

## The Evidence of Spiritual Life, Part 7 | Godliness

### I. The Nature of Godliness

- **The Difference between Moral Excellence and Godliness**
  - II Peter 1:3; Romans 8:29; II Corinthians 3:8
  - Our becoming godly is God's ultimate goal. We were dead; He made us alive. We were sinful; He made us righteous. We were self-worshippers; He made us God-worshippers. We were fleshly; He makes us godly.
  - Moral excellence or virtue is part of what it is to be godly just like self-control and perseverance are. Moral excellence is also a position and possession, but godliness is the ultimate goal and expression of moral excellence.
- **The Fleshly Version of II Peter 1:5-6**
  - Luke 8:11-14
  - True faith that leads to moral excellence in Christ that pursues knowing God from His Word that results in genuine Spirit-controlling that perseveres no matter what temptations come against it will produce godliness every single time. But just because you trust something, are excellent at it, are constantly studying it, changing your behavior to fit it, and consistently growing in it doesn't mean that's from God or glorifying to Him. None of that pleases the Lord because it's motivated and empowered by self.
  - Godliness is *impossible* without the Lord because it's the direct result of His working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).
  - If we're looking for a more legitimate evidence of spiritual life, godliness is it, since it's so easy to exercise the other traits in our own fleshly power for our own fleshly ends.

### II. The Goal of Godliness

- I Timothy 2:2; II Peter 3:10-11; I Timothy 6:6; II Timothy 3:5; I Timothy 6:5; Psalm 21:16-17
- "Holy conduct" or moral excellence is a facet of godliness, and nothing matters more in the whole world than to be godly.
- But we must be careful because it's easy to see the benefits of godliness and pursue it for selfish reasons. Such people believe that a certain set of behaviors constitutes godliness even though their lives are filled with the ungodliness that comes from sinful self-control.
- Did God want His people offering sacrifices? Yes. He commanded it. And yet, external obedience without a genuinely godly broken spirit and contrite heart is sin which God despises.

### III. The Process of Godliness I Timothy 4:7-8

- **Ignore worldly philosophy.**
  - You cannot grow in obedience to the wisdom of God when you're filling your mind with the foolishness of the world.
- **Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.**
  - Discipline refers to Olympic training. Training doesn't happen *to you*, it happens as you participate with the trainer. Again, we see that godliness is the result of personal investment in God's will for your life.
- **Discipline requires for you to labor and strive.**
  - Godliness requires hard, often uncomfortable work empowered by the Holy Spirit for the purposes of being able to discern good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

- **You are to labor and strive to be just like the living God.**

- The standard of our godliness and moral excellence is the living God Himself. But why does godliness have so much work?
  - It's hard work because living like God is the exact opposite of living like a human.
  - I Timothy 6:3-4, 1:9-11; Titus 1-3; Galatians 5:17-21
  - Read through Titus 1-3 and compile your own list and compare your life to it.
  - According to this short list of character qualities, which three would you like to start striving and laboring toward first?
  - There is nothing more practical than that.
    - For example, in Titus 2:2 we read, "*Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.*" For the sake of my own life, I would choose to pursue greater and deeper temperance. This word refers to sober moderation, but not merely in food or drink, but in character.
    - And so I would then turn to the Scriptures to better understand the moderate sobriety with which God would have me live my life, and as I learn and understand what it means, I would need to actually put those things to practice in my life.
- I Timothy 6:11-21
  - Trust in God (faith) equips us to live righteously (moral excellence), and increased knowledge of God along with submission to the Holy Spirit (self-control) produces perseverance in our conformity to Christ (godliness).
  - I Timothy uses the word "godliness" more than any other single book of the Bible, and Paul's final words to Timothy are instructive for all who desire to discipline themselves for the purpose of godliness. If you're reading this on our blog, take special note of all the bolded words. If you're listening, I'll try to highlight them. These words represent the labor and striving necessary to pursue true godliness.
  - "*But **flee** from these things, you man of God, and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. 12 **Fight** the good fight of faith; **take hold** of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I **charge** you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you **keep** the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. 17 **Instruct** those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to **fix** their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 **Instruct** them to **do** good, to **be rich** in good works, to **be generous** and ready to **share**, 19 **storing up** for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may **take hold** of that which is life indeed. 20 O Timothy, **guard** what has been entrusted to you, **avoiding** worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— 21 which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.*"
  - Based off I Timothy 6:11-21, what are some practical steps you need to take to discipline yourself in the areas above?
  - Asking, answering, and applying these to your life is the only way to continue maturing in your spiritual life.