

Message Series: In Pursuit of Godliness

Message One: The Meaning of Godliness

1 Timothy 6:3-11 *If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,*

4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,

5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain,

7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Synopsis: The goal of this message on The Meaning of Godliness is to instruct believers in how to achieve their full potential as individuals who are living lives of godliness to the fullest, seeking after God with all their hearts, and striving to fill their lives with more of Him in everything they do.

INTRODUCTION: As Christians, we have been assigned a task.

First Timothy 4:8 *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.*

Paul says our assignment is to pursue godliness, because it is profitable both for the life we now live and the life we will live forever as believers.

This means we need to understand clearly what godliness is and what it is not.

It is possible to have a false kind of godliness because Paul warned Timothy about this trap.

2 Timothy 3:5 *having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.*

It is crucial that we understand the difference between true godliness and its mere “form.”

The Greek word for “form” means a shape, a silhouette, or an outline, not the full substance.

When you see a person’s shadow, you are seeing only their silhouette.

What this means for the issue of godliness is that it’s possible to look the part of a godly person without having any reality.

How do you know if you’re looking at the shadow instead of the real thing?

Because the Bible says that false godliness has no spiritual power attached to it.

It’s like putting on a Superman outfit but not being able to fly.

Someone who is impersonating Superman has the form of power and of flight, and the attire of power and of flight, but without the accompanying power to pull off what the form declares can be done, this form is useless.

The person wearing this outfit had better not be jumping off any buildings.

This form of godliness without real power is called religion.

Religion gives the impression of something related to God that’s real.

You can look religious, you can use religious vocabulary, and you can carry a Bible, and yet still be devoid of God’s power.

Many of us know what it is like to go to church for years and not be changed; to be in the “vicinity” of God and not have the power to make us more like Him, which is more Godly.

Three are things we need to understand about Godliness.

1. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GODLINESS IS NOT

It is possible to have all the outward trappings of godliness with no inner reality.

For many people, church is God's donut shop—a sweet place with no substance.

True godliness has His power attached to it.

Religion by itself can provide us with these outward forms while not providing any power.

Many religious people fall into this trap.

Godliness is not an event you attend and leave unchanged.

2. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT GODLINESS IS A LIFESTYLE THAT CONSISTENTLY REFLECTS GOD'S CHARACTER

Living in the light of His presence puts you on the road to true godliness.

The godly person is obsessed with God's presence.

A godly person is consistently evaluating things from God's perspective.

Godliness requires that you agree with God in everything He says.

Challenging God means you have set yourself up as your own idol.

Godliness requires a prior decision that God's Word is true, period.

Romans 3:4 *By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."*

3. WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT THERE ARE ENEMIES OF GODLINESS

Worldliness is the devil's tool to combat true godliness.



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2 Timothy 2:16 *But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness,*

This world's system is firmly under the devil's control.

Worldliness is a mindset that leaves God out of the equation.

Christians cannot breathe the "air" of worldliness and still be Godly.

The world is an alien environment for the Christian.

THE DONUT SHOP ILLUSTRATION: Lots of people like to go to the donut shop because everything in there is sweet.

Everything tastes so good.

But no matter how often you go to the donut shop, you're probably not better off health wise for being there.

In fact, the more often you go, the worse off you will be because there is no nutritional value in donuts.

For many people, church is God's donut shop.

They want to hear a sweet song, a sweet word, everything sprinkled with sugar—but no real spiritual substance.

That's having a form of godliness while denying its power.

HIGHWAY DRIVING ILLUSTRATION: If I'm driving down the highway and a policeman pulls up beside me, I'm forced to drive differently.

His presence affects my driving.

My foot goes off of the accelerator and left toward the brake.

If I am going faster than him, but still within the speed limit, I won't pass him because I am affected by his presence.

However, if he drives off, and I am no longer being watched, I can go back to my same old ways.

The reason I can go back to my sinful lifestyle of driving over the speed limit is that I am no longer driving in the light of his presence.

The moment I see that he left me and I can dismiss him from my mind, my lifestyle changes.

When it came to driving, I had become a sinful man.

However, if the policeman showed up again, I got holy again.

The reason I would get holy is because his presence would've shown up.

That's the effect of living and acting with an awareness of someone's presence.

IMPORTANT TAKE-AWAYS:

Too many people are not experiencing more of God because they don't live in His presence—they only visit His presence.

As long as you are visiting, you can leave.”

“Religion can give the impression of something related to God that's not real.

You can look religious, wear religious clothes, use religious vocabulary, and even carry a religious book, the Bible.

You can hang out with religious people, and yet there can be no power.”

“Once you say, ‘I don't think God's right,’ you have judged God.

If you judge God, you have become your own god, and another god is an idol.”

“You don't have to be a criminal to be worldly.

All you have to do is leave God out of the equation and you just became worldly.”

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