

Genuine faith in Jesus produces fruit. When there is real faith in Jesus, works will follow. See Matthew 13:22-23 and James 2:20. We do no one any favors, including ourselves, when we don't work at growing in godliness.

The words "yours and are increasing" in 1:8 can rescue us from two dangers that we face when it comes to our own sanctification: **stagnation** and **perfectionism**. These words adjust our expectations. They push us to pursue holiness while they humble us and ground us. They won't let us think that we are perfect, and they rescue us from expecting perfection from others. The idea is that we are to be continually and progressively growing in the 7 things found in 1:5-7 while recognizing that in this life we will never completely add them to our faith in Jesus.

2. Passionately pursuing true godliness in your life keeps you from being **unsure** and **forgetful**. (1:9)

9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

It's never good to forget what God has done for you. Forgetting that you are forgiven is a bad thing. God wants you to have a clear read on your own spiritual status. He doesn't want you to be unclear or unsure of your salvation. As a believer in Jesus, passionately pursuing a holy life gives assurance that you have eternal life. Fighting against sin's power in your life in the present assures you that you have been forgiven of sin's penalty in the past.

3. Passionately pursuing true godliness in your life keeps you from being an **unsteady soul**. (1:10)

10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

The second command in this letter (in 1:10) is very similar to the first (in 1:5). Seriously going after godliness in your life by God's power saves you from stumbling spiritually. Compare with 2:14.

4. Passionately pursuing true godliness in your life leads to being **warmly welcomed** into Christ's kingdom. (1:11)

11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"On June 18, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt returned to New York City after a fifteen-month tour abroad, having travelled through Africa and western Europe. An elaborate city celebration drawing a million people marked his homecoming..." ([www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org](http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org))

The man who had served as the POTUS until March 4, 1909 was warmly received on a warm June day in NYC. A million people turned out for the event! He was given a rich reception as he came into the harbor and then came ashore, rode and walked down the street, and then made his speech. There were boats and bands, lots of greenery and flags, and loud cheers going up as President Roosevelt made his entrance.

## What kind of a welcome do you want when you arrive at Christ's kingdom?

It's hard to imagine that any genuine believer in Jesus would want what is roughly equivalent to a chilly, not-so-welcome, slow-clap welcome when the time arrives for him or for her to come into Christ's kingdom. It seems that none of us would want some sort of side-eyed, arms-crossed greeting when we appear in His presence. We would much rather have a warm, happy, strike-up-the-band and shoot-off-the-fireworks sort of reception. "Well, you made it." is **not** what we want to hear from our Lord and Savior when we see Him. Instead, it's "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

If you are a genuine believer in Jesus Christ, then this and other passages (like 1 Corinthians 3:10-15) teach you that how you live now affects what it will be like for you on the day when you step into His eternal kingdom. Marcus Aurelius got it right: "What we do in life echoes in eternity." What we pursue now will make a difference then.

Instead of barely getting into the kingdom of Christ, we can be richly received and rewarded! See also 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

So, do others, yourself, and your future a favor by passionately pursuing true godliness in your life now. Every day, as a person who has real faith in Jesus, show up at the jobsite (that is your life) and continue, by God's power, to work hard at becoming an authentically godly person.

All Scripture taken from the ESV.

## How to Do Others, Yourself, and Your Future a Favor

2 Peter 1:8-11

Why should you passionately pursue true godliness in your life? In 1:8-11, God gives us more whys. He lays out the ways that we (and others) will benefit when we obey His command in 1:5 (and in 1:10). Why should you, by God's power, give maximum effort towards adding these 7 things (listed in 1:5-7) to your genuine faith in Jesus? Why should you, by God's grace, do your best to grow in authentic godliness?

1. Passionately pursuing true godliness in your life makes you **useful** and **fruitful**. (1:8)

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being really useful isn't just a *Thomas the Tank Engine* (*Thomas & Friends*) thing... I'm not quite sure what to make of *Thomas the Tank Engine* (*Thomas & Friends*). Both the books and the show are a mixed bag for sure. But one thing that's really clear on the Island of Sodor is that it's **really good** to be **really useful**. And it's **really bad** to be **useless**. And while **we** should **never value** human beings based upon how "useful" they are—while the worth of a human being is **never limited** to his or her usefulness—God **did** create us to be **useful and fruitful** creatures. In other words, while our worth is **not** strictly set by our usefulness and fruitfulness, God did create us for, and He does call us to **both**!