

“ADD TO YOUR FAITH” (2 PETER 1:5-7) GODLINESS

The word “godliness” is a word synonymous with “piety.” Such “piety” displays itself in a “Godward attitude” that offers “worship rightly directed” (Vine, Vincent). We may learn even more about “godliness” by noticing the contexts in which it is used in the Scriptures.

“Godliness” must be exercised. Paul wrote, “...exercise yourself toward godliness” (1 Timothy 4:6-9). Just like one must be “health-conscious” to promote bodily exercise, the one who is “God-conscious” will spend more time in spiritual exercise.

True godliness will lead to contentment. Paul also taught “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:3-11). Here, Paul contrasts those who use godliness as a means of worldly gain with those who are content with their worldly lot because they are godly! The godly are not concerned with impressing others materially. Truly, if our only concern is impressing God earthly treasures will matter little to us since God owns the entire world and all we have is His.

Godliness must be more than an empty show. Paul warned of

those who had a “form of godliness” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Some seem pious but are inwardly corrupt. To these, worship is merely a contrived act to bring themselves praise. Look at many “worship leaders” today and some are more interested in entertaining a crowd than offering heartfelt praise to God. Paul was warning of these types of false religious people.

Finally, God’s grace teaches us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:11-14). If we focus on God’s role for us in life, we will make major strides toward accepting His grace. *Joshua R. Welch*

WHY MY FAMILY NEEDS THE BIBLE CRITICISM

A proud heart reacts negatively to criticism. It bruises our ego. Often, we respond by microscopically surveying the faults of the criticizers. Yet, we are left speechless when the one offering critical judgment has no faults. Such is the situation with God and His Word.

Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Word of God pierces us. It cuts open our hearts and exposes our sin. It is intended to do so. It is a “discerner.” The word “discerner” describing God’s Word is originally from the Greek term KRITIKOS meaning “decisive (‘critical’), that is, discriminative, discerner.”

While we may not enjoy criticism, it is a necessary part of growth. Spiritually, we should be willing to take criticism from a God Who is so intimately familiar with us. He created us and has known our character from the beginning. (Acts 17:24-28). He is our Father and corrects us for our own good because He loves us (Hebrews 12:5-12). He is our Judge and His Word will be the standard of judgment in the last day (John 12:48).

Therefore, our families need the Bible. We need God’s criticism if we expect to live for His purposes. We need His criticism so we might learn to make our Father pleased with His children. We need His criticism so we can stand before Him in the final judgment and know we have done His will in our lives.

Yet, how many react to God’s Word with proud hearts and bruised egos?

We do not like the Christian who uses God’s Word to condemn our sins and we call them “judgmental.” The preacher who steps on our toes and dares to rebuke our sins is being too “nit picky.” The church who stands for the truth is deemed “intolerant” by an immoral society.

Even so, before we make any progress we must embrace the constructive criticism of God. It is not intended to merely injure us. Instead, sometimes we need the spiritual surgery of the word to repair our wicked hearts. After all, the God who sees those flaws now will see them at the judgment day for “...there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (4:13).

Take the criticism of God’s Word and grow from it.

Joshua R. Welch

is it in you?



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