

Message Three - The Path to Godliness

1 Timothy 4:4-8 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;

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.

SYNOPSIS: The goal of this message on The Path to Godliness is to stress the importance of exercising our spiritual lives the way some people exercise their bodies to get in shape, and to explain the benefits of disciplining ourselves spiritually and abiding in the presence of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: Everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior has been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

You have been transferred from a place of spiritual impoverishment to a place of spiritual riches.

You have been removed from the kingdom of Satan and have been seated at the right hand of Jesus Christ in heavenly places in the spiritual realm.

All of us know the struggle that it is to leave the worldly life behind and partake of the new spiritual realities afforded to us.

In fact, we all know what it is to bring the old life into the new reality.

Today, we have Jesus within us.

The goal of this reality is the production of godliness in the life of God's children.



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The whole point of the salvation experience is to make us godly men and women.

We've defined godliness as a lifestyle consistent with the character of God, and godlessness is a lifestyle inconsistent with the character of God.

Godliness does not mean perfection, but it does mean consistency.

It means that it becomes normative for us to pursue Godliness, and to recognize when we are not Godly.

Paul says in **1 Timothy 4** that if you want to be Godly, you must **discipline** yourself.

The Greek word for discipline is our word "gymnasium."

You go to a gym to work out and get in shape—not to create muscles, but to build the muscles you already have.

The gym is designed to develop the physical attributes you already possess.

The reality is that a lot of times you don't want to work out, but your health is more important than your feelings.

So you must make a quality decision.

If you are spiritually flabby, the soul is out of shape.

How do you know you're out of shape?

If ungodliness rules, it is because you are out of shape spiritually.

One thing that is true about physical exercise is that there's a big difference between intending to do it and actually doing it.

We wake up intending to go to the gym, but the thought of that extra time in bed overrules our desire to get in shape.

Your workout regimen for Godliness has to go beyond good intentions.

It is going to require a decision to engage in a workout program to get rid of the flab in your soul.

Unfortunately, most Christians are satisfied with one weekly "workout" on Sunday morning.



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But if they only work out spiritually once a week and then the rest of the week do the opposite, they wasted their once-a-week workout session.

What most of us are doing is going to a spiritual workout session on Sunday and then going to the donut shop on Monday, canceling out whatever workout routine we did on Sunday, turning it into merely a religious exercise in futility.

Godliness is much more than that.

1. YOU MUST USE YOUR “MEMBERSHIP” IN CHRIST TO DEVELOP GODLINESS

It's possible to have a membership without using the benefits of that membership.

When you accepted Jesus Christ, you got a membership that gave you access to His spiritual gymnasium for the purpose of exercising godliness.

This workout is not to create Godliness, but to develop the Godliness you already possess by virtue of your salvation.

2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

Even though you're converted, your soul is living in the flesh, which still produces ungodly thinking, appetites and actions that need cleansing.

The reason so many Christians stay defeated for so long is that their souls are out of shape.

Spiritual fitness needs to take priority over physical fitness.

Physical exercise is profitable for a little while, but godliness is profitable for now and for eternity.

If you're working your body out more than you're working your soul out, you have your priorities mixed up.

Bodily exercise may affect the quality of your life, but it will not affect the quantity.

2. EXERCISING GODLINESS MEANS PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.

The gym you need to attend to develop your godliness muscles is Jesus' gym.

Jesus is the source of all godliness

Jesus' indwelling presence in us is the secret of godliness.

Colossians 1:27 *To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

The more time you spend exercising Godliness, the more you will see changes.

When you exercise Godliness, your spiritual muscles will begin to grow.

Another benefit is that the "clothes" of the old ungodly ways won't fit anymore.

If you want to grow more, get a "workout partner;" help someone else grow in Godliness and you can grow together while providing accountability for one another.

3. YOU CANNOT HAVE GOD'S BLESSINGS WITHOUT CULTIVATING GODLINESS

Too many Christians come to church primarily to get a blessing.

The problem is that people want to be blessed, but they don't equally want to be Godly.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to be blessed, but when we disconnect blessings from Godliness we're asking God for something He's not free to give.

Godliness is the foundation of blessing.

GOD'S PHARMACY: The way the Trinity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit works can be illustrated by the workings of a pharmacy.

God is the manufacturer who has produced all the medication we need to cure the ungodliness within us.

Jesus is the doctor, the Great Physician, who knows what's wrong and knows what to prescribe from God's pharmacy to bring about the healing of the malady of ungodliness.



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But we also need a pharmacist to fill the doctor's prescription so we can apply the medicine to heal the malady.

That's the work of the Holy Spirit, to deliver what Jesus has prescribed.

Jesus said if we abide in Him and His Word abides in us, we will experience the healing He has to offer.

When Jesus calls in the prescription and the pharmacist fills it, that prescription has within it the power we need to get well.

But the power in the prescription is only realized in me when I take the medicine that was prescribed.

SMOG: We are told that Beijing, China, has such a major smog problem that during the day it looks like night.

The smog is so thick in the city that they put up big screens like those in Times Square in New York so people can see a picture of the sun rising.

The sun rises, but the people in Beijing can't see it because of all the junk in the air.

We have so much junk in the air that we don't see the SON rising; we don't see Jesus rising as the centerpiece of life.

He's been camouflaged by the smog of ungodliness—by our old ways of thinking and acting.

The answer is to clear up the smog so our view of the Son becomes clear.

THE LONE RANGER: Many of us grew up watching the television series The Lone Ranger. We all admired Silver, the Lone Ranger's beautiful horse.

We also learned early on how the Lone Ranger got Silver.

He was a Texas Ranger who got ambushed with other Rangers and left for dead.

But he was saved by Tonto, and while the Lone Ranger was recovering in a canyon, he saw Silver, a wild stallion.

The Lone Ranger roped Silver and tried to ride him, but kept getting bucked off.



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But he rode Silver until the horse was tamed and came to understand that he had a new master.

If you really want to be godly, give God the opportunity to ride your back; don't buck Him off.

Pray, "Ride me, King Jesus, ride me in this situation, in this crisis, on this job, with my money, until I come under Your lordship and become useful to You."

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND HISTORY AND CULTURE: The Greek word for discipline is the word from which we get our English word "gymnasium."

Since it means discipline, we have come to associate it with physical fitness, but in the Bible, this word is used for spiritual discipline.

IMPORTANT SERMON LINES TO REMEMBER: This message explains the surpassing value of exercising ourselves toward godliness over simply using all of our efforts to improve our physical bodies.

This message will also call Christians to the higher standard of pursuing godliness for spiritual gain, to their benefit and God's glory.

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