

# Pursuing Godly Living

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** Jesus calls and equips His people to pursue godly living, which confirms their calling as God’s children.

**BACKGROUND PASSAGE:** 2 Peter 1

On a brisk Christmas morning, a child shot up from his bed. He had long waited to open his gifts that lay under the Christmas tree. Finally the moment came; he could now openly indulge in the fun that his parents had buried beneath the debris of wrapping paper and cardboard boxes. After tearing open the first gift, he recognized the toy race car he had always wanted. Jumping up and down, he ran to his parents and hugged them. His gratitude was short-lived, however, as he read the words “Batteries sold separately.”



How have you experienced a delay to the joy of something because of an unforeseen complication?

# Group Time

## Point 1: God's people pursue godly living through what Jesus has done (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.

Because Jesus Christ, our God and Savior (v. 1), lived the perfect life as a human being here on earth—the life we were incapable of living because of our sin nature—we can be saved in Him. All of God's holy requirements are met in Christ, and thus, by faith, God's people get the incredible privilege of living purposeful lives infused with godliness because of our blameless, risen Savior. Through knowing Him, we can be like Him.



What are some ways we receive the knowledge of Jesus?

God has made many great promises throughout Scripture, and each one finds its fulfillment in Jesus (1 Cor. 1:20). For God's glory and our good, Jesus was sent so we might share in a new "Jesus nature," having been transformed and enabled to properly bear God's image. Now we don't have to succumb to our own evil desires or co-sign on the evil desires of this world. In Christ, with this new divine nature, we can now escape the temptations of this world and have victory over the evil one.



How do believers escape the corruption in the world because of sin?

## Point 2: God's people pursue godly living with effort (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

God's people are called to make "every effort" to add to our faith by living in a way that looks like Jesus. Making every effort is not an easy task, as it surpasses intention and delves into our actions—our every action, for that matter. Whether it's a favorable season or not, whether we feel like it or not, we are to strive toward the mark of godliness in every aspect of our lives. This may seem like an impossible feat, but remember what Peter wrote just a few verses prior: God's power enables us.



### Voices from Church History

"Faith is not only necessary to salvation, it is also necessary to live a life pleasing to God. Faith enables us to claim the promises of God—but it also enables us to obey the commands of God."<sup>1</sup>

—Jerry Bridges (1929-2016)

**Justification and Works:** While good works do not \_\_\_\_\_ justification, they do \_\_\_\_\_ a genuine faith and make our justification \_\_\_\_\_ to others.

Having a high view of Christ makes these verses come alive because it is only in Christ that God's people have the capability to strive to do good, godly things in the first place. We are also only capable of seeing the invisible attributes of God through the visible life of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 1:15), whose righteous life gives us a blueprint as to how to build a life of faith on the foundation of faith Jesus laid (Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:21-25).



How does looking to Christ help you practically see how to live out the qualities described in this passage?

### Point 3: God's people pursue godly living to confirm their calling (2 Pet. 1:8-11).

<sup>8</sup> For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. <sup>11</sup> For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

When the qualities of God are not reflected in the way someone lives, that person is sailing through life in a self-inflicted fog of denial. Sailing blind or shortsighted leads to wrong destinations or even shipwreck. Such is the state of the professing Christian who has forgotten his or her past forgiveness of sins and now chooses to dive back into them instead of striving to look like Jesus in every facet of his or her life.

**Sanctification:** After we are justified by faith, declared to be in right standing with God through the righteousness of Christ, we undergo a \_\_\_\_\_ of sanctification where we are continually made more like \_\_\_\_\_ through the work of the \_\_\_\_\_. Sanctification affects the whole of a person, transforming one's heart, mind, and \_\_\_\_\_ to reflect that of Jesus.

God is gracious to allow fruitfulness in our lives to confirm the work that He has already done in our hearts. Though we may not witness immediate progress (since growth can be slow), others will be able to attest to God's imprint on our lives. We can obtain assurance about our salvation through our desire and efforts toward godliness, yet we cannot forget that this is made possible by our past forgiveness of sin in Christ. It is imperative that we still examine ourselves under the light of God's Word, making sure our lives match our profession of faith and guarding ourselves from self-deception.



What is the relationship between our salvation and our works?



# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read 2 Peter 1:1-4

When a man and woman mutually agree to date for the purpose of getting to know one another, for a season it could appear that the two are inseparable. Their days are probably filled with text messages, phone calls, and many dates in between—some planned, others spontaneous. Whether they like it or not, the two of them occupy one another's thoughts for the majority of the day.

Our desire to know more about Jesus should be similar to this, but greater. Christ is infinitely glorious—far more radiant, far more gracious, and far more grand than anything or anyone we could ever imagine. Thus, we should desire to search the Scriptures and to pray and commune with God in order to discover more about Him. After all, how can we possibly get bored with the One who is more captivating than anything or anyone we could every lay our eyes upon? It is by God's power that we have this knowledge that enables a life of godliness. God's people should value this knowledge and seek to gain more and more of it, not just on an intellectual level, which is certainly important, but on a heart level as well.



### Voices from Church History

"Realize your dignity, O Christian! Once you have been made a partaker of the divine nature, do not return to your former baseness by a life unworthy of that dignity. Remember whose head it is and whose body of which you constitute a member!"<sup>3</sup>

—Leo the Great (d. 461)



What are some habits or routines you can establish that will help you seek to know God even when your flesh may not desire Him?

## Day 2: Read 2 Peter 1:5-7

It's very easy to look past the four small words in verse 5 of this passage—"For this very reason..." For what reason should the Christian make every effort to supplement their faith? It's precisely *because* God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Therefore, we *should* pursue goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love.

If someone were to hand you a million dollars, you wouldn't just leave it on the dining table without paying your bills. You would use that money gladly in order to fulfill the rightful purpose money was designed for. How much more should we press into godly virtues by honoring God with our entire lives? Our godly lives are not just for ourselves but to show a dying world that God isn't far off but near to us in Christ.



What godly characteristic do you need to be pursuing, and how will you do so?

## Day 3: Read 2 Peter 1:8-11

Two runners assume their positions for a track race. Both athletes run initially with all of their might in order to win the race. But one runner gets distracted by the audience and loses intensity in her stride. Losing focus and momentum, she soon trips over a shoelace. Because of this series of events, the other runner wins without experiencing any doubts in her mind.

Peter spoke about a similar scenario in verse 10. As we run the race of the Christian life, it can become easy to get distracted with various elements of our lives. As a result of succumbing to distraction, we lose confidence in our race. A lack of assurance about our standing with God can cause us to retreat from living godly lives. Thankfully, we can have confidence in our victory if we keep our eyes on Jesus and the salvation He provided.



How can you strive to live in a godly manner in order to fight doubt and pursue the assurance the Holy Spirit gives?

## Day 4: Read 2 Peter 1:12-15

Children often need quite a few reminders: “Don’t forget to clean your room!” “Please remember to say please and thank you!”

Repetition is invaluable to parents because children easily forget. They become distracted. They take in so much that they may lose track of what was said to them even moments prior.

God’s children also need reminders because we easily forget. Similar to Eve, we often hear what God said but are prone to regurgitate His Word improperly (Gen. 3:2-3)—sometimes due to ignorance, other times due to rebellion. Peter made it a point in his letter to remind his readers of the things he mentioned previously, as they are integral to the Christian’s vitality. Therefore, we also should recognize our own propensity to forget and thereby respond accordingly by soaking up God’s Word over and over for the rest of our days.



How can you be intentional about reminding yourself of God’s truth on a daily basis?

## Day 5: Read 2 Peter 1:16-21

Peter testified by his very own experience that the prophecies about the Messiah written all throughout Scripture were fulfilled in Jesus’ life, proving the legitimacy of the gospel. Peter bore witness in this passage that he, James, and John literally saw the majesty of Christ firsthand in hearing God the Father affirm the identity of His Son (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Jesus was the Messiah to come who had now come!

Jesus is Lord, the incarnate Son of God. None of these facts are cleverly contrived myths. As God the Father instructed the disciples to listen to His Son in the flesh, we too should listen to the testimony of His Son presented through the divine revelation we have in the Scriptures.



Why is the eyewitness testimony of the apostles and the early disciples useful for fighting the doubts we might have about the truthfulness of the gospel?





## UNIT 28

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2. Martin Luther, quoted in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, eds. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingle, and Lubomir Batka (OUP Oxford, 2014) [eBook].
3. St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 97.

## SESSION 2

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2. Andrew Murray, in *Andrew Murray On Prayer* (Whitaker House, 1998) [eBook].

## CHRISTMAS SESSION

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2. Samuel Ngewa, "John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1279.
3. C. S. Lewis, "The Incarnation," in *The Joyful Christian* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 52.

## SESSION 3

1. R. C. Sproul, *Surprised by Suffering* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), 40.
2. Jen Wilkin, *None Like Him* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016) [eBook].
3. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005) [Wordsearch].

## SESSION 4

1. Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 111.
2. David Platt, "Is Your Definition of Faith Biblical?" *Radical*, July 27, 2018, [radical.net/is-your-definition-of-faith-biblical](http://radical.net/is-your-definition-of-faith-biblical).
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## UNIT 29

## SESSION 1

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2. St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. John Behr (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997), 79.
3. Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2010), 91.

## SESSION 2

1. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, in *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, vol. IV in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1892), 453.
2. Eric Mason, *Unleashed* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2015), 61.

## SESSION 3

1. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 7, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
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3. John Newton, "Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound," in *Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Worship, 2008), 104.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Christianity Today*, "John Newton: Reformed Slave Trader," May 12, 2020, [www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/pastorsandpreachers/john-newton.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/pastorsandpreachers/john-newton.html).

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