

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Rotten and Useless

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### Introduction

I have been teaching several classes of late that have to do with the inner man, renewing the mind, and the kingdom of God. In doing this I have been doing a lot of thinking about the inner man and how it functions. That has led to the producing of a new series on the inner man which will be available on the website soon; but it also started me to thinking about being useful or useless to the purposes of God. I for one do not want to be useless or worthless to the Lord and His Kingdom. That doesn't mean that I want to be a great hero of God—I just want to be useful. As I once heard a Bible teacher say, “I don't want to be the big cheese; I don't want to be no cheese; I just want to be cheese!” I believe that this is the desire of all of us—to be of value to the Lord. This is one of the foundation stones of the inner man. [see “[Foundations of the Inner Man](#)” for more on this.]

### Useful

Peter gives us the requirements if we want to be useful to the Lord in the first chapter of his second epistle.

[2 Peter 1:8 NASB](#)

(8) For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This verse follows a list of virtues or qualities where each is added to the one that was previous. In other words it is a progressive list of attributes that development in us as a result of our maturing and yielding to the process of change that is at work in us by the Holy Spirit. As we grow up in our inheritance in Him, His inheritance in us begins to mature as we become more like the Lord. We become capable of fulfilling His calling in us; we become useful to Him.

## Useless

However, it is much easier to be *useless* than it is to be *useful*. There are different ways in which we become useless to the Lord.

1. **Trying to be what we are not.** We become less productive to the point of uselessness if we try to be something or do something that the Lord has not called us to be or do. He gifts us and equips us according to His purposes and calling. If we have “a different idea” than the Lord, we walk in the flesh and will not fulfill the desires of the Spirit.
2. **Remaining a spiritual infant.** Paul told the Corinthians, “*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.*” (1 Corinthians 3:1 NASB) It doesn't matter how powerful the imaginings are of children playing “dress up”, they are incapable of being and doing what they are imagining because they are still children. If we don't grow up in Christ, we will remain ineffective and useless to the purposes of the Lord.
3. **Maintaining an unrenewed mind.** We are “transformed by the renewing of the mind” (Romans 12:2) One with an unrenewed mind still thinks, that is, has a frame of mind, like he did as a heathen and is incapable of processing spiritual truth or pleasing God. “*because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* (Romans 8:7-8 NASB)
4. **Not producing the expected fruit.** God expects certain things to grow in us and produce something for Him. If this doesn't happen then we are like the ground described by the writer of Hebrews, “*For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.*” (Hebrews 6:7-8 NASB)

The more that we concentrate or focus on the things of this world with its desires and lusts the less useful we become to God for His purposes.

## Rotten to the Core

Is it possible to become so worthless that one becomes unable to become useful again? This appears to be what happened to mankind before Noah's flood.

Genesis 6:5-7 NASB

(5) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

(6) The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

(7) The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

The inner man had become completely corrupt, rotten to the point that every thought and intent

was evil. All mankind except Noah had become rotten to the core.

#### Genesis 6:11-13 NASB

(11) Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.

(12) God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

(13) Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

All mankind had become so rotten, so corrupted in their heart, that they had become completely useless to God—good for nothing except destruction.

Paul tells the Ephesians that we were just like this at one time before knowing Christ. But now we should no longer act like the heathen, "*and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.*" (Ephesians 4:19)

God expects better things of us. He has an inheritance in His saints and He expects to receive it.

#### Ephesians 4:20-24 NASB

(20) But you did not learn Christ in this way,

(21) if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,

(22) that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

(23) and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

(24) and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Becoming useful is a three step process as Paul described above:

1. lay aside the old self—it is corrupt, rotten and it is continuing to rot
2. be renewed in the spirit of your mind—transformed
3. put on the new self, which operates in righteousness and holiness.

Let us do these things. Let us go on to maturity, productivity, and usefulness to the Lord. We have a lot of work that needs to be done in our inner man. Let us open our hearts to the Lord and say with David:

#### Psalms 51:10-12 NASB

(10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

(11) Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

(12) Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.

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