Godliness

Understand and appreciate exactly what godliness is

A 3-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

These three conference sessions of the Godliness study look at what edification and the renewing of the mind are aiming for, the ultimate objective: the term Paul uses is godliness. Lesson 1 defines godliness as God-likeness, from Genesis 1:26, with three components: thinking like God does, doing things God's way, and laboring with God in what He's doing. Lesson 2 turns to the privilege of Gentiles in this dispensation of grace being godly creatures, and the mystery of godliness. Lesson 3 concludes with the opposite of godliness, ungodliness: the evolution of worldly ungodliness and the evolution of Christian ungodliness.

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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
L1	Godliness: What Renewing the Mind Is Aiming For — Genesis 1:26; the Pastoral Epistles; Isaiah 55; Romans 1; Isaiah 50: Three Components of God-likeness
L2	The Mystery of Godliness — Sonship; I Timothy; Twice Dead Gentiles; I Timothy 3:14–16
L3	The Evolution of Ungodliness — II Peter 2–3; Romans 1; Jude; Revelation 19; I and II Timothy; Titus 1:1: Worldly and Christian Ungodliness

Lesson Summaries

L1

Godliness: What Renewing the Mind Is Aiming For *Genesis 1:26; the Pastoral Epistles; Isaiah 55; Romans 1; Isaiah 50: Three Components of God-likeness*

Godliness: the End Result of Mind Renewal

- Paul uses a term that encompasses everything the renewing of your mind is all about — godliness; it is the end result of the mind renewal process
- By the time you get to the Pastoral Epistles you're expected to understand what godliness is; it becomes the big issue and functions like a doctrinal

umbrella over what Paul has been going over in Romans through II Thessalonians

God-likeness (Genesis 1:26)

- No Greek or Hebrew study is needed: godliness means God-likeness; godly means God-like; ungodly means not like God
- The word comes from Genesis 1:26 — the one word that denotes what "after our likeness" is all about; image has to do with visibleness and appearance, likeness with an inner invisible issue, the interior makeup and capacity of man

Three Components of Godliness

- There are three components to God-likeness or godliness: to be able to think like God does, to be able to do things God's way, and to be able to labor with God in what He's doing
- God the Father is particularly concerned with your thinking like He does, God the Son with your doing things His way, and God the Holy Spirit with your laboring with Him in what He's doing
- Man's spirit provides for thinking like God does, his soul for doing things God's way, his body for laboring with God; the original design and purpose in the creation of man: man to be a God-like creature

Ungodliness Indicted: Israel and the Human Race

- God consigned the Gentiles over to ungodliness and separated Abraham and his seed from the rest of the world; Israel was given His word, covenant and promise to think like He does, do things His way, and labor with Him when the kingdom is established
- In Isaiah 55 God takes Israel to task for not being godly; they failed, and were coming into the 5th course of punishment in Isaiah's day
- In Romans 1 ungodliness is the term God through Paul uses to indict the human race, Gentiles, for what they are by nature; man failed all three components of godliness

Adam's Education and the Last Adam

- God began to educate Adam so he could be godly; Adam was to be the monarch of the earth, laboring with God, a helpmeet for God in what He's doing on the earth
- God was coming to meet them for the education of their soul and spirit, but before they ever got a chance to have that Bible study, the adversary struck
- The only person who has ever done that properly is the Lord Jesus Christ: in Isaiah 50 His Father awoke Him every morning and they studied together; as the last Adam He functioned perfectly as the first Adam should have

Your Position in Christ Is Designed for Godliness

- You have been justified, sanctified and exalted in Christ; Romans 6, 7, 8 teach three components to your sanctification: dead to sin, alive unto God, and a son
- Dead to sin, you can think like He does; alive unto God in Christ, you can do things His way; an adopted son with the Spirit of the Son in you, you can labor with Him in what He's doing
- God had consigned Gentiles over to a life of ungodliness with no prospect of being godly creatures; in this dispensation of grace He has given the privilege of being godlike — what the mystery of godliness is all about

L2

The Mystery of Godliness *Sonship; I Timothy; Twice Dead Gentiles; I Timothy 3:14–16*

Your Sanctified Position Equips You for Godliness

- Your sanctification fully equips you for godliness: being dead to sin, you are able to think as God does; alive unto God in the Lord Jesus Christ, to do things God's way; being a son, to labor with God in what He's doing

Sonship: Laboring with Your Father

- The grand privilege of sonship is being able to labor with your father; in Philippians 2:22 Timothy functioned as a son, laboring with Paul as a father in the gospel
- Israel doesn't get the sonship to labor with God until the kingdom is established; we have sonship in this dispensation of grace — the grand privilege of being treated as a son and not a child
- To know the will of God in your life, find out what God is doing and go do it with Him; laboring together with God is the third component of godliness and demands that the first two be in place

Plugging the Definition into I Timothy

- I Timothy 4:7: you exercise yourself unto godliness by exerting your time and energy in learning to think like God does, do things God's way, and labor with Him in what He's doing
- I Timothy 6: the idea that gain is godliness comes from Israel's program; those men were not being unscriptural but undispensational

The Mystery of Godliness (I Timothy 3:14–16)

- Godliness itself was not a mystery — you know that from Genesis 1 — but there is a mystery aspect to godliness, just as with the mystery of Christ and the mystery of iniquity
- The phrase "the house of God" is Israel's terminology, expressing God's residency in the land of Israel; Paul uses it with Gentiles who never had the opportunity to think of themselves as the house of God
- The great issue of the mystery of godliness is that in this dispensation of grace God has revealed that godliness is the issue with these Gentiles

Gentiles Consigned to Ungodliness; Israel Created to Be Godlike

- At the Tower of Babel God consigned the nations over to Satan and to ungodliness; as Gentiles we were twice dead (Colossians 2:13) — dead in sins and dead in the uncircumcision of the flesh — and (Ephesians 2:12) "without God in the world"
- In Genesis 12 God calls Abram out and begins to form a nation of His own creation, and He creates that nation to be godlike; Israel chose to merit it on their own by a law contract, and could never do that
- The Lord Jesus Christ put godliness on display in the nation Israel and, through His redemptive work on the cross and His corrective doctrine, equipped the believing remnant to be godly

Twice Dead Gentiles Given the Opportunity to Be Godly

- Israel's program was cut off and suspended, and God turned to the Gentiles; giving twice dead Gentiles the opportunity to be godly apart from His program with Israel is the mystery of godliness
- As far as the adversary was concerned, the middle wall of partition sealed off the Gentiles from godliness; God took that down, so a Gentile can be what man was designed to be, a godly creature

- The context of I Timothy 3:16 is not talking about the incarnation and the synopsis of the life of Christ; what Paul is doing there, it appears, is setting forth a synopsis of the plan and purpose of God with respect to godliness
- In this synopsis, “God was manifest in the flesh”: God Himself coming into this earth and manifesting godliness in the flesh; “seen of angels”: according to Ephesians 1, He was put on display to the angelic realm; “received up into glory”: the end result, to function as godly creatures in the realm of the angelic sphere

L3

The Evolution of Ungodliness *II Peter 2–3; Romans 1; Jude; Revelation 19; I and II Timothy; Titus 1:1: Worldly and Christian Ungodliness*

Ungodliness Evolves

- The doctrine of evolution in the Bible is the evolution of man’s ungodliness under the satanic plan of evil on this earth — not atheistic evolution; more tragic, there is also an evolution of ungodliness among Christians

The World of the Ungodly (II Peter 2–3)

- Writing to the remnant of Israel about the Lord’s day of wrath, Peter goes back to the old world, from creation to the flood, which by Noah’s generation had become the world of the ungodly
- After the flood God brought in human government and nationalism, putting a damper on Satan’s capacity to produce the world of the ungodly again so rapidly; the evolution toward judgment became a retarded, slow, evolving process
- Since the flood the world of the ungodly has been the satanic objective on this earth; God will destroy the world of the ungodly men again in the day of His wrath

The Backdrop to This Dispensation of Grace

- In Acts 7 Stephen gives Israel’s leaders their third and final opportunity to repent; the world of the ungodly, Israel with ungodly Gentiles, had come to a crisis, and the day of the Lord’s wrath legally could have begun
- The backdrop to this dispensation of grace is the evolution of the world of the ungodly to a point where it merited the day of the Lord’s wrath
- The first part of the gospel produces wrath consciousness; Paul says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven — not executed from heaven

Worldly Ungodliness Proceeds to Its Acme

- In Romans 1:28–32 Paul deals with the third component to ungodliness — laboring with the adversary; they did not like to retain God, though the knowledge is there
- In II Timothy 3 Paul takes almost the same list as Romans 1, which had reached an acme when God brought the dispensation of grace in, some terms more intense; don’t expect it to get any better
- As God is long suffering and dispensing grace, man’s ungodliness evolves a little further; once this dispensation of grace concludes and we’re taken out, it evolves further to the acme
- In the day of the Lord’s wrath, when God resumes His program with Israel, an acme of ungodliness exceeding that at the flood will be reached; Jude says these men have devolved into brute beasts
- The pinnacle of man’s ungodliness that Peter and Jude describe climaxes in

Revelation 19:19: they wage war against God Himself — you can't get more ungodly than that

Christian Ungodliness

- The satanic policy of evil against members of the body of Christ today is to produce ungodly Christians; Christians who depart from the faith will not have the capacity to be godly Christians
- The doctrines of devils put Christians back in Israel's program; such a Christian is ungodly, though he may be sincere and zealous
- Christian ungodliness was already in effect in Timothy's day and will increase unto more; one of the cleverest ways to propagate it is to disguise it as real godliness
- Sound doctrine for and about this dispensation of grace produces godliness for the members of the body of Christ; Titus 1:1 speaks of a body of truth, committed to Paul, whose objective for us today is godliness

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Image vs. Likeness

Image is something you see, having to do with appearance; likeness has to do with an inner invisible issue, the interior makeup and capacity of man. Godliness is the one word that denotes what "after our likeness" is all about.

Godliness Is a Dispensational Issue

Thinking like God does, doing things God's way and laboring with God is a dispensational issue, because God has two programs; His objectives in this dispensation of grace are oftentimes vastly different from those in Israel's program. The men in I Timothy 6 who supposed gain is godliness were not being unscriptural but undispensational; that idea comes from Israel's program. Rightly dividing keeps Romans through Philemon, committed to the body of Christ today, separate from Genesis to Acts (Israel's time past) and Hebrews through Revelation (Israel's yet to come).

Israel vs. the Gentiles in Time Past

Godliness was not a foreign concept to Israel in God's program with Israel — they were created to be a godly nation; the Gentiles had been consigned over to ungodliness. Before this dispensation of grace was revealed and brought in, Gentiles had no expectation whatsoever of ever being godly creatures in God's sight.

Israel's Remnant vs. the Body of Christ

Israel doesn't get the sonship to labor with God until the kingdom is established; we have sonship in this dispensation of grace. II Peter is written to the members of the remnant of Israel, who were given all things pertaining to life and godliness; we in this dispensation of grace have been given the similar thing.

Godliness vs. the Mystery of Godliness

Godliness itself was not a mystery, as Genesis 1 shows, but there is a mystery aspect to godliness. Giving twice dead Gentiles, formerly consigned over to ungodliness, the opportunity to be godly apart from God's program with Israel is the mystery of godliness. I Timothy 3:16 is not talking about the incarnation and a synopsis of the life of Christ.

Wrath Revealed vs. Wrath Executed

Paul says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, not executed from heaven; it is executed when the day of the Lord's wrath is actually transpiring. The Lord came back from heaven, raised up Saul of Tarsus, a brand new apostle, and committed to the Apostle Paul the message about a new dispensation, forming a new creation, the church, the body of Christ, out of Jew and Gentile being made both one.

Worldly Ungodliness vs. Christian Ungodliness

Worldly ungodliness evolves under the satanic plan of evil, reaching its acme after this dispensation of grace concludes; Christian ungodliness only exists in this dispensation of grace, when you put the title Christian on it. You can not only completely misunderstand godliness (I Timothy 6) but have a counterfeit outward form of it (II Timothy 3) — with all the appearance of true godliness unless you listen to the message behind it. A member of the body of Christ who operates on Israel's program when Israel's program is not in effect is an ungodly Christian; he may be sincere and zealous and still be ungodly.

Key Scripture References

Genesis 1:26	Where the word godliness, God-likeness, comes from: "after our likeness"; likeness is not the same as image
Genesis 11–12	At the Tower of Babel God consigned the nations over to ungodliness; in chapter 12 God calls Abram out and begins to form a nation of His own creation, to be godlike
Deuteronomy 28	God teaches Israel He would bless and prosper them: where the gain-is-godliness idea comes from
Job 23:11–12	Before Job ate in the morning, he partook of the food of the words of God's mouth; Job understood godliness
Isaiah 50:4–5	God the Son in human flesh says His Father awoke Him every morning and they studied together
Isaiah 55:7–9	The Lord reproving Israel, taking Israel to task for not being godly
Acts 14:15–16	God "suffered all nations to walk in their own ways": consigned them over to ungodliness
Romans 1:18–32	The first part of the gospel of God's grace begins with the declaration of

	God's wrath; Paul takes you through all three components of ungodliness, showing God giving them up in connection to each one
Romans 1:28–32	The third component to ungodliness: laboring with the adversary
Romans 6–8	Three components to sanctification: dead to sin, alive unto God, a son
Romans 9:22	The dispensation of God's long suffering, enduring the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction
Romans 12:2	The renewing of our mind with the knowledge of what God values and esteems, so that we as sons of God can do what Romans 12:2 says
Ephesians 2:1–3, 11–12	Twice dead: dead in trespasses and sins, and dead as Gentiles, without God in the world
I Timothy 1:3–4	"godly edifying": Paul wants godly edifying taking place in the assemblies in Ephesus
I Timothy 2:9–10	Women professing godliness ought to be concerned with good works
I Timothy 3:14–16	The mystery of godliness: godliness revealed as the issue with Gentiles in this dispensation of grace
I Timothy 4:1–3	Doctrines of devils put Christians back in Israel's program
I Timothy 4:7–8	"exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness": two promises, for now and for what is to come
I Timothy 6:3–6	"supposing that gain is godliness": a view from Israel's program
II Timothy 2:15–16	Ungodliness opposed to the right division of God's word; vain babblings "increase unto more ungodliness"
II Timothy 3:1–5	Almost the same list as Romans 1, some terms more intense; "a form of godliness", Christian ungodliness disguised as real godliness
Titus 1:1	"the truth which is after godliness": a body of truth committed to Paul whose objective is godliness
II Peter 1:2–5	Written to the remnant of Israel: all things pertaining to life and godliness
II Peter 2:4–5; 3:3–7	Written to the remnant: the old world became the world of the ungodly; it will be destroyed again in the day of His wrath
Jude 14–15	Enoch prophesied about the ungodly people who were going to be the focus of God's attention in His wrath
Revelation 19:11, 19	Man makes war against God coming to His own earth: man's ultimate act of ungodliness