



What is the meaning of the paradoxical statement: sometimes the perfect is the enemy of the good attributed to G.K. Chesterton?



### Meaning of “Sometimes the Perfect is the Enemy of the Good” (G.K. Chesterton)

The paradoxical statement “**sometimes the perfect is the enemy of the good**” means that in certain situations, striving for absolute perfection can actually prevent you from achieving something that is already good enough. It warns that over-emphasis on flawlessness can lead to delays, inaction, or the rejection of satisfactory results [Wikipedia+1](#).

#### Core idea

The phrase suggests that **good enough is often better than never getting started or never completing a task**. If you spend so much time trying to make something perfect that you never finish it, you may end up with nothing at all — or worse, a product that is never released or used [goong.com+1](#).

#### Why it’s paradoxical

It seems counterintuitive because perfection is usually seen as the goal. But Chesterton’s point is that **in some cases, the pursuit of perfection can be a barrier to progress**. This is especially true when:

- The task is urgent or time-sensitive.
- The “good enough” version is already functional or valuable.
- The cost of perfection (time, money, effort) outweighs the benefits.

#### Origins and context

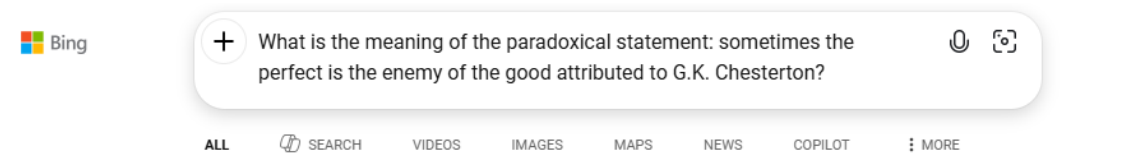
While often attributed to G.K. Chesterton, the aphorism is actually rooted in older proverbs. It echoes Voltaire’s “Le mieux est l’ennemi du bien” (“The best is the enemy of the good”) and similar ideas from Montesquieu and even earlier thinkers [Wikipedia+1](#). Chesterton likely used it to highlight the dangers of over-perfectionism in practical, everyday life.

#### Modern applications

- **Work & projects:** Launching a product or service before it's "perfect" can be better than delaying forever.
- **Personal life:** Accepting a good enough relationship, home, or plan can be wiser than endlessly seeking perfection.
- **Creativity:** Sometimes the first draft is good enough to start the process; perfectionism can paralyze.
- **Decision-making:** In policy or business, waiting for "perfect" conditions can mean missing opportunities.

## In short

Chesterton's paradox reminds us: **Don't let the desire for perfection stop you from doing something that is already good enough.** In many cases, the "perfect" version never comes, and the "good" version is the one that matters most [goong.com+1](#).



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