

*Sanctification? Increase
in godliness.*

Even part of the title above, "godliness" is given in little letters so that we do not get confused as to Who has already made it all the way to Godliness; namely God the Father Who is the source of "godliness" Itself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Paul wrote about that "great mystery of godliness", mystery in the Bible always being something we humans would never know about except for Revelations from God. Also "godliness" in little letters reminds us that we never make it all the way in this life, sin as an inclination and acts and thoughts, remains in our lives on this earth; only to find a remedy when Christ comes again:

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know when He is revealed, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." (I John 3:1,2)

No objection is given here to usage of the word "sanctification" to describe the present of salvation in the Christian life, as contrasted to the past of redemption and the future of glorification at the Second Coming. Many of us have had wonderful Bible studies in theological books like W.T. Conner's¹ "Christian Doc-

1. Conner's books were a favorite in Bible studies at Ouachita Baptist College.

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trine" and "The Gospel of Redemption", also J. Clyde Turner's "These Things We Believe"; however these would have to be called Bible Studies more than theological.

5-1: This illustrates how Theology tends to take away the emphasis of the Bible.

Sanctification is used in the Bible a few times to describe the increase in godlikeness, or godliness in the Christian life; however the predominant word is GODLINESS, and since those trained in Theology, especially those with a Doctors degree in theology, preach and teach a misunderstood concept of sanctification, it should be no surprise that "godliness" in becoming a lost art in Christianity. It is sort of like the word "saints": it is a common word in the Bible in forms like "called to be saints", and yet it is shunned by Christians of today. The last thing Mr. Average church member wants the world to think is that they have some holiness in their lives; yet the very nature of being "IN CHRIST" is to be partakers of the divine nature, another place where theology and history has used the word "Christian"--found only 3 times in the Bible--to explain a group of persons who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Those truly "IN CHRIST" are partakers of the divine nature.

One has to admire the real Peter of the Bible, another place where theology has tried to dominate over real Bible, Peter who just spoke it plainly like it is--

"...exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the heavenly nature..." (II Peter 1:4)

NOTE: Since II Peter 1:1-4 is one of the best practical pictures of sanctification or godliness, we must later come back to a complete exegesis of these verses. And this was only the introductory address of Peter in his second letter to "those of faith", it spoke in this introduction of those things then assumed; however now, because of theology and misuse they have to be spoken and written again.¹

It is always an enlightening experience to check such words as "sanctification" and "godliness" in the dictionary--

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(1). First “godliness”: “divine, pious, and devout”.

Actually this definition in the Webster's dictionary is for “godly” and with godliness used as a noun.

NOTE: You would be interested to know that the estimated date of first usage was the 14th century, about when in the historical outline of sound doctrine in II Timothy where follies of “that sort” of Persons was still being revealed, before the SRB in 1909, and deterioration into the “time will come” of a widespread intolerance toward sound doctrine. (II Timothy 4:3,4) For more on this subject see “What Sort”, “That Sort”, and a “That Sort Outline of II Timothy” on the SunGrist_Bible website of www.biblecom-bibleman.com.

It can easily be deduced that the increase in historical Christianity of the Falling away of II Timothy and 4:3,4 in particular was inversely proportional to godliness or sanctification among Christians, especially since it was the Master Teacher and Example for Christianity who said of the Falling Away, “because sin will abound, the love of many will wax cold.”

When we come back to a detailed exegesis of II Peter 1:1-4, you will find that to “partake of the divine nature” {sanctification or godliness} is the opposite of “the corruption of the world through lust” (II Peter 1:4b).

“...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (II Peter 1:4)¹

5-2: It is time to stop dallying on introductions and get into the meat of the TEXT for this Bible session, only the text is really 5 texts where

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1. There are many today, and their is growth in their numbers, who think of sanctification as speaking in unknown tongues--not really known languages as in the Bible; and among those you will see a certain forgetfulness of godliness when they walk out the door of the worship service, setting godliness aside until the opportunity for another exciting personal time!
 1. While some may read only the “new birth” of the Bible and the “regeneration” of theology into this verse; and yes, that is true, but the new birth is only the beginning of this participation in the divine nature with godliness and increase in godliness the continuation of continuing faith {see our book THE WAY OF CONTINUING FAITH, or BIBLE REPORTS FOR BELIEVING on Amazon.com}, as you will see from the Bible as we increase the number in this Bible session of where increase in godliness is found in the Bible.

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the word “godliness” is found in the Bible: (1) II Peter 1:3, already referenced above in the context of II Peter 1:1-4 on “life and godliness”; (2) the great mystery of godliness first manifested, and only fully manifested in Christ Jesus of I Timothy 3:16; (3) the contentment for believing Christians that can come with godliness, as the greatest gain of the Christian view of life and living of I Timothy 6:6; (4) the religion without God and power of II Timothy 3:5, that helps to identify “THAT SORT” of persons in Christianity of II Timothy¹; and (5) along with perseverance in the Christian life, godliness is to be added as in II Peter 1:6.

1. II Peter 1:6. The path of additions to initial faith all the way to godliness, and by the way of first faith, then virtue, then knowledge, then self-control, then perseverance, then godliness.²

“But also for this very reason {the reason refers back to the promise of sanctification or godliness as written in II Peter 1:1-4}, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness...”

NOTE: Do you know see here the opposite of religion without power and God of “that sort” of II Timothy 3:1-9 by way of the path of initial faith here all the way to godliness, and with the progresses in the Christian life of (1) virtue, (2) knowledge {Bible knowledge and personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as in II Peter 1:8 to follow over theological knowledge}, (3) self-control, and (4) perseverance. And in the completion of the pathway all the way to fruitfulness in Bible and personal “knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” of II Peter 1:8b), we should add after the (5) of godliness, also (6) brotherly kindness--and I know you see the opposite of the “unloving” of that sort of Persons of II Timothy 3:1-9; then (7) love.

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1. In this study of increasing godliness, you are going to find that Paul also mentions that sort without those exact word in Thessalonians; but you can tell it is the same kind of persons in Christianity against he warns, as they are told to avoid them even as in II Timothy.
 2. It is not an easy path and very few Christians seek it and find it!

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5-3: *The “LIFE AND GODLINESS” of II Peter 1:3.*

“...as His divine power¹ has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...” (II Peter 1:3)

NOTE, don't you just revel in those words from Peter and the Word of God as they sink into your mind, “given to us ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness”. If that is not one of the most complete descriptions of the Christian view of life and living, “all things that pertain to life and godliness”, found here in the Bible, we can certainly find none better in theology.

Please do not miss the full context of “the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” which is found here in the words of II Peter 1:3--“through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue”; in the introductory words of II Peter 1:2--“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord”, and in the concluding words of this passage of II Peter 1:8b--“fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”²

1. Grace and peace, along with sanctification and godliness, comes to the Christian by way of “in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ”, II Peter 1:2. While some would attempt to by pass the pathway to more grace and peace without more knowledge of God and Christ, getting sanctification or godliness immediately without any more knowledge of God and Christ, Peter and the Word of God admonishes, corrects, and rebuffs otherwise!

The knowledge of both God and Christ are inseparable as the very purpose of Christ, the Son of God, was to make know, in Person, the knowledge of God the Father. In other words, what God is really like and real godliness!

2. Life and godliness is “through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.” (II Peter 1:3).

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1. Yes, it becomes more clear why II Timothy 3:5 talks about “a form of godliness that denies the power thereof; for here Peter and the Word of God through Peter is talking about the divine power of God that provides real religion and real godliness.
 2. How can you help but notice that a few want to bypass the path to sanctification and godliness without any knowledge, that is by way of emotion and single moments of so-called worship without more knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?

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3. All these things in the pathway from faith to godliness, and beyond that to brotherly kindness and love, are available as “yours” and can abound in you, preventive the very common “neither barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 1:8)

NOTE: And once again we have a very good description of the Religion without power and God, a form rather than a reality, of II Timothy 3:5 and “that sort” of persons of II Timothy, as (1) barren and (2) unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Religion without power and without God is almost synonymous with a lack of sanctification or godliness.

5-4: Religion without God, power, and “godliness” of II Timothy 3:5.

“...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away.” (II Timothy 3:5)

NOTE: You neither thought the Bible would admonish you to turn away from certain kinds of Religion, but so it does, away from a religion, any religion, that is without God and the divine power of godliness.

1. The previous description of “this sort” of religious persons without God and power of II Timothy 3:1-4, those kind of persons that are to be avoided in Christianity.

(1). They should certainly get your attention for avoidance when it is obvious to you that during perilous times, they are “lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, and boasters.” (II Timothy 3:2a)

(2). If they are willing to habitual blaspheme either the name of God or any other doctrine of God like the public rapture, then that is more evidence that they are to be avoided, and further that they are the sort of persons that will lead into the Falling away of churches, denominations, and Christianity. (II Timothy 3:2b)

(3). Avoid that kind of persons and religion, if they are disobedient to the traditions of their Christian parents of sound doctrine. (II Timothy 3:2c)

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(4). Have you not witnessed in your church and your denomination and in the politics of the SBC, this sort of persons--

“unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors {to sound Bible and doctrine of Christianity}, headstrong, haughty...” (II Timothy 3:3 and 4:a)¹

(5). Granted the following form of ungodliness is one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult for pastors and other Christian leaders, since the forbidden “Pride of life” of I John 2:15-17 is a “lust” like lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes so easily overlooked but here in II Timothy described as--

“lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.” (II Timothy 3:4b)

2. The following description of “this sort” of persons in II Timothy 3:6-9.

5-5: Godliness is a great mystery as revealed and manifested in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as it works out in the life of the believer. It ceases to be such a “mystery” {something humanity would have never known apart from Revelations of the Bible and of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ} as our personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of God through Him, is increased}.

1. Could one say that a personal increase in godliness is synonymous with a personal increase in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, at least in the sense of which Peter is writing in context of II Peter 1:2-11?

Yes, and this is the explanation of a Scripture we have revealed in but have seldom understood, “then {at the Second Coming and the gathering up to meet the Lord in the air} we shall be like Him {ultimate godliness for Christians} for we

1. You members of SBC churches have the right to know how your pastors and denominational leaders usurped by political means spiritual power from the Ascended Christ in the political takeover from 1970-1980 of the SBC by the Slaughter without love and without self-control--certainly without godliness--of Christians brother pastors and college and seminary professors as well as denominational leaders. TAKEOVER OF THE SBC should be mandatory reading for every southern baptist church member still believing in the priesthood of believers and soul competency. Do you really think God is going to bless any church or denomination without repentance from such ungodly acts as the political takeover of the convention? And the next step is even worse, they now seek and desire doctrinal control of the SBC.

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shall see Him as He is {ultimate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ}. Once again theology has not been adequate as it has added words to the Bible like regeneration, sanctification, and glorification; with glorification trying to describe the ultimate increase in godliness when we have the ultimate knowledge of Jesus Christ by seeing Him as He is!

2. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness:" (II Timothy 3:16)

(1). Full knowledge of God was manifested in human flesh, as the virgin born Jesus of Nazareth showed the world what God is really like; and then recorded in the "testimony of the evangelists", as Simon Greenleaf former dean of the Harvard Law school likes to call Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John¹--

"God was manifested in the flesh" (II Timothy 3:16b)

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

(2). **"Justified in the Spirit" (3:16c)**

NOTE: While again theology has chosen many words to describe Christian salvation--like justification and redemption, we strain a little bit at the need for Christ to be justified by the Holy Spirit. However the simplicity and yet the magnificent mystery of it comes from two sections of history: (1) vocal testimonies to Jesus during His life in the flesh by the Holy Spirit of God, beginning with the start of His ministry as at His baptism a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.", continuing with all the mighty works of miracles and of goodness Jesus of Nazareth performed, then His character, and above all His crucifixion on the cross for our sins and His resurrection from the dead; and (2) as the Holy Spirit after the Ascension of Christ came to take the place of Christ as a testimony on earth, justifying to the world with conviction, "to convict the world of sin, or righteousness, and of judgment. Of judgment because they believe not in the only Son of God." (John 14:xx)

(3). **"Seen by angels" (3:16d)**

1. We dare not, as part of the Revelations from God on public record, neglect the 14 letters of the Apostle Paul, and the writings of the Apostles like Peter, James, etc of the Bible that also help to make evident this mystery of godliness of Jesus, and to a certain extent available for all Christians.

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It may be a little hard to determine what Paul wanted us to primarily know here about Jesus and angels, so just like with that same principle of Bible hermeneutics as always, we just let the Bible say what it is trying to say; and come to: as in Hebrews, Jesus was seen in heaven as the only begotten Son of God, angels announced His birth, angels were watching and available at the time of His capture and death on the cross, an angel was at the tomb to tell of His resurrection; and finally Jesus will be escorted by thousands of powerful angels at the time of His return!

(4). **"Preached among the Gentiles" (3:16e)**

Paul had a lot to do with this fourth, but so also did other Apostles and disciples as they went into all the world, "making disciples, and teaching in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ..." And we should acknowledge that by now every nation in this world has heard something about the gospel of Jesus Christ, a sign about which Jesus taught in Matthew 24, "then the end will come"!

(5). **"Believed on in the world" (3:16f)**

All the world did not believe, and still does not believe, like Paul cried, "Who has believed our report?", mainly those fellows of his own Jewish nation; however, then, now, and always to the END, "As many as received Him to them gave He power to become sons of God." (John 1:xx)¹

(6) **"Received up in glory" (3:16g).**

"And while they {the apostles and disciples} looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up {sort of like a missile disappearing beyond the clouds}, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel {angels}, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'" (Acts 1:10,11)

3. Now in conclusion although there is far more to say on this subject and which will become part of 3 existing series of Bible studies--"The Prophet Messiah" under the title of "Knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ", the series of "Christian View of Life and Living" under "Sanctification or An Increase in Godliness", and in the series "A Sort Doctrinal History of Christianity" under the title of "Form or Fact of Godliness and Religion". (To those series we must add a closer look at "The Epistles of Peter".)

1. You notice that I am sort of letting the Gospel of John represent the four evangelists with the story of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus; but what a magnificent summary as John uses only 7 miracles in His book to explain the works and teachings of Jesus, reason for believing that He is the Son of God (John 20:xx)

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5-6: Now we must conclude with an extended promise of more on FACT OR FORM OF GODLINESS AND RELIGION and THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN EPISTLES OF THE APOSTLE PETER.

In order to proclaim the Word rather than the "cunningly devised fables" (II Peter 1:16), stick to the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) rather than add to perversions of theology and cults, we will conclude this very difficult subjects of sanctification and godliness with good 'ole' practical Peter. He brings us back to earth where we belong at least for a few more years. His head like the Jesus from Whom he learned and walked and lived with for over 3 years, is not up in the sky or clouds with his Bible more than theology, but is down to earth on what to do with godliness, knowledge, and these other practical fruits of the Christian life.

1. Peter reminds us that "the sort" {these words are borrowed from Paul and from II Timothy} of persons "who lacks these things" (II Peter 1:9) is:

- (1). "shortsighted",
- (2) "even to blindness",
- (3) "and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins".

NOTE: Lest you forget what "these things" are from Peter that can be a HUGE LACK in a form of religion or godliness that is without the divine power, there was listed above in II Peter 1:5-7 as faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

2. Peter calls Christians of all generations to be more "diligent" to make your status and standing as a Christian secure before the God that will make the ultimate decision on your eternal future, "to make your call and election sure" (II Peter 1:10a)

3. For Peter always practical and avoiding the extremes of mere theology and religion without power, reminds us that we could also "stumble" {in later Bible sessions we will also discuss stumbling more, but for now please read online "Snatching, Stumbling, and the Falling Away"}, "for if you do these things {the magic 8 above} you will never stumble" (II Peter 1:10b).

4. All of this discussion on godliness and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is not based on "cunningly devised fables" (II Peter 1:12-21); but has a basis in fact and historical record from the following sources: (1) reminders

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from the Apostle Peter in his two little epistles written to all Christians and in order to sustain all Christianity; (2) records from Peter and the other Apostles in the Bible, and in the “faith once for all delivered to the saints”, about the “power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” manifested in person to these “eye-witnesses”; (3) God gave direct testimony declaring “This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”; (4) Peter and the other apostles and disciples heard this voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, and later again on the mount of transfiguration from God the Father Himself; (5) the prophetic word of the Old Testament Scriptures is confirmed by what the Apostles like Peter heard, saw, and have written in NT Scriptures; and lastly (6) you readers or listeners of Peter and other Scriptures have the ASPI version of the Bible in your hearts and possession so that private interpretations of Scripture are not required or even permitted.

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