

## **GODLINESS PAYS!**

The Bible constantly exhorts its readers to godly living. The worldly minded ridicule godliness, believing it only means hardship and deprivation. The Bible says it pays: “Godliness is profitable for all things...” and “Godliness...is great gain” (1 Tim. 4:8; 6:6). Millions who have tried it through the centuries know it is so. How does it pay?

**Materially:** It is hypocrisy to appear to be godly merely for hope of material profit (John 6:26–27). The Televangelists who promise such are perverters of the Gospel. However, when one makes God’s kingdom and way the most important things in his life, the Lord promised that our Heavenly Father will provide all of the things of life that one **needs** (Mat. 6:33). The very principles of godliness taught in Scripture contribute to prosperity. They include honesty and integrity (Rom. 12:17), industry (1 The. 4:11), good manners and appropriate behavior (1 Cor 13:5), and economy and thrift (John 6:12–13).

**Physically:** Following God’s Word even benefits us physically (2 Pet. 1:3). It urges us to purity of life and body and warns us not to do things destructive to the body (1 Cor. 3:17; 2 Cor. 7:1). It counsels us to replace worry with cheerful optimism (Mat. 6:25; Phi. 4:4). The Bible frequently condemns, either explicitly or implicitly, all practices that are physically harmful and destructive to us (e.g., drunkenness, tobacco addiction, misuse of other drugs, sexual sins, envy, malice, anxiety, gluttony, etc.).

**Socially:** Jesus grew “in favor with men” (Luke 2:52), and none others have ever been as godly as He. Godly persons have the traits that even the ungodly admire. These include strong convictions fearlessly voiced, self–control, unwavering honesty, compassion, meekness, fairness, and love, the most essential of all social graces. Against such admirable traits “there is no law” (Gal. 5:24).

**Spiritually:** Here godliness brings its greatest rewards. When one does what God teaches him to do to begin living a godly life, his sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38). He is raised from the watery burial of baptism to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). This makes him a “new creation in Christ” (2 Cor. 5:17). As a child of God, he is able to approach God’s throne boldly (Heb. 4:16), and he attains a peace that the ungodly cannot comprehend (Phi. 4:7). The wonderful blessing of fellowship with God’s people is his (Heb. 13:1). All of these are rewards of godliness while we live here, but the greatest is that which is to come—eternal life with God and Christ and all of God’s faithful children of all ages (Rom. 2:7; 6:23; 1 John 2:17). We dare not grow weary in godliness and fall by the wayside, for we shall reap the eternal reward only if we faint not (Gal. 6:9). Yes, godliness pays, both for now, “and in the world to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29–30)!

—Dub McClish

Denton, TX