

Newness of Life Part 7

Godliness and Morality, The Journey from the World to God

2 Peter 1:2-4

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

I. Introduction

1. There are two words we used in the title: godliness and morality.

2. *Godliness* is a word used often by Paul and Peter as they taught the early church how to live right.
 3. It signals the newness of life that happened after we escaped the world's sinful and lustful corruption and were filled with His divine power.
 4. Put simply, **godliness is our journey from the world to God.**
 5. Morality is a more modern word that refers to our behavior that describes the difference between right and wrong behavior providing something like a personal compass to show us the way.
1 Cor 15:33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners [morals].
 6. So our lesson on godliness and morality is intended to place a moral compass into our hands to help us make right decisions.
- ii. The direction shift

- A. Flee this and lay hold of that
1. For the Christian, from the moment when Jesus first called you to follow Him, it started a direction shift. He began a process of drawing you into a closer relationship with Him, so that over time, God would get an increasing influence over the decisions you make.
 2. That is a direct result of, as Peter said, becoming a partaker of the divine nature, when the Holy Ghost came inside us and began inhabiting us as His temple, as Paul said:

1 Cor 3:16-17

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

*17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for **the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.***

3. The Spirit wants to lead us to stop defiling our temple and to make it holy, and this is a lifelong learning experience.
4. Our goal in this process is to eliminate the things in our lives that turn our focus away from God so we can enlarge His presence in our life.
5. The truth is, there are some things that displease God and the Spirit reveals those things as we grow in knowledge of the Bible.
6. Paul noted a benefit of living right is “that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.”
*1 Tim 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, **that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.***
7. Our conduct can bring discredit or dishonor to the Lord and the church in the eyes of people who observe our conduct.

8. Mahatma Gandhi was a Hindu leader in India in the early 1900s, and he said this about Christians: “I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”
9. That is a similar idea that Paul was communicating in 1 Timothy 6 referring to conduct that will blaspheme or discredit the name of God and his doctrine.
10. And two verses later, Paul referred to that doctrine that teaches us how to live godly:
*1 Tim 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even **the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;***
11. It is the teaching of Jesus that brings us to understand what godliness is all about. And ignoring those wholesome words and doctrine of Jesus, we are without that moral compass and will default to doing the opposite:
1 Tim 6:4-6

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

*6 But **godliness with contentment is great gain.***

12. Instead of rejecting the words of Jesus and His doctrine, we are to lay hold of the teachings of Jesus and flee from sin:

1 Tim 6:11-12

*11 But thou, O man of God, **flee these things** [let go of]; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

*12 Fight the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life** [grasp], whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession **before many witnesses.***

13. This is what we've been talking about--
godliness becomes how we live our lives
before many witnesses.
 14. Witnesses at church, witnesses at home, at
school, work, the grocery store, the
restaurant, other drivers on the road, all of
them should see us professing a good
profession.
 15. Another way to say it is, **possess what you
profess.**
 16. As we learn to walk in the Spirit, there are
some things we must leave behind and
there are some things we must lay hold of.
- B. Don't copy the crowd
1. So we have the Word of God as our guide.
We also are told who we should NOT copy.
 2. Shortly after God gave Moses the 10
commandments, God warned His people
about the dangers of peer pressure:
Ex 23:2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to

do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

3. I used to hear it put this way: If your friend wants to jump off a cliff, that doesn't mean you should do the same!
4. Even if the multitude wants to do evil, that does not mean I need to follow the crowd just because "everyone is doing it."
5. And not only should we not copy what the evil the crowd does, we must be careful not to adopt the words and opinions that oppose the Word.
6. Don't decline, or stoop low, to copy the speech of many to "wrest judgment," or in other words, twist or pervert what is just and good.
7. Christ followers need to be careful about adopting the words or opinions of the world since we have become a partaker of the divine nature.
8. Our pursuit of godliness and morality involves discerning what is righteous and

- what is unrighteous in the actions we take and the words we speak or posts we make.
9. And as we read before, be careful not to dishonor our bodies (the temple of God) or blaspheme (discredit) the Lord by participating in unclean things.
 10. Godliness and morality are the goal.
 - c. The law of nature
 1. In my recent study of the first two chapters of Romans, this became very clear to me. Paul said God gave mankind an inner voice, like a natural feel for what was right—the conscience.
 2. He spoke of the Gentiles who were not raised or familiar with the laws of God like his fellow Jews were. But Paul said, even Gentiles have within them a natural desire to do right. This is called natural law or the law of nature.

Rom 2:14-15

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not

*the law, do **by nature** the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves [the conscience within convicts them]:*

*15 Which shew the work of **the law written in their hearts**, their **conscience** also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean [between] while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

3. Who created mankind? God did. And what template or pattern did God use when He fashioned him? God created man in His own image.
4. So Paul says this sense of right and wrong is etched into our hearts and conscience naturally, or by nature he knows right and wrong.
5. But remember, when the Bible talks about “nature”, it is a reference to the design God used in creating things.
6. The modern word, “nature,” often is used as if it was the opposite of God. Someone

might say: “It is not a miracle, it is just a natural process.”

7. The truth is, natural processes are not something apart from God. Natural processes are simply the order of design doing what God designed them to do.
- D. The God of Nature
1. Let me step back and clarify something. I get a cut on my finger, and by a miracle, there is no evidence of that cut a week later.
 2. When you and I think of nature, we may think of trees, grass, mountains, rivers, canyons, lakes and seas, and all the wild animals, fish, deer, bears, birds, etc., that inhabit them.
 3. And when we think about natural processes, we somehow equate that with science doing something, or something being done without God.
 4. Like, “it is just the cycles of nature doing their natural thing without the intervention

- of God. It is merely a result of nature doing its thing and following natural processes.”
5. In that line of thinking, they don't see Jesus as the creator of everything, they replace Him with another god called “mother nature” or “mother earth” who is responsible for all things coming into being.
 6. But the revelation of truth for us today is this: **God is the creator of nature and natural processes are simply His creation doing what they were designed to do.**
 7. It is not mother nature doing things, it the Heavenly Father using His design, called nature, to keep His creation going.
 8. It is not mother earth showing us how to live in harmony with her, it is God's wisdom encoded into His creation, mankind, because He gave them dominion and responsibility to be good stewards of His creation.

9. With that said, God is the Creator of nature, and nature follows the natural processes He designed His creation to follow.
- E. When man gives up natural law
 1. And that even goes for mankind. When we choose to hold onto faith in God, we follow that natural law of right and wrong encoded within creation.
 2. It is when we decide to not retain God in our knowledge that we are led off the path of natural law to do unnaturally that which is against nature, defying the laws of nature.
Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
 3. As an example of this, in Romans 1 and 2, Paul refers to the natural use of the human body referring to the natural attraction God created between a man and a woman, so

that His prize creation would be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

4. To do otherwise is to go against nature—to go against God’s design. In Paul’s day, he knew of homosexual behaviors going on just as we do in our day:

Rom 1:26-27

*26 For this cause God **gave them up unto vile affections**: for even their women did **change the natural use** into that which is against nature:*

*27 And likewise also the men, **leaving the natural use** of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

5. As we are talking about godliness and morality, God put into nature the understanding of the natural use of our body that we should not ignore.

6. Part of godliness then is learning to discern when something is against nature, how to avoid that conduct so that we also avoid the recompense, or the resulting wages, or due penalty, or natural consequences, of that error.
7. We read it a moment ago, Paul's argument was that even some Gentiles do right by nature even when they did not read it in the law of God:
Rom 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:
8. He said it again in verse 27:
Rom 2:27 And shall not uncircumcision [the Gentiles] which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?
9. Paul was making a strong point here as he addressed the sexual sins happening in the Roman church.

10. His point was, even many Gentiles do by nature the right thing and avoid the unnatural sins which go against nature.
11. God created man and woman with natural desires encoded in their hearts, as if it is somewhere written in the DNA of our soul, our conscience:
Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)
12. When we retain God in our knowledge, we retain a regard for this natural law.
13. When mankind does not retain God in their knowledge, that is when they develop a reprobate [depraved] mind to do those things which are not convenient [improper].
14. He even said nature reveals to men and women the appropriate hair style for each one.

1 Cor 11:14-15

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

15. That means even people who have not heard the teaching of God's word, have a natural instinct within them that God created in them so they are without excuse.

Rom 1:19-20

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

16. So summing up the law of nature discussion, not only did Paul talk about sexual sins being unnatural, he went on to

describe other sins described in the 10 commandments, like covetousness, envy, murder, disobeying parents, and others. He ended that discussion on morality and godliness with this warning about disobedience:

Rom 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

III. Conclusion

1. Our pursuit of holiness is an emphasis on not letting sin rule us any longer, but letting holiness and everlasting life be our goal.

Rom 6:12-19

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are

alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity;

even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

2. I am free to be holy and have everlasting life:

Rom 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.