

Sermon Text: 2 Peter 1:3-8, 1 Timothy 4:7-13
Mariner Sands Chapel

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Today I'd like to talk about a topic that may seem like a small thing, and it gets little attention in our culture, our education, our national values, or our houses of worship. I would like you think a little today about your own walk with Christ and how it has changed over time. As you think back about how important your relationship with God has been, would you say that it has demanded more attention over the years or less? As the Apostle Paul thought long and hard over the course of his ministry, he wrote in a letter to Timothy that his relationship had become even more important in his final years. He focused on a small thing in his spiritual development, a thing he calls godliness. Some might understand this virtue in the believer's life as a sort of piety or reverence for God in the everyday life of the believer. The apostle Peter, as well in his final letter, wrote succinctly about the importance of godliness in the believer's daily walk.

Paul urged Timothy to concentrate his energy on vigorous training for genuine godliness. For Paul genuine godliness involved both right belief and obedient action. Godly habits would not appear without determined human purpose and effort. Timothy was to persist in that Christian discipline which would prepare him for God's highest purposes. Godliness has the potential of impacting all actions, experiences, and relationships for good.

"How am I going to do that?" Training to be more like Christ is something you can do daily, whether you have full time employment or are fully retired. During the course of your life, you have a period when you're motivated and perhaps even excited to deepen your faith, then at some point, as we all do, you reach what I call the quitting point. When you're trying to be godly r moral and you have come to the point when you say, "It's just not worth that much anymore. Nobody else is struggling with this stuff, I think I'll cave in to the prevailing morals of the day." The spiritual quitting point occurs when God is at work within your life. He is leading down a path, but you're struggling and fighting and don't know if you can trust God. He says "Come a little farther, trust Me, follow Me." You say, "I can't. I'm the only one doing this and I don't think I can make it." That is a spiritual quitting point.

Godliness is an endangered character trait. I promise you that if you will train yourself to be godly, do it with your best energy, you will feel best when you have gone the extra mile to experience a deeper spiritual victory. As the pastoral letter from Peter says, God's power is at work within you. He has given you His divine power to achieve everything pertaining to life and godliness. You do not have to manufacture your own form of godliness. That's what the deceiver's mentioned in this letter were doing. Paying attention to things that did not matter, holding to a form of religiousness, but lacking the dynamic power of true godliness. Paul said this was a trustworthy saying (1 Tim 4:10) and Peter said if you have this quality in your life, you will not be ineffective nor unproductive in your knowledge of God.

Today, I'd like you to imagine a very small thing. That is, imagine yourself becoming much more godly than you are today. Dream small. Pray today and listen to God reveal an area in your life that could use a fresh dose of Godly power. Remind yourself this week of God's promises and God's perspective and not those of the electronic media. Discipline your mind to think about God first when you rise and last when you lie down. Any little progress you make has huge implications. Vince Lombardi taught his team to Dream small. He said, "Inches make the champion." In NASCAR, the average margin of victory is .175 seconds. Just a little thing...like godliness is something to think about, sing about, even dream about.