

What Makes a Person Profitable or Unprofitable to God

Introduction

What makes a person useful to God? Scripture answers this question by describing attitudes and actions that please Him, as well as choices that leave a life spiritually barren. A profitable life is not one that earns God's favor through impressive deeds. It is a life shaped by faith, obedience, humility, holiness, love, spiritual fruit, and faithful care of what God has given. An unprofitable life moves in the opposite direction through unbelief, idolatry, selfishness, empty religion, needless arguments, fruitlessness, and neglect of God-given responsibilities.

The Bible presents these truths as a clear path. A person begins by trusting God, walks closely with Christ, allows the Spirit to form godly character, serves faithfully, and shows love through practical good works. At the same time, Scripture warns that activity without faith and love has no lasting spiritual value.

Body: A Life That Is Profitable to God

The story of a profitable life begins with a humble walk before God. Micah 6:8 says, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" God values justice, mercy, and humility more than outward display.

That walk is possible only through a close relationship with Christ. Jesus explains in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." He then says in John 15:8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." A useful life therefore grows from abiding in Christ, and its fruit brings glory to God.

Galatians 5:22–23 describes that fruit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." These qualities show the Spirit at work in a person's character. They include love, steady patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

God also uses a clean and dedicated vessel. Second Timothy 2:21 says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Purity and holiness prepare a believer for the Master's service.

Faith is essential because Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Faith is more than agreement; it is confidence in God that leads a person to seek Him.

Obedience gives that faith a daily direction. Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” A profitable life respects God and follows His commands.

Such a person also handles responsibilities faithfully. In Matthew 25:21, the master says, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Faithful stewardship means using whatever God has entrusted to us instead of wasting or hiding it.

True devotion also reaches other people while guarding personal holiness. James 1:27 says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Care for those in need and a clean personal life belong together.

Romans 12:1–2 gathers these ideas into a picture of full surrender: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” A believer becomes useful by offering the whole life to God and allowing the mind to be renewed.

Paul describes the result in Colossians 1:10: “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” The profitable person keeps growing, serves in practical ways, and lives in a manner that pleases the Lord.

Body: A Life That Becomes Unprofitable

Scripture also warns that a person can perform duties and still have the wrong view of service. Jesus says in Luke 17:10, “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.” Service is not a reason to boast. Even faithful obedience is simply what a servant owes the Master.

The danger becomes greater when a person refuses to use what has been entrusted to him. Matthew 25:30 says, “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” In the parable, this servant buried his talent instead of using it. Neglect turned opportunity into loss.

Some activities feel important but produce no spiritual good. Titus 3:9 warns, “But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are

unprofitable and vain." Second Timothy 2:14 gives a similar warning: "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." Foolish disputes and fights over words do not build people up; they can harm those who listen.

Even hearing God's Word is unprofitable when it is not joined with faith. Hebrews 4:2 says, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Information alone does not change a life. The hearer must receive God's Word with faith.

Idolatry is another empty path. Isaiah 44:9–10 says, "They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?" Anything placed in God's position is powerless to save or guide.

Jeremiah describes the same tragedy among leaders and people. Jeremiah 2:8 says, "The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." Jeremiah 2:11 adds, "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." Turning from God to what cannot profit is a terrible exchange.

Good deeds also lose their spiritual value when love is missing. First Corinthians 13:1–3 says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Gifts, knowledge, sacrifice, and outward generosity cannot replace love.

Human effort by itself is not enough. Jesus says in John 6:63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Spiritual life comes from the Spirit, not from the flesh acting apart from Him.

Finally, failing to do needed good works leads to an unfruitful life. Titus 3:14 says, "And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." Believers are to learn a pattern of useful service that meets real needs.

Growing into a Fruitful Life

Second Peter 1:5–8 brings the whole subject into focus by showing how a believer can avoid becoming spiritually barren, unfruitful, or ineffective in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Peter presents a steady pattern of growth: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance

patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The growth begins with **faith**, which is trust in God and confidence in His promises. To faith, the believer adds **virtue**, meaning moral excellence and godly character. Virtue is strengthened by **knowledge**, a growing understanding of God and His ways. Knowledge must be joined with **temperance**, or self-control—the ability to govern desires and actions.

Self-control is followed by **patience**, the willingness to endure trials and difficulties without giving up. Patience matures into **godliness**, a life marked by reverence toward God. Godliness then appears in **brotherly kindness**, genuine care and affection for fellow believers. The highest expression is **charity**, the selfless Christian love that marks spiritual maturity.

Peter teaches that spiritual profitability is not merely a matter of saying that one believes. It is a life of continued growth in Christian character. When these qualities are present and increasing, believers become effective, fruitful, and useful in their walk with Christ.

Conclusion

Scripture gives a consistent picture of the person who is profitable to God. That person trusts God, abides in Christ, bears the fruit of the Spirit, pursues holiness, obeys God’s commands, serves faithfully, cares for others, offers the whole life to God, and continues to grow in every good work. Faith, humility, love, and spiritual fruit are not separate goals; together they describe a life that is ready for the Master’s use.

The warnings are just as clear. Unbelief, idolatry, selfishness, empty religion, foolish disputes, works without love, reliance on the flesh, buried opportunities, and neglect of needed good works lead to spiritual barrenness. The choice is not between doing nothing and staying busy. It is between a life rooted in Christ and guided by the Spirit, and a life spent on things that cannot profit.

A fruitful believer therefore walks humbly, serves without boasting, uses every entrusted gift, receives the Word with faith, loves others sincerely, and keeps adding godly character to faith. Such a life gives glory to God and becomes useful in His hands.