

**NO GET-GODLY-QUICK SCHEMES**  
**1 Timothy 4:6-8**

**March 15, 2024**

All throughout the day, people try numerous ads and fads to lose weight and get in shape. Instead of success, many are left disappointed with the outcomes, depleted of their finances and some incurring additional health problems from consuming non-regulated substances. Just like get-rich-quick schemes, many have resorted to lose-weight-quick schemes instead of doing the hard work necessary to establish sound, safe and sustained weight loss. The key prescription for weight loss and getting into shape is decreasing the calories coming in and increasing the movement and exercise with your body.

Paul encouraged Timothy to reject the useless, godless myths and old wives' tales that were a waste of time. Instead, Timothy was to exercise himself in the foundational things that would lead to true godliness, not the get-godly-quick schemes others were promoting. In doing so, Timothy would benefit both in this present life and in the life to come.

Too many Christians are running to this church over here and sitting under that pastor over there and listening to this podcast here and watching that Facebook post there, trying to discover the easiest, fastest, newest and most popular way to achieve godliness. Many are left disappointed with the outcomes, depleted of the finances and some incurring spiritual hurt. The get-godly-quick schemes do not work. We must do the hard work of spiritually exercising ourselves in the foundations of what produces godliness: prayer, worship, Bible study, ministry and the like. In doing so, we will benefit both in this present life and in the life to come.

**REJOICE. YOU HAVE GODLINESS**  
**2 Peter 3:10-13**

**March 16, 2024**

Consider this question: If I had access to a fireplace or fire pit, what would I throw into the fire? As you are pondering this question, it may be easier to first consider what you would not throw into the fire. You would not throw in anything that had financial and/or sentimental value. You would not throw in something you desired to keep for future use. You would not throw in something in your possession belonging to someone else. So what would you throw in? Most likely, things of no value that you do not mind being destroyed.

When Jesus returns, the heavens, the earth and everything in it will be burned up. Everything. Peter noted, "*Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness...?*" Peter urged them to consider that all of the earthly things they value will be thrown into the fire, suggesting they have no value. Alternatively, they should value leading lives of holiness and godliness.

Therefore, knowing that all of your earthly possession will be thrown into the fire, what value will you place on them? Do those things have more value than leading lives of holiness and godliness, which have eternal value? As we nurture holiness and godliness, the things of this world diminish in value. On that day when everything is burned up, you can rejoice – you have godliness.

The graphic consists of a black pyramid with white text on its sides. The pyramid is divided into seven horizontal sections, each containing a virtue: LOVE, Brotherly Kindness, GODLINESS, PATIENCE, SELF-CONTROL, KNOWLEDGE, VIRTUE, and FAITH. To the right of the pyramid, the text reads: PILGRIM REST BAPTIST CHURCH, 2024, LENTEN DEVOTIONAL, ADDING TO YOUR FAITH TO PRODUCE AN EFFECTIVE AND FRUITFUL KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS, and March 10 – March 16, 2024.

**ADD TO YOUR PERSEVERANCE – GODLINESS**

**ADD TO YOUR PERSEVERANCE – GODLINESS**  
**2 Peter 1:6**

**March 10, 2024**

When we were children, there were certain things that we would not say while we were in the church. When someone did say something in the church, it was common to hear someone else say, "You said that, in the church." Although we did not have a problem saying those things once we were outside, there was something about being inside of the church that elicited a sense of godliness, holiness and sacredness that transformed our behavior.

That was also during the time when people would hide their liquor bottles down by their side when they walked past a church, in respect and reverence to the church building. Although they resumed the consumption of the beverage in the bottle once past the church, again there was something about being in front of the church that elicited a sense of godliness, holiness and sacredness that transformed their behavior at that moment.

We were not aware that godliness was not about being inside of or being in front of a building – even if it was a church. Godliness is the respect, reverence and devotion that we have towards God everywhere and at all times. While we did not say or do certain things inside of or in front of the church, we said and did those things in the presence of God.

If the presence of a church building, and the presence of other people, for that matter, has the power to transform our behavior, should not the presence of God have more power to do so? If we will say or do things in front of God that we will not say or do in front of other people, we have more respect, reverence and devotion for people than we do for God.

Adding Godliness to Perseverance provides motivation to continue persevering to be the Godly women and men of God we are called to be.

**IS YOU IS OR IS YOU AIN'T?  
1 Corinthians 10:14-22**

**March 11, 2024**

At a point when a person may not be clear where they stand or with whom they stand, and they are pressed to declare a stance for what is good and right, they may be asked, “Is you is or is you ain’t?” The purpose of the question is to acknowledge that one cannot stand in the middle. One cannot agree with both points or stand on both positions. With some things, there comes a point in time when one must choose, “Are you standing with this one or are you standing with that one?”

Paul rebuked the church in Corinth for their conflicting loyalties. On one hand, they participated in the Lord’s Supper. They drank from the same cup and ate from the same loaf of bread, symbolizing they were united in one body with Jesus and each other. On the other hand, they participated in drinking and eating in sacrifices to idols, symbolizing they were united with demons. Paul admitted that there was no significance to either the idols or the food sacrificed to them. Paul’s concern was that the sacrifices were made to demons and he did not want them fellowshiping with demons. Therefore, they had to choose, “*You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord’s Table and at the table of demons, too.*”

We must also choose. Consider, am I committed to pursuing godliness or ungodliness? Is my respect, reverence and devotion to God or to the devil? Am I standing with God or am I standing with the devil? Am I clear where I stand? The question is still on the table, “Is you is or is you ain’t?”

**YOUR LIGHT BRINGS LIGHT AND  
LIFE TO OTHERS  
Philippians 2:14-16**

**March 12, 2024**

If you have ever gone camping or been out in a rural area at night where there are no streetlights, and the clouds are out preventing the light from the moon and stars to shine forth, you know darkness. You know darkness where you cannot see your hand in front of your face. You know darkness that can be felt. In the midst of this darkness, you turn on a flashlight and it pierces through the darkness like a hot knife through butter. The light completely conquers the darkness and a sense of peace is enters.

Paul wanted his readers to know that they were like flashlights piercing through the darkness of the crooked and perverse generation of people they lived among. Therefore, they could not afford for their actions and attitudes to dim their lights, making them less effective. As their lives lined up with the word of life, their brightly shining lights would bring light and life to many.

Consider those in your immediate environment right now who are not saved. They are lost in the darkness of this world. God has placed you in their lives to be a flashlight; a brightly shining light to bring light and life to them. Therefore, your actions and attitude must line up with the word of life to ensure your light is not dimmed. They are depending on you for light and life.

**PURSUE A FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS  
James 4:4**

**March 13, 2024**

“The friend of my enemy is my enemy.” Many have heard and perhaps used this phrase. When used, it acknowledges the complexities associated with relationships. If someone is a friend of my enemy, can I trust that person? Can I depend on that person to consider what is in my best interest? Can a person be a genuine friend to both of us? I suggest the answer is, “No.” Knowing that the person is a friend of my enemy forces me to keep them at arm’s length and prevents me from providing access to the personal areas of my life, which is what a genuine friendship requires.

James asked very directly, “*Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God?*” James asked because clearly they had not realized it. They were engaged in jealous disputes and conflicts in their pursuit of lustful pleasures. They desired to be friends with the world, not realizing that the world was an enemy of God, making them an enemy of God.

With whom are you pursuing a friendship? Are you desiring a friendship with the world to receive fulfillment in the world’s lustful pleasures? If so, realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God. Think about it from God’s perspective. If you are a friend of God’s enemy, can God trust you? Can God depend on you to consider what is in God’s best interest? Can you be a genuine friend to both God and the world? I suggest the answer is, “No.” Jesus said in John 15:15, “*No longer do I call you servants...but I have called you friends...*” Cease your pursuit of the world’s lustful pleasures and pursue a friendship with Jesus.

**THE LIGHT IS OURS, THE GLORY IS GOD’S  
Acts 3:11-16**

**March 14, 2024**

Many of our parents worked hard to ensure that we maintained a healthy balance between acknowledging, appreciating and accepting who God created us to be, the way that God created us to be it, and the potential arrogance of believing that we were better than someone else because of who God created us to be. Therefore, our parents said to us something similar to, “No one is better than you and you are better than no one else.”

No doubt, after people witnessed the miracle of the lame man’s healing, they looked to Peter and John to elevate them and praise them for their power and godliness for the miracle. Yes, Peter and John were living godly and could have received their praises and responded, “Thank you. Yes, we are powerful, godly men.” Instead, they gave the praise to God and acknowledged that the miracle was accomplished through faith in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

People will look at the testimonies of our lives, see our lights shining brightly and desire to praise us for the outcomes. And yes, we too may be living godly lives and it is easy, sometimes, to say, “Thank you.” However, the praises always go to God. Remember, Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 that the purpose of our brightly shining lights is for everyone to see our good works, so that they will give the praise and glory to our heavenly Father.