith of Messiah Yeshua, maturing as believers and becoming more like the King, trials and tribulations are coming for each and every one of us in this life, just as He warned us. Yeshua said this in John 16:33 (b): “In the world you will have tribulation.” This statement expresses a certain thing. We will have tribulation in this life! Life as a Christian will not all be blessings—at least, not from a worldly perspective. We have to learn to experience God’s eternal blessing in the midst of our struggles in this world so that we can be sanctified by the Holy Spirit and prepared for life everlasting. When we have complete faith in Yeshua, without doubting, we can have peace in tribulation and we can trust God through our trials, waiting on Him for His certain blessing, but we have to understand that His blessings

come only at His appointed time. We have to wait on the LORD. Yeshua said, “be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” This is a promise of God that we must hold on to, especially when the world is pulling us away from the things we cannot perceive with our senses. When life’s many troubles take our eyes off eternity and make us think we can move through this life with our own strength or the promises of this world, we have to hold fast. We have to master the basic principles of the faith so that we do not fall away from Yeshua when life gets difficult. In saying this, I don’t mean we can rest on our understanding of the elementary principles alone—because “knowledge puffs up, but love edifies;” we also have to practice our faith with discernment and teach it to others by word and deed, and our application of righteousness helps us strengthen our relationship with God and endure through hardship. The foundations of the Gospel and God’s commandments have to be second nature for us, written on our hearts. If we don’t have the basics down—if we aren’t 100 percent sold out for the LORD in every way shape or form—if we don’t truly fear God and trust Yeshua more than anything else—, we risk being taken out by the enemy. It is for this reason that we need to mature beyond the basic principles of Yeshua—why we have to “go on to perfection.” Because we are going to face trials and tribulations in this life as Christians, and because we are going to watch our brothers and sisters we care about go through major struggles and fall away, and because we’re going to struggle when we experience these things, I want to share a prayer the Apostle Paul offered in Ephesians 3:13-19, and extend the same prayer for you and for me today. We read: “I bow my knees to the Father of our LORD Messiah Yeshua, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Messiah which [sur]passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” This is a prayer for you and me, that we will mature in our faith—that we will move on to completion—that we will go on to perfection—that we will endure until the end—so that when Yeshua returns, He will bring us into His Kingdom. As John wrote in Revelation 14:12, according to the English Standard Version, “Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Yeshua.” We are called to move on to completion and endure in this higher calling of God.

{New slide} When we look closely at the key passage we’ve been studying throughout this series; namely, Hebrews 6:1-2, we can see that “moving on to completion” is a key concept the writer of Hebrews is communicating to the followers of Yeshua. In the New

King James Version of the Scriptures, the concept is worded a little differently. We read: "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Messiah, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." In this instance, the concept is worded, "let us go on to perfection." Before we further explore what this means, the first thing I want you to see here is that "going on to perfection" or "moving on to completion" is something we ought to do after we lay the foundation, which is the elementary principles of Messiah Yeshua. In this series, we've studied the six concepts that new believers in Messiah Yeshua must both understand and practice, and I've shown you how they are all interrelated. First, we hear the Gospel of Messiah Yeshua; that He is God who came in the flesh and gave His life in the flesh for the atonement of our sins, rising from the dead conquering sin and death on the third day, and we make a decision to put our faith in this Truth, which justifies our souls. We next move toward a posture of repentance, and this means that we renounce our transgressions against the law of God—that we renounce our own ideas about how to live this life—that we renounce the ways of the world and the culture all around us—, and instead we turn to walk in the Way that God has both described to us in the Holy Scriptures and shown us by His example when He walked on the Earth. Additionally, our understanding of the eternal judgment that God has promised is one of the reasons we're moved to surrender to God in this way. We understand that God is holy, just and good, and that He is faithful toward those who trust and obey Him, but He will also be faithful in His promise to utterly destroy those who oppose or rebel against His goodness. We understand that there is a day coming when Yeshua will return to resurrect the dead and catch up all who are still living together, all at once (1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15). There won't be a single soul from all of history that won't face God's judgment at that time. Some, who have "done good," will be resurrected into eternal life into "new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13b), and others "who have done evil," will be resurrected into "eternal damnation" (John 5:29). The righteous will receive new "incorruptible" bodies and dwell with God forever (1 Corinthians 15), while anyone who is corrupted by lawlessness will be consumed with fire (2 Peter 3). For this reason, we also have come to understand that we must be buried with Yeshua through baptism into the death of our flesh, so that we might rise up from the waters as Yeshua Himself rose from the dead as faithful people, cleansed from our former sins, walking in the newness of life (Romans 6:4). And when we rise up from the waters with hearts dedicated to obeying the commandments of God, because of our faith in Yeshua, we receive the Holy Spirit in a baptism by fire and by the laying on of hands in prayer. When we receive the Holy Spirit, the Most High

Himself helps us live a life dedicated to the Way of Yeshua according to the Word of God (John 14:15-18). From this point, we will have Yeshua literally dwelling “in us” as we seek to live “in Him,” which is, to live according to the Way He showed us in His law and through His life. This begins our walk along the narrow path all the way into the Kingdom of God, following Yeshua to completion.

{New slide} I’m going to finish up this series by giving you an overview of what it means to “go on to perfection.” The first thing we have to address is the meaning of this phrase and how it fits in with the other six principles, and I’ll do that first by way of prophetic metaphor. Is “moving on to completion” itself the seventh elementary principle of Messiah Yeshua? In one way it is, and in another way it isn’t. On a symbolic level, I find it fitting that “moving on to completion” is the seventh principle we’re left to ponder, and the number “seven” itself is symbolic for completion. The idea that we have to “go on to perfection” is an elementary principle, but the actual execution of moving on to completion is not—in fact, it is the whole remainder of our life of endurance in our faithfulness toward God as we mature in the faith. One way that these two concepts are married is not coincidentally related to the Seventh Day of the week, or the Last Day. We meet together as a congregation on the Seventh Day of the week, the Day that God blessed and sanctified, because in it He rested from all His work which He had created and made, as we read in Genesis Chapter 2. According to Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5 and Leviticus 23, among many other passages, God commanded His people to set aside the Sabbath Day as Holy so that we can gather together and rest together in His presence. It is the LORD’s Day—the Holy Day of the LORD—a feast day. We don’t learn about the Sabbath Day’s significance to our topic until the Holy Spirit gives us interpretation in the Apostolic writings, and so let’s turn there next.

{New slide} According to Hebrews 10:23-25, we’re not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together during God’s appointed times, for these are the times that we help one another “hold fast to the confession of our faith without wavering.” In other words, we encourage one another to endure in our faith—to move on to completion. It should be no surprise then that we’re executing this seventh principle on the seventh day. We’re also meant to “stir up one another to love and good works” and to “exhort one another,” especially as we see the Last Day approaching. Can you see how this all ties together? The type of encouragement the writer of Hebrews promotes for God’s Holy Days is what helps us to endure until the End. It’s what helps us go on to completion. Furthermore, the LORD Himself has invited each of us to this rest, and accepting His invitation helps us to build our relationship with Him. In Matthew 11, verses 28-30,

Yeshua said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” What easier obligation is there than to come in and learn from the Word of God and rest in the presence of God’s Holy Spirit as He instructs us in righteousness? For those of you who know the LORD, you know that the Sabbath isn’t an obligation at all, but rather it is a delight. It’s a pleasure. It’s one of the most wonderful gifts the LORD has given us. That’s why Yeshua also said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,” according to Mark 2:27. The Sabbath wasn’t just made for the Jews, but for all of those who follow Yeshua, to rest in the LORD, to learn from His Word, and to literally train our hearts to trust in Him and forsake the ways of the world. It is, in fact, by remembering to keep the Sabbath that God has given us that we learn how to endure until the end. After explaining that Gentiles professing their faith in Yeshua and coming into the faith ought to immediately forsake sexual immorality and unclean foods, the Apostle James noted in Acts 15:21: “Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.” In other words, we come together here on the Sabbath day, in the synagogue, a Greek word that simply means “meeting place,” to learn the law of Moses so that we can apply it to our lives. As some of you may have already experienced, when you hear the Word of God read or explained to you, the Holy Spirit convicts your heart to turn away from sin and surrender to righteousness. This is exactly what it means to “go on to perfection.” This is the process of sanctification. It is something that we continue to do from the time we first believe until the LORD comes to bring us home.

{New slide} And so, as we turn back to look at the phrase “go on to perfection” itself, understand again that it both is and isn’t a seventh elementary principle at the same time. We can understand sanctification as the next step we take after confessing our faith and surrendering to the will of God through repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands as we await the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. In this way, it ought to be our foundational understanding that this is the next step we ought to take as disciples of Yeshua. However, when we look at the manner in which Hebrews 6:1-2 is worded, it’s clear that “moving on to completion” is something we do after we have mastered the foundational principles, and in this way it is not an elementary principle but the very transition between the milk of the Word and solid food. I don’t want to consume too much more of our time on the Sabbath, but I do want to note that the Seventh Day also functions as a transition from the last day of the week to the first. Prophetically speaking, it represents the Last Day when all of God’s people will enter

the eternal Kingdom of God and all the wicked will be destroyed, and it also leads into the eternal Kingdom itself, which becomes both an “eighth day” as well as the “first day” of a new age. Not coincidentally, Yeshua Himself rose from the dead on the First Day of the Week, and the Holy Spirit was given to all who believed on Him on Pentecost (Shavuot), which always falls on the first day of the week. These major prophetic events set up the very spiritual environment by which we might move on to completion in Messiah Yeshua. When we look at the phrase itself, these layers of meaning present themselves. In Greek, the phrase reads, “...ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερώμεθα (epi tēn teleiōtēta pherōmetha),” which reads literally, “...to the maturity we should go on...” The key word here, “teleiōtēta,” translated “maturity,” has its root in the Greek word “τελειότης (teleiōtēs).” When considering the HELPS Word-studies, a resource that looks at the usage of Biblical Greek words in secular first-century texts to better understand their proper definitions, the word “teleiōtēs” means “consummation,” which then lends itself to the combination of truths or the stages of spiritual growth. This “maturity” represents a culmination of faith that also supports future consummation of faith. In other words, there is a faith that we realize upon our mastery and application of the “Elementary Principles of Messiah,” and that very elementary faith also leads to increasing growth and maturity in our relationship with God until the very end, when the LORD will return and bring us into His Kingdom.

{New slide} Paul explained this culmination that also supports future consummation represented by the word “teleiōtēs” in His letter to the Romans, Chapter 1, Verses 16-17, and you can see here that it all begins by preaching the Gospel of Messiah Yeshua. We read: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Messiah, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” If the Gospel of Messiah is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, then we ought not be ashamed of it. In fact, we ought to be so confident in the Gospel that we do not hesitate to explain it, “in season and out of season,” to all who will listen. In other words, when it’s popular to do so and when it’s unpopular to do so, regardless of the consequences. We move beyond our own adoption of the faith through the elementary principles to multiplying our faith and thereby move on toward completion of our calling. Yeshua Himself commanded us to do this, as we read in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” While we certainly ought to examine ourselves to make sure we are walking righteously with our God, we shouldn’t remain introspective

in our faith alone, but rather go out, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them about the righteousness of God, while living it out ourselves so that we are not hypocrites. We ought to take new believers through the elementary principles and then help them move beyond them in their loving embrace of the LORD so that they too understand and practice all of God's commandments, and then they ought to go out and do likewise. Moving on to perfection involves multiplying the faith of Yeshua. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:27-28, "To [the Saints] God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Messiah Yeshua." When Messiah Yeshua dwells inside us—when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in those of us who have embraced the elementary principles of Yeshua—our heart become His heart, our way becomes His ways, our hope rests completely in Him and the glory of God is multiplied by this. But we do not rest alone in our own salvation; rather, we go out to preach by warning every man about the coming judgment, teaching the wisdom of God's commandments to all who will hear and obey, and the objective of this effort is so that each of us who submit to Messiah Yeshua will be presented before God as perfect in Messiah Yeshua on the Last Day. The word "perfect" here is "τέλειον—teleion" in Greek, a derivative of "teleiôtēs" meaning perfect, mature, or complete. It is the precise objective of every Christian after we have mastered the elementary principles. This is the objective.

{New slide} In 2 Timothy 4:1-2, Paul wrote, "I charge you therefore before God and the LORD Messiah Yeshua, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching." Brothers and sisters, we have to be ready at all times for the LORD to use us for His purposes, and what does the LORD will other than that "all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:2). He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). But God has also given each of us a free will to choose His free gift of salvation or not, to choose to follow Him or not. He is a God who loves us, and therefore He will not force us to obey His will, even though He certainly has the power to do so. In His even greater love, mercy, and wisdom, He has granted each of us the choice to follow Him so that His Kingdom will be made up of willing servants that desire Him, His Ways and His Kingdom. In His everlasting wisdom, the LORD has chosen to use those who trust in Him to preach His Gospel, but not only that. He has called on us to "convince, rebuke" and "exhort" those who will listen to us "with all long-suffering" and sound doctrine so that they too will be resurrected into life at His coming. The LORD wills that

all repent and that all walk in Truth, but we must surrender to His will and convince others to do the same in order to complete our faith. In our effort to obey the Great Commission of Messiah Yeshua, it's critical to understand what Truth we ought to teach so that we can truly direct our lives according to His will. In the same letter to Timothy, Paul warns us against those who preach falsely and the damage that can come upon those who listen to them. I kid you not, just yesterday I spoke to someone who literally said to me in a voice mail message: "I don't think that what you're espousing meets my needs so I'm going to be looking elsewhere." If you know me at all, you know that I was espousing nothing other than the Word of God, and this man didn't like what God had to say about his way of doing things. This is a tragic realization of what Paul wrote in the second part of our passage from 2nd Timothy 4, verses 3-4, where we read: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the Truth, and be turned aside to fables." This is a warning to all of you. As you advance past the "Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua" and begin to "go on to perfection," there will be many voices out there seeking to discredit or distort the Word of God to turn you away toward false doctrines that lead to death. The reason for this is simple: they don't want to follow God's Word; they would rather do things their own way, and deep inside they know they're leading toward the misery and pain of death, and in their selfishness they want to bring you with them, usually without even knowing it. This mindset is a doctrine of demons, who have no hope. There will always be a false teacher out there who will seek to justify you in your sin so that you might join them in theirs. If your heart is seeking your own way, you will certainly fall victim to these "wolves in sheep's clothing," but if you remain watchful in all things and endure afflictions, as Paul wrote in verse 5, you will fulfill the ministry for which God is calling you.

{New slide} It matters not whether, like Timothy, you've been called to be an evangelist, or like Pricilla and Aquila, you're called to be teachers (Acts 18:26), or like John, you're called to be a prophet (Revelation), or whether you're called in any of the spiritual roles whatsoever that Paul explains throughout 1st Corinthians 12, all of these roles create richness in the kingdom of God. But even more than this, we are ALL called to a "ministry of reconciliation" as "ambassadors for Messiah," according to 2nd Corinthians 5:17-20, by which we preach the "message of reconciliation," which is the Gospel of Messiah Yeshua and the rest of the Word of God. We read, "Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Messiah Yeshua, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was

in Messiah reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the Word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Messiah, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Messiah's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." We ourselves are reconciled to God through Yeshua, and we were reconciled because someone taught us the Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua on their way to completion, and so we likewise ought to go out and reconcile others to God as part of our own walk in the light of Messiah Yeshua. But let us make sure that we understand and teach the true "Word of reconciliation" according to the sound doctrine of Holy Scripture and do not fall prey to the fables that lead our hearts away from the Truth.

{New slide} As a people who are moving on to perfection, we have to be diligent to watch that we are actually following the Word of Truth, lest we find ourselves on Judgment Day calling out "LORD, LORD," and Yeshua responds, "Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness" (Matthew 7:21-23). To be reconciled to God, we first must accept His mercy, which endures forever, through the death and resurrection of Yeshua, which washes us clean from our sins, but then we actually have to live according to what the LORD instructed us to do and continue to walk in His righteousness—we must move on toward perfection, if you will. When we turn away from the Truth of God in our hearts, the LORD will not hear our cries for mercy when He comes, even if we cry out His name. We have to do the will of God on account of our love for Him. In Jeremiah 7, the LORD gave very similar counsel through the prophet to his people in Judah who were worshipping in His temple but neglecting His Word of Truth. Starting in verse 3, we read this: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.'" He's saying, repent! Repent! Turn back to the Way I've shown you. We cannot trust in the Temple—we cannot trust in weekly church attendance—we cannot even trust in the mercy and grace of God—if we are listening to false teachers and committing transgressions on account of our own wicked desires.

{New slide} Continuing in verses 5-7, we read: "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever." This

same promise applies to us. If we walk in the righteousness that Yeshua showed us, according to the commandments of God, we will dwell with Him in His Kingdom forever. However, if we heap up teachers for ourselves that direct us away from God's Word, we ought to expect nothing other than condemnation from the LORD. The LORD confirms in verses 8-10, where we read: "Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Ba'al, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'?" After confirming that these people who say "LORD, LORD," but sin willfully will be cast out of His sight, the LORD added this frightening command in verse 16, where we read: "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you." We have to be very careful that we are abiding in the commandments of God, which shows that we are living "in Messiah Yeshua," lest we quench the Holy Spirit of God and the LORD forsakes our prayers.

{New slide} This isn't some Old Testament angry God type of concept here. When Yeshua opened the eyes of a blind man, symbolizing his salvation through faith, the man, testifying about the Gospel of Yeshua, said the very same thing, which is critical for us to understand. The man's words are found in John 9:31, where we read: "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him." We know that God does not hear the prayers of sinners. We have to worship God for Him to hear our prayers, and what is worship other than obedience to His will because we love Him. Paul said the same thing in Galatians 2:17, where we read: "if, while we seek to be justified by Messiah, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Messiah therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!" Yeshua is not going to minister to those who rebel against His Word. His Holy Spirit will not abide in a man or woman who follows the dictates of his or her own wicked heart. We must endure in our faith to be saved. This is why Yeshua and His Apostles and prophets so often warned us to watch and pray, for we need the strength of God to help us understand and apply His Word, and it is in such faithfulness that we can move on to the culmination of our faith. Similarly, James wrote in James 1:14-16, "each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren." This is fairly straightforward. When we try to do things our own way, the LORD will cut us off from His salvation. The end for those who continue in lawlessness is death. But there is a way out, which James explains as he continues into verses 17-18, where we read: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is

from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” We can dwell with the LORD forever when we live our lives according to the Word of Truth and thereby embrace the free gift of grace that He has given us through Messiah Yeshua. He has also given us His instruction, both written and living, as a gift, and He impartially judges each of us according to that Word, so let us move on toward perfection on account of this understanding.

{New slide} As we have discussed so many times before, it is through a testimony of two that we will endure in faithfulness until the end; God’s mercy through the death and resurrection of Messiah Yeshua and our demonstrable obedience to the commandments of God as a testimony of our love for what the LORD has done for us. It is because we fear the LORD and understand the good choice He has set before us that we can begin our journey toward Him. We read in Proverbs 16:6: “In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.” But it is through love of the LORD and His instruction that we can endure in His mercy according to His Truth until the end. In Joshua 1:8, the man who led Israel into the physical Promised Land of Israel had this to say: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” In James 1:25, the Apostle James who intimately followed Yeshua—who will lead His people into the eternal Promised Land—had this to say: “he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” When we delight in God’s Torah, and not only read it every day and night but then put it into practice, we will be blessed by the LORD. This blessing is not temporal but eternal. When we read in Psalm 119:11, “Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You,” we need to be taking this in! How do we move on to the culmination of our faith? This is how! When we have fallen so much in love with the LORD that we’re reading His Word day and night, praying without ceasing, and embracing His instruction to the point that it is literally the very substance of our heart, coming forth in our every word and action, we can be assured that we are on our way to perfection in Messiah Yeshua. This is the fruit you will know Yeshua’s disciples by. If you have not acted on the Elementary Principles of Messiah, then that is your first step toward this goal. If you have, but you are not reading the Word every day, then this is next for you. Internalizing the Word to the point that it is hidden in your heart is an essential element of becoming complete in Yeshua.

{New slide} In 2nd Timothy 3, verses 16-17, we read, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Do you want to know the meat of the Word of Life? It’s in your Bible. Do you want to understand concepts that are hard to explain? Let’s move on in our studies and get serious about them. If you are reading through Scripture and don’t understand something, pray for understanding. If your life throws you challenges or even extreme difficulty, open the Word and read it; pray for the LORD to open your understanding according to His will. We read in Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” We can’t open the Word of God looking to justify our own actions, lest we be deceived. Instead, we have to humble ourselves and let God explain His will to us according to His Word. We have to do things His way. We have to trust that He knows what He’s doing because He created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. He is just. He is good. He is faithful. He desires what is good for us, not what is evil. God wants us to inherit His eternal blessings. When we read His Word with humble hearts that subject ourselves to His will, He reveals His Truth to us. The Word may be hard to understand, even confusing at times, especially Paul’s writing as Peter noted in 2nd Peter chapter 3, but when we patiently ask the LORD for wisdom, He grants it to us so that we can apply His instruction to our lives, and part of moving on to completion is searching the richness of the Word of God for understanding, and not giving up until the LORD reveals it to us. James puts it this way in James 1, verses 2-6, where we read: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.” Let us not put the LORD our God to the test, as Israel did in the wilderness. Let us not cry out in anger against the LORD, for the LORD is good and His mercy is everlasting, He is faithful to His promises. If things aren’t going our way, and we don’t understand, the right response is prayer and fasting to reveal what needs to change in us; we should never seek what God needs to change. We need to ask the LORD for wisdom and then patiently wait for His response, with faith that He will answer us in due time according to His will. Is it taking too long? Wait longer. Pray harder. It is in this very effort that the LORD helps to make us perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

{New slide} David wrote in Psalm 27:14: "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!" This is the same message. We are perfected by God in the process of reading His Word and praying for His wisdom and guidance to apply it according to His will. We move forward toward completion when we patiently wait for the LORD with boldness, understanding that He will never leave us nor forsake us and He has a reason for everything He does in our lives, even those things that seem wrong to us in the flesh. We literally become more spiritually mature when we can develop a spirit of contentment no matter what issues we're facing in this life. If we are anxious, depressed, discouraged, or doubtful, it is our duty to turn to the LORD with all of our heart and lean not on our own understanding. We ought to trust in God, for He is good and His mercy endures forever! The Apostle Paul wrote similarly in Philippians 4, verses 11-13, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me." Contentment is the opposite of covetousness, and we know that the LORD has commanded us "you shall not covet." Contentment expresses trust in God, while doubting the LORD's faithfulness elevates some other thing, whether wealth, provision, liberty or even health, above our love of God. Doubt creates an idol in our lives. If we fall into this mindset, we risk making ourselves an enemy of God, and God destroys His enemies. But as you know, we all fall short of the glory of God; we all stumble in the ways I've been describing. Proverbs 24:16 notes in the New American Standard Version that "the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity." Where does our heart land when we find ourselves stumbling in the difficulties of life? Do we fall and then immediately correct ourselves, calling out to the LORD with humble and contrite hearts, seeking to make ourselves right before God and man, or do we double down in our wickedness, seeking our own path and forsaking every Godly man or woman seeking to pull us up from the fire? We've all doubled down in our sin in this way and put ourselves in danger of the judgment, but God willing we have moved beyond this fleshly way of thinking through humility. The Apostle James provided the solution for when we find ourselves in this position, and it aligns very much with the path we ought to take in our walk toward perfection. In James 4:5-8[a], we read: "do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously'? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

{New slide} The Apostle Paul displayed this very attitude of humility in Philippians 3, verses 12-14, where we read: “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Messiah Yeshua has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua.” The question I have for you and me is this: Are we pressing forward toward the goal? Are we moving on to completion? Are we answering the “upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua?” It is without question that there isn’t a single person hearing this message who has apprehended the perfection that we are promised in God. When Yeshua said in Matthew 5:48, “therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect,” he didn’t expect that we would all attain this completion on the day of our baptism. Nevertheless, as we forget those transgressions against God that He has forgiven through the blood of Messiah and reach forward toward that pleasing obedience that we’ve been called toward in Yeshua, we are indeed answering that upward call. We are laying hold of that for which Messiah Yeshua has also laid hold of us. In other words, we are moving forward from faith to faith, from humble victory by the power of God’s Holy Spirit to the next, slowly but surely drawing nearer to God as He draws nearer toward us. Paul encouraged us to this same end in Romans 12, verses 1-2, where we read: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Our whole lives ought to be laid down before our LORD—He told us to pick up His cross and follow Him—that means that we must sacrifice our own will so that we can take on the mind of Christ. We have to “take every thought captive” to the will of God. We have to renew our mind to align with God’s Word, rejecting and renouncing the noise brought forward by the enemy to take us off track. We win the war for our mind by reading, understanding, speaking and doing the Word of God, proving the good, acceptable and perfect will of God for our lives. And in that effort, we also teach others to do the same.

{New slide} The Apostle presented his own take on what it means to “move on to perfection” in 2nd Peter, chapter 1, following his introduction that cryptically refers to the Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua. In brief, Peter explained in verses 2-4 that we have been “given all things that pertain to life and godliness” through our faith in the Gospel of Yeshua, which he calls “the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.” In such faith, we receive “great and precious promises,” such as the

resurrection unto life, and have become “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” In other words, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which we receive through faith in Yeshua, we repent from our dead works—our sins that lead to death—and turn to walk in obedience to God. It is because of our mastery of these elementary principles that we then move on to complete the will of God in our lives.

{New slide} Peter explains, starting in verse 5: “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” When coming to understand the Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua, we start with faith and add virtue to it through repentance, but we ought not rest on the basic premises of faith and virtue. Rather, we ought to add “knowledge” to faith and virtue, and knowledge comes only from the Word of God as understood through the power of the Holy Spirit. We read in Proverbs 2:6-7, “For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly.” And we know from Exodus 24:4, by way of one example among many, that “Moses wrote all the words of the LORD.” And in 2nd Corinthians 3, verses 15-16, we understand that “even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the LORD, the veil is taken away.” Faith in Yeshua removes our blindness when it comes to our understanding of the law, and in our righteousness God reveals more of Himself to us in His Word. In fact, when we have received the Holy Spirit of Yeshua within us through faith, the LORD helps us apply the law properly to our lives, also. It is indeed this knowledge in partnership with the Holy Spirit that helps us develop self-control, and further, perseverance, then godliness. As we grow in maturity, the Holy Spirit sanctifies us so that the law is written on our hearts and becomes a part of who we are. While we still ought to study the Word of God day and night, now and forever, because the Word of God is eternal and we will never exhaust the application of God’s instruction in our lives, we begin to live in the liberty that God has given us in Yeshua when we are seeking the LORD like this with all of our hearts. In other words, as we come to know Yeshua more and more through our faithful pursuit of His will, He increasingly helps us to not just persevere in our self-control but to take on the nature of God in what we say and do. And it is in such godliness—such goodness—that our love for God grows into a love for one another. We begin to express brotherly kindness and gentleness, endure hardship with long-suffering and peace, and express the joy of God that dwells within us in all circumstances. And when our brotherly kindness further

matures, we finally reach the pinnacle of the faith, the desire to sacrifice ourselves for others; for true love considers others more highly than ourselves.

{New slide} According to Yeshua in John 15:13, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” Truly, Yeshua offered up Himself on the cross once for all time, and we cannot repeat His sacrifice for sins. As we read in Hebrews 10:14: “by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.” And yet, Yeshua also commanded us, saying in Matthew 16:24: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” The cross we must bear can never account for the sins of others, but it certainly symbolizes the sacrificial love that we must attain in our walk with God. Our lives become a living sacrifice, fully dedicated to the will of God. We move by the Holy Spirit wherever He leads us, even if our flesh does not desire to go. It means we speak to people we’re afraid to speak with; we step out in faith to do what seem to be impossible things because the LORD has sent us, and we trust Him. It means we’re not afraid to face persecution or even death to defend the Gospel and the Truth of God’s Word. It means we put God first in our lives, no matter what the consequences of doing so may be. Perhaps it means that we give a prophetic Word and apply the Word of God to a modern circumstance, even when it is terrifying to do so, because the Holy Spirit of God has directed us in that way. There are many other scenarios we might discuss here, but it comes down to this: We must put Yeshua and the Way He showed us first, at any and every cost to ourselves and our own comfort, no matter what. As Peter continued in verses 8-9, we can see the consequences of moving on to completion in this way or not. We read: “For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our LORD Messiah Yeshua. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.” From reading this, we ought to discern that moving on to perfection is not optional. This is the Way of Christ. This is the narrow path we’re called to walk on. If we fail, then our initial confession of faith and baptism of repentance will be of no consequence. If we succeed, with the help of God, then eternal life awaits us—and eternal life in God’s Kingdom is the ultimate completion of all creation. Peter concludes in verses 10-11, where we read: “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and Savior Messiah Yeshua.”

{New slide} As we close out today’s message and this entire series about the Elementary Principles of Messiah Yeshua, I want to give you a glimpse of what it’s

going to look like when we stand victorious at the very end—at the completion of all things—based on a description in Scripture. There are several prophecies of this reality, but John's in Revelation 21 and 22 is my favorite. Here's an excerpt from Revelation 21, verses 1-7, where we read: "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.'"

{New slide} Continuing, John wrote down another glimpse of eternity in Revelation 22, verse 1-5, where we read: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the LORD God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever." How do we endure until the end? How do we go on to perfection? How do we make it into this Kingdom of God that John is so beautifully describing. Revelation 22:14 explains: "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." Indeed, Solomon also confirmed in Proverbs 4:18, which we read in the Berean Standard Bible here, "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until midday." That Eternal Day awaits all who wait on the LORD and trust in His promises, who stake their lives on Yeshua, the only way to the Father, and who follow Him in all His ways. And so, let us go on to perfection, brothers and sisters, and let me know how I can pray for you and encourage you to continue on that narrow Way without delay. Shabbat shalom.