

YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!
Winter 2018-19 Leader Commentary



Unit 2: What Matters Most
Session 3: It's Good to be Godly (see pp. 132-135)

The Question: What does it take for me to be godly?

The Point: We develop godliness in our lives by training and practice.

Background Passage: 1 Timothy 4

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 4:4-5,7-10,14-16

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “What does it take for me to be godly?” and drive home this one truth: We develop godliness in our lives by training and practice.

Focus These Points

Created by God
(1 Tim. 4:4-5)

The apostle Paul offered some specific suggestions on how Timothy could aid the Ephesian Christians to grow in godly living. These ideas included exposure to genuine faith, training in the godliness, and active service for God. Paul described the false teaching in 4:1-5. Then he urged Timothy to point these things out to the brothers. Some church members had submitted to the erroneous teachings related to marriage and food. The remaining believers, however, could be protected by proper instruction. In addressing the false teachings related to food, Paul built on Peter’s vision (Acts 10:9-16) and his own teaching (1 Cor. 8:8) in that food, in itself, does not bring us closer to God or drive us farther away. These restrictions went all the way back to the time of giving of the Ten Commandments and the development of the Levitical laws. When Peter had his vision of the sheet being lowered from heaven, it was a sign that God had opened all the storehouses of heaven for His people. Nothing was forbidden as long as God’s people received it with the proper attitude.

Paul clearly stated that nothing is to be refused if it is accepted with “thanksgiving” because all that God creates is “good.”

In the larger picture the spiritual principle in these verses applies well beyond the scope of food and what we consume as a part of our diet. In fact, the broader scope of God’s provision and blessing on all that He touches impacts the pursuit of godliness for all believers. Yet many of the regulations related to food were perceived to impact a person’s pursuit of godliness. Paul contended that we must work toward godliness; he even encouraged Timothy to train in godliness.

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When it comes to our eating, a prayer of thanksgiving recognizes God's provision of our physical needs and for the food we are able to enjoy. Spiritual transformation takes place in the life of a believer as he or she acknowledges God as the source of the things they enjoy—all the good things God provides.

Compared to God ***(1 Tim. 4:7-10)***

A well-grounded teacher knows what teachings to reject. “Pointless and silly myths” fit that category.

Paul made clear that false teaching at Ephesus absolutely lacked credibility. He urged Timothy and others to have nothing to do with such teaching. Instead, training in godliness should be the supreme goal. To “train yourself” means to discipline yourself as athletes discipline their bodies. The word for *train* translates the word from which we get *gymnasium*. Results for an athlete come after diligent, consistent physical effort in the gym.

Christians are to train themselves in “godliness.” This word combines such ideas as love for God, reverence toward Him, and total commitment to live according to His will. Godliness results from a knowledge and acceptance of the gospel truth of Christ's work of grace. It is living a life of loving service to others in Jesus' name and obeying His teachings. The Christian disciplines of Bible study, prayer, worship, meditation, giving, service, and witnessing are essential to godly living.

The benefit of training in godliness outlasts in every way physical training. In other words, godliness profits every aspect of life—emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental. The effects of spiritual discipline affect us now and also for the life to come. The benefits of godliness endure for eternity.

Paul identified a third “trustworthy saying” in this letter. The term emphasizes the high value of the statement to the believer. Verse 8 may be the actual saying, while verse 10 serves to explain it further. The point of the saying is that all Christians should discipline themselves to live a godly life.

Continue Toward God ***(1 Tim. 4:14-16)***

Paul insisted that Timothy not neglect the gift that was his, meaning he should be exercising his gift faithfully. By “gift” Paul meant a God-provided ability. Verse 13 seems to suggest the gift was that of teaching and preaching. Although verse 14 was written personally to Timothy in regard to his spiritual gifting, the same directive can be applied to all believers. We are not to neglect the spiritual gifting God has given us. These spiritual gifts are intended for service to God and to the church.

The way to keep our private and public lives consistent and thus protect our witness is to be on guard at all times. It also means to watch your teaching, which must be consistent with Scripture

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and be clearly presented. Persevere in these things. Paul did not mean Timothy's faithful living and serving would save him. The idea is that his faithfulness would confirm to himself that he was saved. His confidence would be affirmed by his example. His message would encourage a response of faith and obedience in his hearers.