

Training Yourself and Others in Godliness

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: 1 Timothy 4:7-8.

II. Godliness is devotion to God that results in a life that is pleasing to God.

A. Godliness begins with a person is devoted to God. God is the center of this person's life. (Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5)

B. A godly person whose life is God-like in quality and character.

C. Devotion to God is the foundation upon which Christ-like character is built.

D. God-like character principally involves two things.

1. Holiness generally means without sin. This is putting off ungodly character. (1 John 1:5)

2. Love involves putting on God-like qualities like compassion, forgiveness, forbearance etc. (1 John 4:8; Ephesians 4:22-24; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:12-14)

E. God is paramount and center in the godly person's life.

III. Growing in godliness requires devotion to God that results in God-like character.

A. There are three essential elements to devotion.

1. The fear of God has to do with awe and reverence for who God is in all His glory, holiness and majesty. (Isaiah 6; Revelation 1:12-16; Isaiah 11:1-3)

2. An understanding of the love God has for us comes from a fear of God. We can appreciate God's love as we understand the gap between us as creatures and Him as Creator. (2 Corinthians 5:14)

3. The fear of God and an understanding of the love of God create a desire for God Himself and fellowship with God. (Psalm 22:1-2; Psalm 27; Philippians 3:10)

4. We should continuously build and reinforce our devotion or there will be weak places in our character that are not supported by devotion.

B. These are six principles that will help us grow in God-like character.

1. Devotion to God is the only acceptable motivation for godly character.

2. The power for the Christian life comes from Christ, not from our own resolution, self-sufficiency, strength, merit or will power. (John 15:4-5; Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8-9)

3. Though the power comes from Christ, the responsibility for developing and displaying godly character is ours. We are 100% responsible for developing godly character, but we are also 100% dependent. (Philippians 2:12-13; Nehemiah 4:9)
4. Godly character involves putting off sinful traits and putting on godly traits. (Ephesians 4:22-24)
5. Godly character is well-rounded and balanced. (Galatians 5:22-23)
6. Growth is progressive and never finished. (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)

IV. Training in this verse is based off of Greek athletics and focuses on practicing toward an objective. Three things must be present in order for this type of training in godliness to occur.

- A. Training must include intense commitment to the objective. (Philippians 3:12-14)
- B. Training must include a coach or a teacher who holds us to the highest standards and corrects flaws. (2 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 6:4)
- C. Training must include practice.
 - a) This means we must practice and teach truth motivated by experiential knowledge. (Titus 1:1; 1 Corinthians 8:1)
 - b) This means we must accept personal responsibility for godliness.
 - c) Bringing someone else to the point of practicing godliness primarily happens through prayer. (Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:9)

Application questions:

1. What are the three essential elements of devotion to God? How do they relate to each other?

2. What does it mean to be both 100% responsible for developing godly character while also being 100% dependent on Christ for godliness?

3. Who are your spiritual coaches? How do they influence you toward godliness? Who do you train toward godliness?
