

## Pursue Godliness

Ponder: What is godliness, and why should I pursue it?

Scripture: “. . . pursue righteousness, godliness . . .” (1 Timothy 6:11, NKJV).

I’ve heard for decades that godly means “God-like.” That’s a handy definition for us English-speakers (just drop the “y” and substitute “i-k-e”). But it isn’t accurate.

Paul’s word for godly in this passage doesn’t contain “God” (Greek “theos”) at all. Its meaning is reverence, respect, or piety. It does, however, emphasize reverence for God and the things of God. In Acts 10:2, for example, Cornelius is a “devout” (godly) man – that is, very religious, pious, and reverent.

Godliness includes respecting the Bible, worship, the church, and other people (made in God’s image). Godliness may be manifested in daily Bible study, regular attendance with the local church, frequent prayer, holy living, and kind treatment of all people. Such things stem naturally from a reverence for God Himself.

Remember, “pursue” means to chase after. You expend serious effort and energy. So we’re not surprised that earlier in First Timothy, Paul told him to “exercise yourself toward godliness” (4:7). Paul’s word “exercise” gives us our word gymnasium. We think of the gym as the place to exercise our physical bodies. But the next verse shows that Paul is using “exercise” as a metaphor for exercising the inner person.

I can make endless excuses not to exercise my body. All of them are vain. So it is with excuses for not attending, studying, praying, etc.

What happens when I discipline myself to exercise my body instead of making excuses? I get stronger. I feel better! And maybe I lose weight and enjoy other benefits.

What happens when I bypass the excuses, read my Bible every day, and attend Bible classes and assemblies regularly? Pretty much the same thing, right? I become spiritually stronger, and I feel better about my relationship with God and with my family in Christ. I’m better equipped to do things for the Lord.

Let us pursue godliness! Chase after it, like you would rush to catch something of tremendous value. Let us exercise ourselves to godliness. Deep-six the excuses and, as the Nike shoe commercial used to say, “Just do it!” You’ll be a stronger Christian; you’ll feel better about yourself, about your relationship with God, and the church.