

# Refuse profane and old wives fables

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev John Macsween

- [ 0 : 00 ] We may now consider together, as we shall be enabled, words you will find in the chapter we read. The first epistle of Paul to Timothy, chapter 4.
- And we shall read again from verse 7. 1 Timothy, chapter 4, reading from the 7th verse.
- But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.
- For bodily exercise profiteth little. But godliness is profitable unto all things.
- Having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.
- [ 1 : 15 ] This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. How appalled.
- That God. That God. That God. That God. That God. Father, who can't put forth phrase.
- That today, God, is not to. Let God.
- That God. ■■■■ changing. Exercising oneself unto godliness is not easy to deter.
- He exhorts Timothy to refuse, to turn away from profane and old wives' tables.
- I presume that means from all the heathen explanations of God, the world, and religion.
- [ 2 : 44 ] The heathen, of course, had their own explanation of things that are and things that are to come.
- From all such, Paul exhorts Timothy to turn aside. He had no time for what is called nowadays the study of comparative religion.
- He had no time and no inclination to assess and evaluate the religion of the heathen.
- And say, well, it has so much good in it. We better take this into our own. No.
- It has been recognized, and it should have been recognized long ago, that one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christianity is its utter intolerance.
- [ 4 : 07 ] It does not tolerate other religions. Recently, I read a letter in the press in connection with religious instruction in schools.
- At this point was taken up. That Christians are intolerant of other religions. Well, the tragedy is that that is not more pronounced and conspicuous than it is.
- You know that this was one of the main reasons why the Christians in the early days of Christianity, that is of New Testament Christianity, were subjected to severe persecutions.
- They would not tolerate other religions. As we have occasion to point out to you often, the Romans were tolerant of all religions.
- They had their pantheon, where the gods of the subjugated peoples were set up. The Gauls were allowed to have their own gods.
- [ 5 : 51 ] The Egyptians were allowed to have theirs, and so on and so forth. But what Christianity came on the scene? It refused absolutely to be counted as a religion.
- It came with the claim that it was the only religion. That is the only true one. And that every other religion was false.

That is what we mean by the term, the intolerance of Christianity. It wasn't willing to take its place alongside the other religions.

It wasn't willing to take up the position, well, we'll keep to ours and let other people keep to their religion.

No. The apostles and their followers went into the world to make disciples of all nations.

[ 7 : 03 ] To win, in other words, to the Christian religion, all nations. It didn't make any exception.

It didn't say, well, your religion is good enough for you, we don't need to preach to you at all. Oh, no. That is absolutely foreign to the genius of Christianity.

Hence, the apostle may have this in mind when he says, turn away from favors, profane and old wives' tales.

Turn away from that. There is no room in your system for this at all. But there is room, and much room, for exercising yourself unto godliness.

And there is here the assumption, and more than an assumption, that there is no godliness apart from the Christian religion.

[ 8 : 18 ] That will become more apparent as we consider the denotation and connotation of this word godliness.

Exercise thyself unto godliness. Godliness. And then he goes on to say, other exercises may be profitable in their place.

Bodily exercise profiteth for a little while, or profiteth little. He doesn't deny that there is no profit at all in bodily exercise.

And the meaning of that is just what we mean by it ourselves. Bodily exercise. The body needs exercise.

Exercise is good for the body. It does profit, but it is only for a little while. At best, it is but for a short space of time, and then it vanishes away.

[ 9 : 49 ] But godliness, he says, is profitable unto all things.

Hence, exercise thyself unto godliness. Recognition is made here of the fact that life in all its forms requires exercise.

Physical life requires it, or else it will decay and peter up. Godly life requires exercise.

Hence, we refer to an exercised Christian. at least. That was a common phrase at one time.

A man was referred to that is of course that he deserved that praise. He was referred to as an exercised Christian.

[ 11 : 13 ] That does not mean to say that there can be a non-exercised Christian. It allows for degrees, different degrees in the Christian life.

There are some, in other words, who are more exercised than us. life. But there is no such thing as spiritual life where there is no spiritual exercise.

That would be a contradiction in terms. life must exercise itself.

Life must have exercise. So where it is, it is exercised. But as in physical, so in spiritual life, some are more exercised than us.

Now it is to this point that Paul directs the attention of Timothy as he exhorts him to be faithful to his trust as a preacher of the gospel.

[ 12 : 45 ] But while this is addressed in the first place to Timothy as a preacher, it also has its application to the life of every believer.

It is not the sole prerogative of preachers to be exercised. It is demanded and required of every member of the mystical body of Christ to be exercised.

and to be exercised unto godliness. What we might ask are the conditions of this exercise unto godliness.

godliness? And in that connection we might further ask, what is godliness? godliness? Well, as we had occasion to speak of that not so long ago, we can just refresh your memories by making one or two statements concerning godliness.

it means it means in short that life and the exercise of that life which god gives as his gift to his own.

[ 14 : 28 ] The gift of god is eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Godliness is the exercise of spiritual life in the soul of man. And I mean spiritual as distinguished from mental or intellectual life.

a man may be a very strong and very advanced in intellectual life and not have any spiritual life whatsoever.

But when we say that we must remember that we don't get we must beware unless we get lock sided. While a man may have a strong intellectual hope and be devoid of spiritual life in the sense in which we use it here, we must also say this, wherever there is spiritual life, there is intellectual exercise.

life. The spiritual life is not something in which we can relegate to a mystical region where the human understanding is unprofitable.

[ 16 : 18 ] there is of course and that it has always been in the history of the church a certain type of mysticism that dispenses with the human intellect.

the advocates of this type of life say that religion, true religion consists in the soul's absorption into God, by which is meant this.

The distinguishing characteristic of religion is feeling. If we feel well, it doesn't matter how we think or whether we think at all, then all is well with us.

if we are taken away as it were from this earth in spiritual ecstasy, that is considered to be the acme of spirituality.

This is what is called mysticism. At least one form of mysticism where the intellect is dispensed with.

[ 18 : 03 ] Now, we say that this is not the religion of the Bible. This is not the spiritual life that the Bible says before us. For in that spiritual life, the one that is commended to us and pressed upon us in the gospel consists partly in this in the enlightening of the understanding.

it doesn't dispense with the understanding. It enlightens the understanding. Those of you who know your shorter catechism will think immediately on the answer to the question what is effectual calling.

And the effectual calling is another term for the impartation of spiritual life. Effectual calling is the work of God's spirit whereby convincing us of our sin and misery and this is the point we want enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ and renewing your will and so on but this is the part enlightening of mind giving life to the intellect to deserve to appreciate and to embrace Jesus

Christ freely offered to us in the gospel. In this godliness there is an enlightening of the mind as well as of course renewing of the will.

what is godliness we ask? It is first of all knowledge of god.

[ 20 : 43 ] This is life eternal. What is? that they should know thee the only true god and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

This is the beginning of godliness. Knowledge of god. What god? god. In this day and generation there are many schemes many plans put forward many organizations formed in order to meet the needs of humanity.

but you have to remember this that all our approaches to everything in the world are conditioned by your conception of god.

thoughts or Assassi Kindle is conditioned by your conception, so thoughts of God.

So two people may agree in saying, yes, the beginning of godliness is knowledge of God. But then that hasn't settled the question.

[ 23 : 01 ] That hasn't proved that the two are in agreement. Because there is another question that has to be settled. And it is this, what God?

Knowledge of God, what God? Who is he? What is he? So that the question, what is God?

Takes on far-reaching importance. What is God? Who is he?

What does he require of us? What is his character? What is his relationship to man? To society?

No, it is obvious that the answer we return to those questions determine infallibly our own movements, our own schemes and plans for alleviating the condition of distress we see our own.

[ 24 : 27 ] And incidentally, which we find in ourselves. Who is God?

Who is God? What the tendency? What the tendency nowadays is is to take away, to evacuate, if you prefer, from the character of God, all that savors of righteousness, of justice, of rectitude, of equity.

The tendency is to picture God as someone who is merely concerned with the welfare of his creatures.

Yea, and in some quarters, this is pushed so far as to say that God is doing his best.

But seeing men will not cooperate with him, he is not able to accomplish much. Well now, is this your God? Is he a God that requires you help?

[ 26 : 01 ] Who cannot accomplish much, if anything at all. Unless you come to his aid. Well there are many who are that type of God.

Now you can see, can't you? That although two people will agree on this, that the beginning of godliness is knowledge of God. The more ultimate question requires an answer.

What God? But who is the God that is set before the mind?

That is revealed to the person who has true godliness. Who is he and what is he?

He is a God that is both transcendent and divinant. He is in all things, yes. That's the imminence of God.

[ 27 : 13 ] But he is over all things. That's the transcendence of God. He is in and over all things.

He doeth his will. In the army of heaven. And among the inhabitants of the earth.

And none can stay his heart. He is not a God that requires my help.

I cannot help myself. For less can I help God. He is a God before whom I bow.

In reverence. And godly fear. A God who draws out the adoration.

[ 28 : 16 ] And therefore the allegiance. Of my heart. This is the beginning of godliness. Falling before him.

In utter prostration. Knowing him. As infinite.

Eternal. And unchangeable in his being. Wisdom. Power. Holiness. Justice.

Goodness. And truth. Hence it is written. The fear of the Lord.

Is the beginning of wisdom. The beginning of knowledge. Godliness. Knowledge. Knowledge.

[ 29 : 20 ] Of God. The knowledge. That puts man in the dust. That exalts God. In other words. It is the knowledge.

That gives God. What is his. And. The knowledge. That makes man take. What is his own. And what belongs.

To man's. Shame. Shame. And confusion. Of peace. But glory. And majesty. And honor. Belong.

Unto the Lord. Unchangeably. And. Eternally. Godliness. Godliness. Godliness.

Godliness. Godliness. Godliness. Ascribing. Honor. To God. And that in turn. Of course. Means.

[ 30 : 23 ] That he takes. The throne. Of the heart. He is the king. Eternal. Immortal.

Invisible. He is the king. And it is as king. He takes his place. On the throne.

Of the heart. Of man. There is that for. Subjection. To him.

Not the subjection. Of a slave. But the subjection. Of a son. For he gives. The spirit.

Of adoption. Whereby. We cry. Abba. Father. The father.

[ 31 : 18 ] Is the king. And the king. Is the father. God. Hmm. But we have heard.

That to go on. And say. Where. And how. Is this. Knowledge. Of God. To be had. Well.

That is the question. That Christianity. Asks. It says. Without. Any ambiguity. That this.

Knowledge. Of God. Is to be had. Only. In. Christ. It is the. Glory.

Of God. Revealed. In the. Faith. Of Jesus. Christ. That. Produces. Godliness.

[ 32 : 17 ] In the. Heart. Of man. It is not. A contemplation. Of God. As an almighty being. And so on. And so forth. It is.

A receiving. Of the revelation. Which God. Makes of himself. In the. Persian. Of his. Son. God. God. And this.

And nothing else. Is. Godliness. Exercise. Thyself. Unto this.

As if. Paul had said. To Timothy. In the last. Analysis. It makes. Very little. Difference. What else you have.

If you have not. Godliness. In the last. Analysis. It makes. Very little. Difference. What else you lack.

[ 33 : 25 ] If you have. Godliness. For this. Godliness. Has the promise.

Of the life. That. Now is. And of the life. Which is to come. And we might add.

What more. Could one desire. It has the promise. Of the life. That. Now is.

And. Of that. Which is to come. Its promise. Is comprehensive. Within its ambit.

It includes. All things. But what are we to understand. By the promise being. For the life. That now is.

[ 34 : 28 ] Certainly. Godliness. Does not promise. Worldly greatness. Or worldly riches. In another place.

We read of those. Who thought that. Gain was godliness. They thought. Gain was godliness. Godliness. Godliness.

Godliness. They were. Gross materialists. They worshipped. What they could see. And handle.

They worshipped. What the world. Could give. Godliness. They thought. That this was godliness. Gain. Now Paul says.

From such. Turn away. Turn away. From them. They have perverted. By this very doctrine.

[ 35 : 33 ] They have perverted. The good way. Of the Lord. Gain is godliness. Now if there are. Few perhaps. Who would say that.

In these. Words. But. Many live. Many strive. Many work.

Day and night. On this. Very principle. To them. Gain is godliness. What shall we eat?

What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? Let us have this.

Words. A good. Or goods. And then we'll be satisfied. They work. They toil. Day and night.

[ 36 : 32 ] Heaping up riches. Or at least trying to. They think that gain is godly. That is. They worship. They worship gain. But while gain is not godliness.

It is equally true that godliness is gain. That is. Whoever has godliness. Has gained something. Paul puts it like this.

For me. He says. To live is Christ. And to die is again. But he says something before that. The things that were gain to me.

These I found it loss. For Christ. Yea. I count all things as loss.

For the excellency. Of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. My Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss. Of all things.

[ 37 : 44 ] Why? Because he received. Greater gain. Than that which he lost. To live is Christ.

And to die is gain. Christ became gain. That is to say. He had godliness. And he gained something thereby. Exercise thyself.

On this. And the first thing in this exercise. On that which is.

Presupposed at the very outset. Is this. That I will not assume. On insufficient grounds.

That I have godliness. To exercise thyself. To godliness. Means. That you will take.

[ 38 : 56 ] Due diligence. To ascertain. Whether you have godliness. Or not. There is no mistake.

That is so fraught. With misery. As this one. The assumption. That many make. That they have godliness.

When they don't have it at all. They rest on their beliefs. They assume much.

And it is a false assumption. Do I have godliness?

If so. Where did I get it? How did I get it? How did this come to pass?

[ 39 : 58 ] How did it? How did it go? How did it go? How did it go? And it is worse than useless. To go over evidence.

That's no evidence at all. for instance to start thinking like this well I was born into the church I was baptized I was taught I am a church member and so on and so on and so on not one of these not all of them taken together as even the slightest bearing upon whether one has godliness or not godliness in its beginning is a personal transaction between the soul and god it is to come into immediate contact with god himself it is to feel his gracious presence it is to be awed by his man's history it is to save from the heart the word my god

I will exhort thee thou art my savior thou art my prophet my beast and my king yea thou art my all in all now this doesn't come to people by simply using the means of grace as we say although let no one think that we disparage that that of course is to be done diligently consistently and persistently but using the means of grace is not the same as being partakers or partakers of the life of godliness now if I were to ask this question and with this I conclude you say you have godliness and that you are exercising yourself towards godliness not only ascertaining that you have it but exercising yourself in the knowledge of god you say you have godliness that you are increasing in the knowledge of god now I ask you where did you get it when was it

I say I can't give any day or or well that maybe that maybe but that is not what is important but this is where all the essence of this question lies this is the distilled essence of godliness without which no one shall see the law does my heart respond in its deepest recesses to that way of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ do I sit or have I sat at the feet of

Jesus as the brightness of the father's glory and the expressed image of his person have I sat there not only saying that Jesus will save me but saying this which is something very different saying unto him thou art my salvation thou art my salvation for he is made of god unto the church wisdom righteousness sanctification and redemption exercise thyself unto godliness and remember in the ultimate analysis no one can answer this question for me have I godliness or not no one can answer that question for me but god himself it is he and he only who can set my mind at rest in this connection hence the necessity of waiting upon him of being closed in to him oh my friends beware beware of the looseness and laxness that is in present day religious thinking everything is left at a loose end now as distinguished from that for ourselves and for others this is what we would do shut ourselves in to god and with god beseeching him to enlighten us more and more in connection with what god is and giving it to us in larger and larger measure until we come to a perfect man in

[ 46 : 47 ] Christ Jesus whatever man to can inquisi her an mother can see Bye ■■■■■ todo wrong to