



THE PURSUIT OF GODLINESS

4. The Motivation for Godliness



05 JULY, 2020

Please click on text in **RED** to listen to music or join in singing on YouTube. When finished, please shut down YouTube and you will be returned to this page. Thank you

Welcome Church and Welcome to Worship!

I trust your week has been pleasant in the presence of God! Some say we are stumbling from darkness into light as restrictions ease, others believe we are staggering towards ultimate doom, and some have revived an old jingle, everything the government does is “too little, too late”.

But we are here to celebrate life, life eternal in particular, as we celebrate today the birth, life, message, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus our Christ, in bread and wine (juice/water)

Today, we also bring to a close, our four-week journey into the “Pursuit of Godliness”, examining **The Motivation for Godliness**. I trust the series has been a blessing.

LISTEN	As we are gathered	3
	Just as I Am	32

As the music plays, read these selected Bible Verses. When done, you may shut the music.

Jesus said, “You’re absolutely right. Take it from me: **Unless** a person is born from above, to wipe out the past and start all over again with God as your centre, Christ as your Saviour and the Holy Spirit as your guide, it’s not possible to see what I’m pointing to—to God’s kingdom.” (John 3:3)

Jesus called a child to Himself, whom he stood in the middle of the room, and said, “I’m telling you, once and for all, that **unless** you return to square one and start over like a child, you’re not going to get even a look at God’s kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God’s kingdom. What’s more, when you receive the childlike on my account, it’s the same as receiving me. (Matthew 18:3-5)

The king called in the man he had forgiven and said, “You evil man! Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?”, and king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you **unless** you forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart. (Matthew 18:32-35)

OPENING PRAYER

Come, all you children of God! Our Father is present and He calls us to gather at His feet, to rejoice He is God, our Creator and the sustainer of all Life!

We celebrate His presence with voices and instruments, with praise and prayers and singing songs and hymns, old and new!

We do not search for God in the mountains nor in the valleys, in heaven nor on earth! God is here among us, waiting to bring new life to all who believe.

Come! Let's worship the God of Creation, the God of all People, the God of families and community. Jesus leads us to the Father. Let us worship together in faith. **AMEN.**

HYMN

O Worship the King

63

PRAYER FOR OUR NATION AND THE WORLD

Lord God, we thank you for your mercy towards our nation throughout its long history. Hear us as we seek your continuing mercy in this our day.

Deliver us from the sins of affluence, pride, materialism and indifference, all of which distorts our view of the needs of those who suffer, near and far.

Inspire your Church to be the nation's conscience. Give to our leaders soundness of judgement and courage of decision, and unite us all in a common zeal to honour you and serve others, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

~ John R.W. Stott

HYMN

I serve a Risen Saviour ... He Lives!, He Lives!

MP 295

PRAYER for OUR COMMUNITY

Loving Father, this week our hearts are drawn to those in our community, in need of love. Loving Father, help us not to be afraid of those who are different or unknown to us, instead, willing to accept the opportunities and offer friendship, as Jesus befriended all whom He met. Lord, so often we see others as more fortunate than ourselves, getting more for what they do, being more beloved than what we feel. O Lord, your love comes first and is so much better than all that and completely unearned.

We pray for those who among us, have had medical treatment this week; we pray they may experience You and Your hand of healing...

We pray for those who among us, will soon be treated medically for conditions they have been suffering far too long; we pray they may trust you implicitly for healing...

We pray for those who among us, who miss seeing/visiting, touching/hugging family and friends. We pray they many know your love and be assured of the love of family and friends, young and old.

Thank you, gracious God, for always giving us much, much more than we can earn or ever deserve. We thank you for providing for us, the bread from heaven that feeds us today and for Your promise of spreading Your table for us in the promised land and forever provide bread without price and wine without cost...

Lord, hear our prayers for our family and our friends, for our church, our community, and our world.

All these things we pray in the name of Christ Jesus, the joy of heaven to earth come down; he who is our life and our hope, our daily bread, and our rock and our refuge. **AMEN.**

READING - 1 Timothy 6:3-19

These are the things I want you to teach and preach. If you have leaders there who teach otherwise, who refuse the solid words of our Master Jesus and this godly instruction, tag them for what they are: ignorant windbags who infect the air with germs of envy, controversy, bad-mouthing, suspicious rumours. Eventually there's an epidemic of backstabbing, and truth is but a distant memory. They think religion is a way to make fast money.

A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough.

But if it's only money these leaders are after, they'll self-destruct in no time. Hankering for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely, and live to regret it bitterly ever after.

But you, Timothy, man of God: Run for your life, far from all this. Pursue a righteous life—a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy. Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to, the life you so fervently embraced in the presence of so many witnesses.

I'm charging you before the life-giving God and before Christ, who took his stand before Pontus Pilate and didn't give an inch: Keep this command to the letter, and don't slack off. Our Master, Jesus Christ, is on his way. He'll show up right on time, his arrival guaranteed by the Blessed and Undisputed Ruler, High King, High God. He's the only one death can't touch, his light so bright no one can get close. He's never been seen by human eyes—human eyes can't take him in! Honour to him, and eternal rule! Oh, yes.

Tell those rich in this world's wealth to stop being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they'll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.

MESSAGE

The Bible is divided into three distinct periods of history, starting with the era of God when, from creation, He spoke and interacted personally with people. The second era arrived when God's Son gave up His privileged position in Heaven to achieve two objectives: first, by living among us, He taught us, a "God-Standard" of life is very achievable. Having accomplished this, He submitted Himself to the cross to break the stranglehold of death which separated us from God, which He achieved through His resurrection. Finally, the era of the Holy Spirit begins after Pentecost. The Holy Spirit's task is to protect, guide and keep us safe from harm and danger until God's Kingdom comes on earth, exactly what Jesus taught us to pray, *Our Father in Heaven, ... May your Kingdom on earth come soon (so that) Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* (Matthew 6:9-10).

The Holy Spirit teaches and prepares us to know God and develop the right relationship with Him by living a Godly (God-centred) life, until our transition into God's Kingdom. Nothing, including finally meeting with God, would catch us by surprise!

In this short series on The Pursuit of Godliness, we reminded ourselves, we are made in the image of God (no excuse, therefore, for not being Godly). On Father's Day we looked at what it means for men and women, fathers and mothers, to live up to the Character of God, and last week we came to grips with the naturally contagious nature of Godliness and our role in transmitting it from one generation to another (words and language appropriate for this time!).

Today, in closing The Pursuit of Godliness, we shall examine what should motivate us to live the God-centred life and how to remain motivated, without distractions.

We live in a perfectly viable tension: the authentic, real-life, material and tangible nature of the present, and the imaginative, sometimes fictitious and seemingly

idealistic future. We relate easily with our present because our needs, desires and obligations are real, whereas we cannot relate with promises to be realised in the future, as these have no immediate, tangible impact.

“Godliness” is caught in this tension. Looking around our world, we don’t see what we think is Godliness and believe, therefore, Godliness is a level of perfection which is impossible to reach. Godliness is about living today in a way, that tomorrow’s promises are realised and come true.

But Godliness is not an achievement on a scale of 1-10; Godliness is a lifestyle that is consistent with the character of God, which happens by cultivating habits that refocusses our value systems, placing God consistently at the centre.

I will be among the first to say, this is easier said than done as, more often than not, the pressures of life, the values of community and society and the expediency of moral choices in the present, are at odds with the character of God. One of the easiest distractions is, *Most people/Everyone is doing it and enjoying life; what could be wrong? Everyone has it, why shouldn't I?*

As Christ-Following people, our primary goal in life should be to live by the rules of the Kingdom of God. But the quandary we are placed in is this: should we work hard to acquire wealth, from which we share in God’s work? OR, should we depend wholly on God (while working a normal life) and share in God’s work from what He blesses us? Surely I can work hard, and the harder I work the more I will earn, and the more I will have to give to God’s work, because I have no guarantee of how much God will bless me, from which I can bless others through God’s work.

We have created this quandary on two falsehoods: 1) My wealth is based on how hard I work. I can work very hard, but what happens when I am sleeping, the stock, commodity, property, bullion market dives and collapses? On Monday, 19th October, 1987 all of the twenty three major world markets experienced a sudden, sharp, severe, and largely unexpected stock market crash; Hong Kong stock market experienced the highest loss with a drop of 45.8%. Worldwide losses were estimated at US\$1.7 trillion. Did anyone expect it? No. Did many plan for it? No. One of the largest and richest Christian organisations, which was then invested heavily in the US Stockmarket, lost 48% of its endowment!

2) The second falsehood is, God needs my wealth to fund His work! If he does, he cannot be God; the one needs my wealth to fund his work is a god-man, a charlatan, who imposes his/her need for money on me.

So, how do I motivate myself to live a lifestyle that is consistent with the character of God? What habits should I cultivate to remain motivated to pursue Godliness as the ultimate standard for life and living?

First, don't believe you can bless yourself, nor can anyone else bless you with wealth through hard work. By their very nature, blessings are from God. No one or nothing else can bless us.

Second, God's blessings are not restricted to money. Health, wisdom, a steady job, a car that starts when we need it, peaceful and mutually satisfying relationships, including our relationship with God Himself, are some of the other blessings God grants us. To think, I can bless myself and look after myself through my own hard work, is absolute folly.

Third, let's examine how God's blessings work. God asked Solomon, *How shall I bless you?* Solomon replied, *I am young and lack wisdom. Grant me your servant, a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.* The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, *"Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honour—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings.*

God pours out His many blessings anyone who admits they are unable to carry out the responsibilities given to them, yet they desire to please God in all they do.

Let this be your motivation to pursue Godliness, and watch God pour Himself into your life. Not only will you experience the joy and contentment that comes from being blessed by God, but it will be God's blessings you will effortlessly share with others. **AMEN.**

PRAYER

Loving Father! You have blessed us in so many ways, with loving family, caring friends and neighbours, with food, clothing and shelter. Thank you for your promise, those who are faithful to pursue a Godly life, and to demonstrate how material blessings are only an extension of Your spiritual blessings, both working together to bless the world to live joyfully and in peace. May we never forget this truth and make it our goal to live by it. In the Name of Christ and for His glory! **AMEN.**

HYMN **Just a Closer Walk with Thee**

BENEDICTION

Happy are they who know where the real treasure is to be found!
Happy are they who enjoy the treasure and also share it!
Friends of God, prepare to leave this church with spirits lighter than when you came in;
Trusting Christ to take an intimate interest in the costly investment he has made in each of us.
Invest God's love in others as God has invested his love in you!
Rejoice in the fellowship of The Holy Spirit.
The blessing of the eternal God is upon you:
redeeming grace,
enfolding love,
enduring fellowship.
Now and forever.
AMEN.

As a member of Botley Baptist Church, please do not forget to remit your tithe and offering, either directly into the bank or drop-off your envelope at Church.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS IN TITHING AND GIVING

If you are not attending this Church and would like to contribute to its ministry, please click "EMAIL US" at the top of the home page to know more.

THANK YOU.