



gracefellowship

Everything
October 6, 2019
Godliness

:: 2 Peter 1:3-5

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, *godliness*...

I imagine everyone in this room knows someone you would describe as being godly. Who is that person who comes to mind when you think about someone who is godly?

- Parent
- Person who led you to Christ/discipled you
- Pastor/Church Leader

What makes that person godly? Why do you describe them that way? We usually think of things like the character they exhibit or the knowledge they have about God and the way they live out their faith.

Here's the real question for today: Do you see yourself as being godly? Many would say no to that, although Peter tells us that God has given us everything we need for a godly life. We may think of a godly person being someone like Billy Graham or someone who has the national spotlight. But godliness is not just for "super-Christians." Peter says all followers of Jesus should add to our faith godliness!

Jerry Bridges wrote an amazing book I will refer to multiple times today called *The Practice of Godliness*. In it he writes: "It is both the privilege and duty of every Christian to pursue godliness."

What is godliness? I want to give you several ways to think about this by defining the term, each getting simpler until you have something really bite sized to hang on to.

The term is from the Greek word eusebeia

(yü-sê-bā-ä...you-say-bay-a), which literally means “well-worship.”

To worship well reflects an attitude of one’s life to live with a sense of God’s presence and a desire motivated by love to be pleasing to Him in all things we say, do and think.

A godly life is a life of worship that has a right view of God as the power behind our worship and a love for God leading us to do everything in a way that pleases Him.

Here’s a simpler definition from Jerry Bridges:

“Godliness is a devotion to God which results in a life that is pleasing to Him.”

Here’s the Joel Owen paraphrase, take it home with you, version of that definition:

Godliness is devotion in motion!

Last week we looked at the characteristic of perseverance and the call we have as Christians to endure in our faith to the end of our lives. Christian perseverance is motivated by godliness. How do I persevere in my faith? Be devoted to God in such a way that the actions of my life please Him. When we ask the question, “What makes a person godly?” We can answer by saying, “They have a devotion to God that impacts every motion of their life.”

Again, godliness is something for all of us to strive for- this is something God has given us everything we need in order to develop it in our lives. But it takes effort on our part to walk in whole-hearted devotion to God. When Paul wrote Timothy he encouraged him to train himself to be godly.

:: 1 Timothy 4:7-8

7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.

8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Paul tells Timothy that godliness requires exertion and training. The Greek word for training, or discipline in some translations, is *gymnazō* (*güm-nă-zō*; *goom-nad-zo*). This is where we get our English word gymnasium. The actual definition means to exercise naked...so there’s that. Did you know that in the 8th century BC it was common for the runners of the marathon in the Greek games to competed naked? I don’t recommend exercising sans clothing in our culture, and I’m pretty sure the people at the Y would frown on that as well! This word is meant to convey, whether using body or mind, you exercise vigorously. Godliness isn’t something that just happens to you. You train yourself for godliness. My

Pastor growing up said, “You don’t stumble into godliness; you stumble into ruin.”
(Dr. Randy Davis)

If we want to be godly men and women we need to train ourselves to be devoted to God in such a way that the actions of our lives are pleasing to Him. Here is the second thing Paul told Timothy in the verse we just looked at: *godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.* Sure, physical training has value. But godliness brings value to every aspect of your life. And it also prepares you for the life to come. In heaven we will be singularly devoted to God and perfectly worship Him for all eternity. Why not get a jump start on that now!?

I want to spend the last part of the time we have together this morning looking at what allows us to have a deep, abiding devotion to God that motivates the actions of our lives to be pleasing to Him.

There are three things we need to train ourselves in if we are going to be devoted to God so that the actions of our life please Him.

1. **Desire for God**
2. **Fear of God**
3. **Love of God**

Devotion to God is the source of all godly character.

When you think of what separates a godly person from a moral person, or a benevolent person, it is the element of devotion to God. We see incredibly moral people all around us that we wouldn’t describe as godly because they don’t know God. We see incredibly philanthropic and generous people all around who we would not describe as godly because the source of their generosity is not devotion to God. To have godly character requires a person to do everything they do out of a profound devotion to God. When we are motivated to do things in our lives by our devotion to God, it’s a godly action.

To grow in our devotion to God we need the three things I mentioned just a minute ago.

Fear of God and love of God form the foundation of true devotion to God, while the desire for God is the highest expression of that devotion.

If we are to add to our faith godliness, these are the things I believe we need to know and understand in order to do that. Let’s take just a few minutes and look at each of them.

Fear of God:

This is an element we don’t talk much about in our society. I think many people don’t truly understand what it means to have a biblical fear of God. As a result

our devotion to God sometimes wanes. In his book, *Principles of Conduct*, John Murray wrote, "The fear of God is the soul of godliness."

Biblically there are two ways to think about the fear of God.

a. Anxious Dread

i. Judgment for sin for the unbeliever

When Adam and Eve sinned against God they hid from His presence because they feared the judgment they faced outside of the perfect fellowship they had always experienced. In Romans 3 Paul describes a godless culture and concludes by saying the distinguishing mark of the godless is that there is no fear of God in their eyes.

ii. Discipline against sin for the believer

As followers of Jesus we have been delivered from the wrath of God against sin, but we still understand there is discipline from God against sinful conduct. In the same way a loving parent will correct a disobedient child, God will discipline us and hold us accountable for our sinful behavior in an effort to train us to be more like Jesus.

The second element of fear of God is how we should most fully relate to Him:

b. Honor, Reverence, Awe

As Christians we hold God in the highest respect and live in absolute awe of him. This is an attitude of our hearts that responds to God in adoration and love. As a kid I can remember having both these responses to my Dad. There were times I knew I had messed up and broken a family rule or done something stupid worthy of punishment and I lived in the anxious dread of my Dad finding out because I knew the punishment could be harsh. I also remember having a reverence for my Dad and holding him in high honor- not because I was forced to, or else face his wrath, but because he was strong and wise and gracious. Our relationship with God is meant to be this way. This fear of God is the soul of godliness.

The second posture of our heart that helps us develop godliness is love of God.
Love of God:

God showed His love for us by sending Jesus to die in our place and take the wrath of God we deserved in order to offer us freedom from sin. But it's not enough to simply believe God loves you- He wants each of us to personalize that love and be gripped by the realization that apart from Him we have no ability to truly love anyone or anything.

:: 1 John 4:7-8

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Love of God results in turning our lives completely over to Him. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was

raised again.”

Because we recognized the depth of God’s love for us, it spurs us toward deeper love and affection for Him, so that we no longer live to please ourselves, but to please Him above everything else.

That leads us to the final element of a godly life:

Desire for God

Devotion to God is driven by a passionate desire for God. The Psalmist wrote:

:: Psalm 42:1-2

1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

When you know God intimately and have a growing passion for his glory, majesty and holiness you will find yourself in a place where there is excitement in spending time with God by reading your Bible, praying, listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit and engaging with other Christ-followers for the purpose of fellowship with God.

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a desire for God that will enhance your devotion to Him.

When we truly desire God, everything else in life comes into focus in light of His glory. The things that at one time seemed so important, fade away in order that we may have a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus. This is exactly how Paul felt when he wrote to the Philippian Church.

:: Philippians 3:4b-11

4 ...If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee;

6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

When Paul's life was changed by Jesus, his focus on what was important was also changed forever. All that he once considered so important was now as good as garbage to him compared to knowing Jesus.

I pray that we can say like Paul, "I want to know Christ!"

As we fear God, love Him and grow in our desire for Him we will become devoted to God in a way that can only be described as godly!

Life Group Discussion Questions