

*The Pursuit of Godliness*

A message delivered to  
**MAYER COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**September 12, 1999**

**TITLE: The pursuit of Godliness**

**TEXT: Various**

**THEME: Godliness**

**THRUST: Am I pursuing godliness or worldliness?**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Bible says? "... godliness with contentment is great gain."

Just what is *godliness*?

This word comes from the Greek word *eusebeia*  
and when traced through its roots it has to do  
with a manner of life that is *worthy of God*.

This word is only used 15 times in the New Testament,  
the majority of them by Paul, the rest by Peter.

According to Peter in Acts 3:12

*godliness* is something *we* manifest.

In other words, it is not a gift that is given to us  
like the robe of righteousness  
or Spiritual gifts.

It is something that becomes part of our character.

In Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:7

"exercise yourself unto godliness" (KJV)

"train yourself to be godly" (NIV)

it is something that grows *within* us ...  
something that matures through exercise.

What God in his sovereignty may yet do on a world scale I do not claim to know:  
but what he will do for the plain man or woman who seeks his face I believe I do  
know and can tell others. Let any man turn to God in earnest, let him begin to  
exercise himself unto godliness, let him seek to develop his powers of spiritual  
receptivity by trust and obedience and humility, and the results will exceed  
anything he may have hoped in his leaner and weaker days. ~A. W. Tozer  
(1897–1963)

According to verse eight of that same passage

*godliness* is something that is profitable for all things,  
both in this life and in the life to come.

Now, there are not many things that we can do

where we will reap benefits  
both now and for eternity.

One of the critical errors that cropped up in the early Church had to do with this truth that *godliness is profitable*.

Error is very subtle.

If your sights on the target are only off by a few degrees, you will miss!

**e.g.** If we set ourselves to the task of financial security, it is a great endeavor for here now, and for our future but does nothing for eternity.

In fact, it may have a detrimental effect on our “eternal security” because “riches” is a snare.

*That* is what Paul was referring to when he told Timothy that there are those that *suppose* that *godliness* is the *means* to great riches.

All you have to do is turn on your TV to a Christian program to see how deeply entrenched *that error* has become in modern Christian thought and theology.

Paul states that such individuals have been *robbed of the truth*.

You may begin to feel very comfortable this morning because you say:

“I don’t believe in nor subscribe to the *prosperity gospel*.”

What we need to realize is that Paul was using worldly riches as an example of the deceitful error of being robbed of Truth.

If we are not practicing *godliness* we have been robbed of Truth.

If we have been robbed of Truth, we are involved with a lie!

Because, truth is whole, and, a half-truth is a whole lie!

Paul shows us more of this relationship between *truth and godliness* in his words to Titus

**Titus 1:1** Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness (NIV)

The *knowledge* referred to is *full knowledge*.

The way the word is used here  
*knowledge = acknowledgment (KJV)*

So, the Apostle shows that *godliness* can be attained through *full acknowledgment* of the Truth.

In other words, *Truth* is not something we take a piece of and reject the rest.

*Truth* is something that is accepted in its entirety ...

it is not to be bisected, dissected, sliced or diced.  
It is *Truth*, a total package.  
But there is more here than the *acknowledgment of Truth*.  
Wrapped up in this word is also the idea  
of becoming *fully acquainted with the Truth*.  
It is Here, at this point,  
*the full acknowledgment of Truth*,  
by *becoming fully acquainted with the Truth*  
that many Christians are failing  
and are not demonstrating true *godliness*.

## 2 Timothy 3:1 & 5

### • ***Holding to a form of godliness:***

*appearance* but no substance.  
to *fashion. i.e.*, make it the way *we* want it to be  
making adjustments to the parts till we have a  
*form* of the original but no real functioning capability,  
much like abstract art.  
The reason this can happen is because  
we do not want to deal with *Truth*  
in its absolute form,  
we manipulate truth into an abstract form.  
It still has the *appearance* of godliness  
but it is crippled in its ability to function.

Dr. Richard Halverson noted: "We don't want ministers anymore, we want CEOs. We don't want prophets, we want politicians. We don't want godliness, we want experience. We don't want spirituality, we want efficiency. We don't want humility, we want charisma. We don't want godly authority, we want relational skill."

It appears that we got exactly what we wanted!  
The absurdity of this is that we *hold on to it!*  
Whatever we have created,  
from an image of who God is and  
a perception of how God must act,  
to a belief of who we are and what we are required to do.  
We think we have it all figured out.

### • ***denying the power of godliness***

You may be tempted to take comfort  
from the word *deny* – don't.

To *deny* means:

to *contradict*;

to deny by way of *disowning* a person;

to *forsake or renounce* a thing;  
not to *accept* something offered.

Therefore, we can be guilty of *denying the power of godliness*,  
both by things that we do and things we don't do.

Let's ask ourselves this,

"Is the godliness that I portray  
a manner of life that is worthy of God?"

"Are my hours in front of the TV *worthy of God*?"

"Is my conversation with my family *worthy of God*?"

What about with my friends?

"Are my thoughts *worthy of God*?"

"Are my financial dealings *worthy of God*?"

"Do I exercise my spiritual gifts  
in a manner *worthy of God*?"

We could ask these questions for the rest of the day....  
and, perhaps miss your situation!

I challenge you to ask God,

"Is there any practice in my life  
that is *unworthy* of You?"

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We have spent a lot of time in this church over the years  
speaking about and underscoring the truth of 1 Peter 5:7

"Casting all your cares upon Him because it matters to Him the things that concern you."

The beauty of this awesome fact is  
that the Infinite Almighty God is interested in finite you!

I fear however, that we have not balanced our knowledge.

Perhaps, we have picked this truth because it appeals *to us*  
and have ignored the truth of godliness  
because it requires something *of us*.

I read a comment recently about our tendency as Christians.

"We are too ready to take from the hand of God  
while we ignore His heart!"

Godliness means that I have captured the heart of God  
in the details of my life!

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*Godliness with contentment is great gain....*

Let us begin to *exercise ourselves unto godliness!*

**CONCLUSION:** Hymn #295 *Spirit of God* (vs. 1,3,5)