

August 28th and 29th
SWEATING FOR GODLINESS

"Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

I TIMOTHY 4:7-8

Leonardo DaVinci. Winston Churchill. Thomas Edison. Jascha Heifitz. Mike Singletary. Artist, politician, scientist, musician, and professional football player. On the surface there doesn't seem like they have anything in common. However, when you look behind the curtain, you see all possessed discipline to become strong in their profession. Kent Hughes describes their discipline in his, "Disciplines of a Godly Man." DaVinci drew 1000 hands to draw hands in his artwork. According to biographers, Churchill spent years of his life perfecting "impromptu" speeches because of his speech impediment. Thomas Edison failed 1000 times to invent the lightbulb. Heifitz committed 102,000 hours to his craft on the violin. According to Singletary, he would spend three hours watching game film...for one half of football! Men, these are all dedicated men that sweat for their work, and we are called by our God to equally sweat for godliness.

As we study Leviticus, the theme is to "be holy, for I am holy." For the next several weekends, we will divert from learning from our history of godly men and reflect more purposefully on working out our holiness. You'll see that God emphasizes holiness throughout the entire Bible. Kent Hughes does well to unpack where we will begin today. In "Disciplines of a Godly Man" he unpacks his main theme from the perspective of the young protégé Timothy who is getting tutored by his spiritual father Paul. What does God have to say to Timothy and what does this mean for us?

Train yourself for godliness. This sentence is simple but packs a potent punch to our lives as men. Training...as Hughes points out, the word that Paul uses here is where we get our English word gymnasium. The literal interpretation of what Paul is saying is to "exercise naked." Ancient Greek athletes would compete in the Olympic Games while completely naked. From this example that Paul uses, Hughes emphasizes that as men, we are to "sweat for godliness." God continues to remind us that godliness/holiness has value in this life and in the life to come. There are reasons why the men mentioned earlier were so maniacal in their preparation...they wanted to perfect their craft. While we cannot be perfect in this life, we can "throw off everything that hinders and run the race that is set before us...". God has called us to be like Him, which takes effort, i.e. "sweaty discipline." The motivation behind our discipline is because becoming like Christ is our highest pursuit in this world.

Men, how holy are you today in what you see and in what you say? God has called you to be distinct from the world, but often as men people can't tell the difference between us and people that don't follow Christ. This isn't a call to focus on "don't smoke, don't chew, and don't go with girls that do...". While those actions fall under our Master's call, they are just symptoms of a deeper problem, our sinful hearts. We can become weighed down by the cares of this world...health, family, work, and retirement. But God. God calls us to "look to Jesus, the Founder and Perfecter of our faith...". Will we look to our Master's call to train for godliness? Will we be devoted to the task of knowing our Savior from His Word so we can confidently obey Him? We want to be known as men that work hard; let's be men that are known mostly for working hard to be godly men, that walk with undivided hearts. How will you "sweat for godliness" this weekend?

Spend some time thinking about the glorious calling of Jesus that saved you. He saved you for a purpose, to make you more like Him. Ask the Lord to show you ways that you have drifted from being holy as He is holy. Ask Him for more grace to be a godly man.

Further Reading: Ephesians 4:17-32

