

Studies in Christianity Spiritual Maturity #5

S#1.

Continuing Toward Maturity

S#2.

Text : **II Pet. 1: 4-11 ; I Tim. 4: 6-10**

A. When you ask a little child how old he is the answer will seldom be simple. S#3.

1. I'm 7 ½ or I'm almost 8 or
2. They are eager to be more grown up.
3. God wants for His children to be just as eager to grow up in the faith.

I Pet. 2: 2 – Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

B. In Peter's second Epistle he again emphasized the importance of spiritual growth

1. God has made magnificent promises so you want to be sure to get them,

II Pet. 1: 3-4 – 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. S#4.

2. You started off with faith, but you need to be adding to that faith.

II Pet. 1: 5-7 – 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. S#5.

3. Maturing in this way is directly relevant to one's eternal salvation with God.

II Pet. 1: 8-11 – 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. S#6.

S#7.

C. Step by step we've been examining these characteristics to be added to our faith

1. We observed that God requires us to approach spiritual maturity with “diligence.”
 - a. It is not something that we can just wait to happen with the passing of time.
 - b. “*Spoude*” is also translated as haste, as earnestness and as effort.

2. We studied the need to separate one's self from evil, to seek **moral excellence**.
 - a. In the KJV this is translated as "**virtue**"
 - b. The Christian must change his mind leading to a changed life .. moral goodness.
3. We then saw that, like faith, moral goodness grows out of **knowledge** of God's word.
 - a. The quest for knowledge is neither an academic study nor meritorious work.
 - b. One cannot follow the standard unless he knows the standard.
Eph. 5: 10 – (walk as children of light) trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.
4. The one who leads a life characterized by moral goodness, must have **self-control**.
 - a. "*egkrateia*" the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions (tongue)
 - b. **Gal. 5: 23** ... Self-control is part of the fruit of the Spirit in one's life.
5. Strong faith is only of value if it will endure until the end, if it will **persevere**.
 - a. Jesus admonished us to "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."
 - b. At the end of Paul' life his claim to Heaven was, "I have kept the faith."

S#8.

D. With this lesson we will consider the importance of adding godliness to our faith.

1. We will consider what godliness is and is not.
2. We will consider how one adds godliness.
3. We will consider some of the short-term negative effects of godliness.
4. We will then consider the long-term benefit of godliness.

I. What does it mean to be a godly person ?

S#9.

A. Many just say it means "to be like God." Not an adequate definition.

S#10.

1. It is good to try to be like God, but no one can fully achieve that goal.
2. One can strive to be like God in many respects and NOT be godly.

B. What does it mean to be "godly" ?

1. "*eusebeia*" Is the word translated as godliness and also as "piety".
2. The word is defined as "reverence, respect, piety towards God, holiness."

C. There are a number of practical definitions given by theologians.

S#11.

1. The habitual doing of right things because of a fervent love for Christ.
2. A devotion to God that results in a life that is pleasing to Him.
3. Holy affections for God that results in a life lived for God.

4. An inward reverence and respect toward God that leads to an outward godlikeness in conduct.
5. Wiktionary : **godliness** .. The condition and quality of being **godly**, pious, scrupulously observant of all the teachings of one's religion, practicing virtue and avoiding sin.

S#12.

D. At its heart, godliness is a condition of heart, an attitude which molds character.

1. One does not live godly in order to be saved, **but** because he love God.
2. The greatest of all commandments is to have this attitude towards God.

Matt. 22: 37 – And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and all your mind.'

38 This is the great and foremost commandment."

3. My practical definition of "godliness":

The character of one who loves God with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind.

S#13.

II. Our texts instructs us to add godliness to our faith; how is that accomplished ?

S#14.

A. The wisdom of the Holy Spirit is apparent in the progression these are presented.

1. These are serious challenges for the faithful .."applying all diligence." (**I Pet 2 / Heb 5**)
2. "in your faith supply" These are principles that are ONLY of value to people of faith.
3. Moral excellence ... knowledge ... self-control ... perseverance ... godliness

S#15.

B. The Christian's entire relationship with God is based upon knowledge of Him.

1. Godliness is an attitude of heart but that attitude is based upon knowledge.
2. **Titus 1: 1** – Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, **2** in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

3. Knowledge leads to godliness and gaining knowledge about God is a godly act.

4. We seek more knowledge about God as we anticipate Heaven.

S#16.

- a. **Titus 1** .. "in the hope of eternal life"

- b. **II Pet. 1:11** .. "for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you."

* **This is in no way to imply that one can be godly enough to be saved.**

- a. **Rom. 6: 23** ... Salvation is a gift that is given, not a compensation for a godly life.

- b. **Eph. 2: 8** – For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

C. It takes spiritual discipline and self-control to add godliness to one's faith. S#17.

1. **I Tim. 4: 7** – But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.
On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.
2. Physical exercise has benefit for this life, **BUT** the benefit of godliness is eternal.
3. Your body will never stop making demands for satisfaction, you must master it.

D. No pain, No gain. The discipline of godliness requires a lifetime of effort. S#18.

1. It takes much practice to develop a godly heart.
Heb. 5: 14 – But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.
2. The entire Christian life is characterized by discipline to overcome ‘natural’ desires.
3. This is why the Spirit starts off with “**applying all diligence.**”
4. Even athletes who are masters of their sport continue to practice so they can reinforce the muscle-memory which they rely on in their games.
 - a. Imagine the horror of driving if you had to think about everything you do.
- * b. There must come a point when one's Christian life is lived by muscle memory.
- c. HOWEVER, even then he never stops practicing so as to keep that muscle memory.

III. It is important to develop a godly lifestyle, but doing so has some short-term negative consequences. S#19.**S#20.****A. It is natural for those who are wicked to be repulsed by those who seek godliness.**

1. **John 3: 19** – This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.
20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. **21** "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.
 - a. People who do wrong look for a dark place ... couples don't park under a light
 - b. Did you ever see a brightly lit bar ?
2. Have you ever been around a person who was so wicked they made your skin crawl? They were probably having the same response to you.
3. A person who does not want to be righteous does not like people who makes him feel wicked **or** guilty.
4. They feel no guilt when they are among their own. *Birds of a feather ...*

B. The Apostle warned us that godliness will bring about a negative response.

1. **II Tim. 2: 10** – Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, **S#21.** patience, love, perseverance, **11** persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! **12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. **13** But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
2. Those who are turned off or offended by righteousness will often lash out.
 - a. In excess of 10,000 Christians are killed because of their faith each year.
 - b. Few in this country are done physical harm, but some lose jobs, etc.
 - c. The ungodly will seek to embarrass you in the presence of others.

S#22.**C. One who will become a godly person must separate himself from evil influences.**

1. Sometimes one cannot be where he wants to be.
 - a. I had to leave a job at GM because of the ungodly atmosphere and the dishonesty.
 - b. I had to leave a bowling league because of the ungodly actions of teammates.
2. Sometimes one has to give up friends he has known and like for years.
 - a. When I married I had to replace my single friends with those who were married.
 - b. When I became a Christian I had to seek out Christian friends and learn how to ...
I Cor. 15: 33 – **Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals.**
 - c. One of the most often cited reason for convict reoffending is that they returned to the same social group they were in before they offended.
3. Recovering alcoholics do not hang out in bars. *Recovering sinner*
4. TV .. Video games .. Websites

IV. CONCLUSION ... Consider the long-term benefit of godliness.**S#23.****A. In adding these things to our faith we are assured of Heaven.****S#24.**

II Pet. 1: 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.

S#25.**B. Be diligent to add moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness****S#26.**

INVITATION : *One can't improve what does not exist .. Are you walking with God*

S#27. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**II Peter 1: 2-11**

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.

I Timothy 4: 6-10

6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. **7** But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; **8** for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. **9** It 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.