

August 27, 2017

“Training for Godliness”

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 4:6-10 (NASB)

Cross References: Matthew 6:33; Mark 10:28-31; 1 Timothy 6:6, 17-19; 2 Timothy 3

Lesson Idea: Since we have our hope fixed on God, we should discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness and the profit it brings to our lives.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Aug 20 Jeremiah 30-31	Aug 21 Jeremiah 32-34
Aug 22 Jeremiah 35-37	Aug 23 Jeremiah 38-41
Aug 24 Jeremiah 42-45	Aug 25 Jeremiah 46-48
Aug 26 Jeremiah 49-50	Aug 27 Jeremiah 51-52

Background: Read 2 Timothy 3 to get some idea of what kind of false teaching and godless lifestyles that Timothy was facing in Ephesus.

In our lesson today, Paul instructs this young pastor to stay true to *“the words of the faith and sound doctrine,”* and to draw his nourishment from them. This is great advice for all of us as we study the Word of God. Make it a priority in your life, and let God strengthen you every day through it. To do so will take discipline—and discipline can lead towards godliness as long as it is based in the desire to know Christ Jesus intimately and allow His Holy Spirit to be your daily teacher. Verse 8 reminds us that *godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

1 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.

DISCUSSION:

- v 6. Read back over verses 1-5. What were “these things” that Paul wanted Timothy to “point out to the brethren?” Why did that make Timothy a good servant of Jesus Christ?
- How do you strive to be “a good servant of Jesus Christ?”
- On what kind of things are we supposed to be “constantly nourished?” How do you know what qualifies as “words of the faith” and “sound doctrine?”
- v 7. What kind of “worldly fables” should we avoid? Why does Paul say that they are “fit only for old women?” (see 1 Timothy 1:4)

NOTE: from David Guzik, *1 Timothy*:

Reject profane and old wives’ fables: The priority must be on God’s Word, not on the words of man. Paul cautioned Timothy to keep focused on the Word, not on things that come from man. The greatest effort must be put into God’s Word, not man’s word. . . This is the negative aspect of the command. In the positive aspect, the priority must be kept on eternal things, not temporal things.

- How would you define the word “discipline?” What does it look like to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness?”
- v 8. How does Paul contrast bodily discipline with godliness? Why is godliness always profitable? What kind of profit does it bring?
- How does godliness bring us promise for the present life? How does godliness bring us promise for the life to come? (see Matthew 6:33; Mark 10:28-31; 1 Timothy 6:6, 17-19)

NOTE: from Guzik:

Exercise yourself toward godliness: Ancient Greek and Roman culture put a high value on physical exercise. Paul tells Timothy that the same work and commitment that others put towards physical exercise should be put toward the pursuit of godliness.

The word *godliness* comes from the old English word Godlikeness; it means to have the character and attitude of God. This was a worthy goal, much more worthy than the potential attainments of physical exercise.

Bodily exercise profits a little in that it has some value. Or, the idea can be translated bodily exercise is good for a while, while exercising unto godliness is good for all eternity... Spiritual development and physical development share some similarities. With each, growth only comes with exertion and proper feeding.

Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is: Paul here explains the value of godliness, both in its temporal and its eternal sense. Godliness makes the life that now is better, and we should not hesitate to believe it and to tell people this... Though godliness does not make this life the most comfortable, or richest, or most pleasurable, or easiest in the life that now is, it undeniably makes it the best, the most contented, and the most fulfilling life one can live in this world.

"I assure you, and there are thousands of my brethren who can affirm the same, that after having tried the ways of sin, we infinitely prefer the ways of righteousness for their own pleasure's sake even here, and we would not change with ungodly men even if we had to die like dogs. With all the sorrow and care which Christian life is supposed to bring, we would prefer it to any other form of life beneath the stars." (Spurgeon)

And of that which is to come: At the same time, godliness is the only guarantee of a profitable life which is to come. There are many pleasures or achievements in this world that do not even pretend to offer anything for the life which is to come.

- v 9. What is the "trustworthy statement" that deserves full acceptance?
- v 10. How did Paul "labor and strive?" Why should we "labor and strive" for godliness? What does that look like in your daily life?
- What does it mean to "fix your hope" on the living God? Why should we fix our hope on Him? How is He the "Savior of all men?" Why is He the Savior "especially of believers?"

NOTE: from Guzik:

The Savior of all men: This emphasizes the idea that the priority must be kept on the message of Jesus Christ. It isn't that all men are saved in an universalist sense; but that there is only one Savior for all men. It isn't as if Christians have one Savior and others might have another savior.

But notice Paul's point: **especially of those who believe.** Jesus' work is adequate to save all, but only effective in saving those who come to Him by faith.

"What God intends for all, he actually gives to them that believe in Christ, who died for the sins of the world, and tasted death for every man. As all have been purchased by his blood so all may believe; and consequently all may be saved. Those that perish, perish through their own fault." (Clarke)

APPLICATION:

- ✓ How can you make sure you are nourished on words of faith and sound doctrine?
- ✓ How can you discipline yourself for godliness this week?
- ✓ What do you have your hope fixed on?

Lesson by Bro Stan