

Growing in Godliness

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Epic Faith

Text: 2 Peter 1:5-7, 1 Timothy 6:3-11

The Bible tells us that we are to add to our faith first virtue, then knowledge, then self-control, then perseverance and to perseverance godliness. Godliness is profitable for all of life and for our eternity.

1 Timothy 4:8 Godliness is not an arbitrary or subjective concept. It is a way of life that is clearly defined. This means that we need to clearly understand what godliness is and what it is not. The Bible warns us about people that have a form of godliness but have no power.

2 Tim. 3:5 (NKJV, NLT)

The Greek word for form means- shape, silhouette an outline and not the full substance. This form of godliness without real power is called religion. Many people are willing to settle for religion over transformation. You can look religious, seem pious, you can carry a Bible and use Christian vocabulary and still have a life with no power.

The whole point of salvation is to make us godly men and women. Godliness is a lifestyle that reflects the character of God and is consistent with His ways and His Word. Godliness is living life with God. He is included in every aspect and in every decision. Godlessness is a life lived apart from God and is a lifestyle that is inconsistent with the character of God.

Titus 2:11-12 (NKJV, AMP, CSB), 1 Timothy 6:11

Godliness does not mean perfection, it does mean growth and consistency where we desire to function in a way that reflects who God is. Our soul longs for godliness. It longs to be filled with more of God. If we are not full of God then our soul is starving and you will be malnourished. Those who are Godly are self - feeders.

Living in the constant awareness of God's presence helps us to live in godliness. One of the names of God is Jehovah Shamma or God is THERE or God is present. Think of that, His name is There. Where is He? –there! God where are you? He answers -Present. **Hebrews 13:5,**

Ezekiel 48:35, John 14:17 The abiding presence of God is comforting and peaceful and powerful but it also affects the way we live. Think along the lines of how you make decisions when driving and a police officer is around. Or how you conduct yourself around the opposite gender when you spouse is by your side. Living in godliness means cultivating the reality that God is there with you and the Holy Spirit resides inside of you.

Godliness means coming to the opinion that God's WORD and His WAYS are right and true - period.

Proverbs 30:5, Psalm 19:7-14, Psalm 119:89-105, 124-128, 133, 137-144

Those who are godly, cherish God's laws, commands judgments and precepts. The Godly build their life upon them. They are light, they are direction and they are understanding. The ungodly are led astray by the "doctrines of demons". **1 Timothy 4:1, Ephesians 4:14, James 1:8**

Worldliness is the devil's tool to combat true godliness. This world's system or way of doing things are firmly under Satan's control. **2 Timothy 2:16, 1 John 2:16-17 (AMP), 2 Peter 3:11**

Worldliness is often misunderstood. Many confuse worldliness with wickedness. Wickedness is doing those things that you know are sin and displeasing to God. Worldliness is a mindset that leaves God out of the equation; God is not even a thought or a consideration. **Proverbs 3:5-6** Christians cannot live and breathe in worldliness and still be godly. **John 17:14-19** We are in the world but not of the world.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 It is important to know that Satan will send worldly people among godly people in order to turn our godliness into ungodliness. They entice us to compromise God's ways and to pursue our ways. **Jude 1:4**

For Christians, the world should be an alien environment, but for many Christians the ways of the world are familiar and comfortable. An alien is someone who is out of their element. They do not thrive where they are because it is not conducive to who and what they are. In a real sense, a Christian being around worldly things should be like a fish out of water. **1 Peter 2:11-12** The addition of godliness to our faith is the act of being less at home in the world more at home in the ways of God.

There is a direct link between growth in godliness and our fruitfulness. Growing in any area of our life and being fruitful all require discipline and training. **1 Timothy 4:8, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27** There is always a new fad concerning physical fitness and there is some benefit to it. Godliness is beneficial for our life on earth and for eternity. If you are out of shape physically you are flabby, weak and tired. The same holds true spiritually. Many people are spiritually flabby for the same reason they are physically flabby, they have good intentions but no follow through. If you are going to be truly healthy physically and spiritually you must have more than a weekly workout routine. The word train or exercise comes from the Greek word for gymnasium; this is where we work out and work out things and areas of our life.

It is important to understand that we do not exercise our faith to create godliness, but to develop the godliness we already have. **1 Peter 1:3** Even though we are saved we still live in our flesh, which still produces ungodly thinking, desires and actions that need cleansing. The reason that many Christians stay defeated for so long is that their souls are out of shape.

Many people want to have God's blessings without cultivating godliness. The problem with much of modern Christianity is that people want to be blessed but they do not desire to be godly just as much. There is nothing wrong with wanting the blessing and approval of God, but we cannot separate blessing from godliness. The two go together and if we ask God for one without the other we are asking for something that God is not free to give. Godliness is the foundation of all blessing.

There is great gain in godliness, but only under God's conditions. **1 Timothy 6:3-11** There are people that use religion solely for financial gain. These are people who are only interested in blessings that benefit them in a natural sense. This is called materialism and has given birth to the prosperity message that has been sown into the body of Christ. They use godliness as a pretense to grow rich; this is nothing more than materialism and mammon worship cloaked in a "form of godliness". The attitude is "let me be more religious so that God will give me more money". This is really just a pretense for greed. **Matthew 6:24** To limit the blessings of God to financial gain is missing the complete covering and transformation the blessing of God brings into our life. **3 John 1:2** God has given us everything for life and godliness. The prosperity of God is the abundance of God's favor and goodness impacts us completely; spiritually, physically, emotionally, family, financially. You cannot truly prosper in any area of your life until your soul prospers. The soul is the part of our life that we must bring into agreement with God's ways. It is where godliness is applied.

Godliness is not a hindrance to success, it is really how we become successful in the eyes of God. Godliness is profitable for all things. If you want to enjoy the high profit margin of godliness, a marriage needs to occur between our pursuit of godliness and contentment. **1 Timothy 6:6-8** A lack of contentment will stifle godliness, but the presence of contentment with the pursuit of godliness will give you a great profit margin. **Hebrews 13:5-6**

The problem with trying to find contentment in material wealth is that it never satisfies. **Ecclesiastes 5:10** When you are not satisfied you become discontent this leads to selfishness and frustration. When discontent sets in being like godly is no longer the priority but satisfying our longing. **James 3:16**

Money itself is not a problem, it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil.

1 Timothy 6:10

For many people the underlying issue is that we have confused our wants with our needs.

Philippians 4:19 Before we can claim the promise of verse 19 we need to learn the lessons like Paul did in the verses prior. **Philippians 4:11-13**

True contentment is developed in both the fat times or in the lean times. If we are not content in one area we will not be content in the other. True prosperity is thriving spiritually and emotionally in the good times and the bad.

The real issue of contentment is our understanding of how our true desires will affect every area of our life. **Matthew 6:33, Psalm 37:4-6**

Ways to tell if you are a lover of money

- If you spend more time complaining about what you do not have than giving thanks for what you do have.
- If your financial life is going up and your spiritual life is going down.
- If you compromise spiritual principles to gain a profit.
- If you are praying more for the growth of your cash than for the growth of your character.
- If you treat rich people better than you treat people without money.
- If you rob God of His tithes and offerings to pocket all you get for yourself.

The more our material worth goes up, the more our more to the Lord should go up. The reason that there is so much misery in the church, and the Kingdom of God can't advance is because so many rich people aren't generous. **1 Timothy 6:17-19** Many Christians have a poverty mentality. We need to see ourselves as wealthy in every conceivable way. **Ephesians 3:8 (NLT)** In our culture it is important to understand that by any standard almost all believers can be considered rich.

Basic Principles of Godliness

- The motive for putting on godliness is our love for God. This is the "why" of why we find value in adding this to our faith. ~ John Owens- "Love begets a likeness between the mind loving and the object beloved. A mind filled with the love of Christ as crucified will be changed into His likeness and His image". This is why long married couples look like each other. This is why a dog takes on the look and temperament of their owner. **2 Corinthians 3:18**
- Godliness is an attitude of seeking to please the Lord. **2 Corinthians 5:9 (NLT)** Godliness is not just avoiding sin in order to escape punishment. It is avoiding the things which we know do not please God. We love God more than we love sin, more than we love our own way. This is why godliness can only be the fruit of our love for God; not an outward obedience of legalism.
- The power required for living a Godly life comes from God Himself. **2 Peter 1:3, 2 Corinthians 3:5, Colossians 1:29, Philippians 4:13**
The Christians life and power do not come from us they come from staying connected to the vine. God is our source.
- The embodiment of godliness is Jesus. **Hebrews 1:1-3, John 14:7-9**
If we need an example to follow, we are to look to Jesus who literally is God in the flesh. **John 5:19-20 & 30**