

1 Timothy

I. Introduction

A. **1 Timothy 4:9-11** . . . It (*the statement that disciplining yourself for the purpose of godliness is profitable for all things*) is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. [10] For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. [11] Prescribe and teach these things.

B. Pray

II. The profitability of godliness. Four considerations from **vs 10-11**.

A. [9] It (*the statement in vs 8 that disciplining yourself for the purpose of godliness is profitable for all things*) is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.

1. In other words, the benefits of an intentional, disciplined, and continuous pursuit of godliness are real, and you can depend on experiencing them. And in addition, they far exceed the benefits of any form of intentional, disciplined, and repeated physical exercise, celibacy, or restricted eating plan.
2. Why? Because godliness gives you mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health – which in turn enables you to live the most sensible, well-rounded, satisfying, and peace-filled life possible in this messed-up world. But the benefits of godliness are not confined to this life, because a serious pursuit of godliness **in this life** builds into you a longing for eternity with God and prepares you to experience the best that eternity with God has for you.
3. Which raises the question, if godliness is this rewarding – both in this life and the next – then why doesn't every Christian pursue it with zeal?
 - a. Why do some Christians treat godliness as a restrictive lifestyle built on old-fashioned ideals and grandma's morality?
 - b. Or, why do some Christians treat godliness as if it is only or mostly measured by the externals of the Christian life – such as the kind of church you attend, the theology you adhere to, regular involvement in the activities and programs of the church, reading your Bible, praying, and tithing?
 - c. Or, why do some Christians treat godliness as an option?

4. In my experience, the primary reason godliness is not treated as seriously as it ought to be is double-mindedness. Christians want the best possible life in eternity – which is the reason many become a Christian, while also wanting the best possible life now – which is why they merge their Christianity with their love of the world and their desire for some of the pleasures of the flesh.
 - a. Yet John cautions us about this double-mindedness in **1 John 2:15–17**, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. [17] The world is passing away (*it is temporary*), and also its lusts (*those things that gratify our worldly desires are also temporary*); but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”
 - b. James goes one step further and urges us to get rid of double-mindedness by purifying our heart (*the home of our desires, longings, fears, and values, and the motivating source of our thoughts, attitudes, words, and deeds*) (**James 4:8**).
 - c. To help us in our pursuit of godliness, Peter combines God’s doing with our doing, and adds the valuable outcome of godliness in **2 Peter 1:2–11**, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; [3] seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. [4] For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. [5] Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your **faith** supply **moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, **knowledge**, [6] and in your knowledge, **self-control**, and in your self-control, **perseverance**, and in your perseverance, **godliness**, [7] and in your godliness, **brotherly kindness**, and in your brotherly kindness, **love**. [8] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. [10] Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to **make certain** about His calling and

choosing you; for **as long as you practice these things**, you will never stumble; [11] for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”

5. To summarize: godliness is profitable, advantageous, beneficial for all things, because it brings about many good things in this present life and also in the life to come.
- B. [10] For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. [11] Prescribe and teach these things.
1. Though most of us are not in recognized positions of ministry, **vs 10-11** provides four things we all ought to consider –
 - a. **First**, it is important to promote and nurture godliness in yourself and others.
 - b. **Second**, there is a significant difference between the living God and imaginary, man-made gods.
 - c. **Third**, the phrase, “God is the Savior of all men, especially believers” requires an explanation that we can use in talking to others about our faith in God and the truths of God.
 - d. **Fourth**, in talking to family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, strangers, and fellow believers, we can and should bring into our conversations the importance of godliness, the difference between our living God and imaginary, man-made gods, and the fact that though Jesus died for all, only those who repent, believe, and live accordingly are given the gift of eternal life.
 2. **First**, it is important to promote and nurture godliness in yourself and others.
 - a. As I have said in the past, I believe the pursuit of godliness is our most important pursuit once we repent and come to faith in Jesus Christ. Why?
 - (1) Because godliness cures our mental, emotional, and social ills.
 - (2) It kills off pride and arrogance, and replaces these deadly evils with godly humility, compassion, mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness.
 - (3) It kills off irrational fears, calms our natural fears, and nurtures godly courage.

- (4) It produces inward peace and a settled joy – enabling us to remain peaceful and joyful regardless of the circumstances.
 - (5) It makes us sensible and gives us wisdom for daily living.
 - (6) It shows us how to love as love is to be shown.
 - (7) It removes double-mindedness, transforms our thinking, guides our speaking, and conforms our behavior to the likeness of Jesus Christ.
 - (8) It reinforces personal integrity, that is, an honesty with ourselves about ourselves that enables us to rightly judge ourselves regarding any and all of our choices and behavior.
 - (9) And in the church, godliness promotes and protects the message, the spiritual health of the church, the unity of the believers, the practice of spiritual gifts, proper care for the poor and needy, the activity of evangelism and missions, and the building up of the body of Christ to a level of Christian maturity that is equal to the maturity of Jesus Christ.
- b. Therefore, my primary goal as your pastor is to promote godliness in you. And it is my longing that you will work at promoting godliness in yourself and in the lives of those around you.
3. The **second** truth from **vs 10-11** that we ought to consider is that there is a significant difference between the living God and imaginary, man-made gods.
 - a. Down through history, people have created gods in their imagination and written about them in their stories. They have hand-crafted idols, worshiped created things – like the sun, animals, or ancestors, and they have treated inanimate objects as gods.
 - b. Of all the gods mankind has created, most are figments of their imagination, many are inanimate, and of the few that are alive – none are superior to those who worship them.
 - (1) And yet, even now, many worship false gods or idols as if they are superior to us.
 - (2) When I say that many worship false gods or idols, even now, I am speaking of our country where many worship money, science, the health care system, pharmaceuticals, our system of government, and even politicians.
 - c. It ought to be obvious that there are numerous and significant differences between the living God and the imaginary, man-made gods, but today we will look at just two of the differences.

- (1) One of the differences is that the living God was neither created, nor can He die. He is eternal in both directions – having no beginning and no end. Nothing is superior to Him. Nothing can constrain or limit Him. No one is wise enough to counsel Him. Everything that exists, exists because He created it and sustains it.
 - (2) Paul affirms this in **Colossians 1:16-17**, “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. [17] He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”
 - (3) A second difference between the living God and imaginary, man-made gods is that the living God speaks. He has spoken in the past and He speaks today.
 - (a) We know this because some of what He has said about what would happen (*prophecy*), has happened.
 - (b) Some of what He said in the OT law still affects how we live as Christians, today.
 - (c) And some of what He currently says convicts us, leads us, imparts wisdom to us, comforts us, and gives us insight and understanding about the scriptures and life.
 - d. The point is, only the living God is superior to us and speaks.
4. The **third** thing we ought to consider in **vs 10-11** is the phrase, “God is the Savior of all men, especially believers.” We are considering this phrase because it requires an explanation that we can use in talking to others about our faith in God and the truths of God.
- a. At first reading, this may seem like a strange thing to say, yet in light of the whole NT, it makes good sense.
 - (1) For example, in **1 Timothy 1:15**, we read that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – which implies everyone.
 - (2) In **1 Timothy 2:4**, it says that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth – again implying everyone.
 - b. In other words, Jesus died for all sinners, but only some repent, believe, live accordingly, and receive the gift of eternal life.
 - (1) **John 3:16** affirms this: “For God so loved **the world** (*implies everyone*), that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever** (*implies less than everyone*) believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

- (2) **John 3:36** confirms **John 3:16**: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who **does not obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”
- c. So yes, Jesus died for every person born into this world, and in this way He is the one and only Savior of all mankind.
- (1) Therefore, His death is universal in scope, which means He paid the penalty of sin for everyone.
- (2) However, though His death is universal in scope, only those who repent, believe, and live accordingly receive the benefit of His death by being given the gift of eternal life.
5. And **fourth, vs 11** says, Prescribe and teach these things.
- a. The word “prescribe” is a stronger word than teach, and it implies commanding or requiring those you are talking to to take what you are saying very seriously.
- b. However, most of us are not in a position of authority over the rest of us in our church, so I am going to apply this in a general, less commanding or requiring way.
- c. In talking to family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, strangers, and fellow believers, we can and should bring into our conversations the importance of godliness, the difference between our living God and imaginary, man-made gods, and the fact that though Jesus died for all, only those who repent, believe, and live accordingly are given the gift of eternal life.
- d. Obviously, there are far more things to talk about with those around us than these three things. Yet we ought to keep these three things in mind so that at appropriate times, we can bring them into our conversation – for God’s sake and the sake of those who need to hear them or be reminded of them.

III. Conclusion

- A. I want to conclude by reading **Ezekiel 3:17-21**. Though it is written to those in leadership, the essence of its message is a reminder to all of us of the importance of speaking truth to those around us. Listen carefully as I read.
- B. **Ezekiel 3:17-21**, “Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. [18] When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. [19] Yet if you have warned the wicked and

he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. [20] Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he will die; [but if] you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. [21] However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself.”

- C. Speaking up is not a choice, it is an obligation – an obligation of love: love for God and love for the person who needs to hear truth. And though some of us are better at this than others, all of us can do our part – whether it be speaking up ourselves, or getting someone else to speak for us, be it a person, an audio file, a book, or the Bible itself.