

Training for Godliness

1 Timothy 4:1-11

Ben Deaver @ Tallgrass Church Central Gathering on October 7, 2018

Big Idea—Training for godliness gets good return now *AND* in the future.

Mingle Question—What's one incredible food or drink you've had recently?

Happy 6 months, Tallgrass family!

- So thankful for you all and for this launch together.
- Thankful that New Hope Church is doing well. Celebrate with them. They are closing on a piece of property.

1st Timothy—What's your gut reaction to these items?

- Face cards, CDs, Yoga mat, Bottle of wine—Apothic Red, Can of beer—Boulevard Wheat

You can divide the world into two groups of people: those who divide the world into two groups of people and those who don't! Those who love Pepsi...and those who love La Croix...and those who love Coca-Cola! Wait a minute, that's three groups.

For real, you can divide the world into two groups: those who tend towards overindulgence in creation and those who tend towards refraining from enjoying creation. Before we talk about these two groups let's pray.

PRAY!

Hedonists —Pleasure seekers	Godliness	Ascetics —Self-Disciplined
In the world AND OF the world	In the world but not of the world John 17:15-18 ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.	OUT of the world and not of the world
Irreligious	Godly	Religious
Overindulgence, Feasting, Epicureans	Celebration & Somberness, Healthy fasting and feasting	Somberness, Fasting, Stoics
Tax collectors and other "sinners" Younger prodigal son/brother	Generous Father in Prodigal Parable All things to all people (1 Cor 9) Not conforming to the pattern of this world (Rom 12)	Pharisees Scribes & Lawyers Older son/brother

Hedonists	Godliness	Ascetics
Dangers: Accommodation Heresy and Syncretism Immorality Self-Destruction Subtraction from Scripture (Sadducees)	Positives: Holds promise for the present life and also the life to come.	Dangers: Alienation Christian Ghettos (Hermit Crabness) – Manure example Self-righteousness Self-Protection Addition to Scripture (Pharisees)
Modern Examples: Liberal churches Mainline Protestants—deeds but no words—theologically weak	There are two impulses of the Gospel – the Indigenous (Native) Principle and the Pilgrim (Sojourner) Principle. This is where we want to be! Doctrine of Creation AND Doctrine of Redemption	Modern Examples: Fundamentalist churches Monks & Amish Evangelical Protestants—words but little deeds—weak in good works Buddhism Islam Other world religions
Contextualize—Adapt, Participate How are we to be the same as the world around us?		Contend—Separate, Set Apart, Holy, Confront Worldviews How are we to be different than the world around us? By the t-shirts we wear, the bumper stickers on our cars, the stuff we don't do, etc.? Or by the character of our hearts, the amount of service & sacrifice we're willing to go to for people, etc.?
Epicurean	Biblical (Acts 17)	Stoic

- You can be in error on either side. There are dangers on every side. (Go from side to side.)
- Illus: Matthias driving the UPS truck or me driving the Yukon on a windy day.
- Ex: Ricky's testimony and my testimony

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-11

1 Timothy 4:1-3 ¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

- "later times"—When are the later times?
- This very bad teaching!

1 Timothy 4:4-5 ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.

- "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer."
 - This is GOOD NEWS, because food and drink is good!
 - It's extremely interesting how certain subcultures within the Church reject this clear teaching by Paul that was given previously by Jesus Christ.
 - See 1 Corinthians 11:30 and Mark 7; other passages?

Where do you think Jesus leaned? **Have someone place the flannel graph Jesus!**

- Jesus was accused of being over on the hedonistic, overindulgent side. His best friends were uneducated fisherman, tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners, etc. He was known as a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners even though He never overate or got drunk or sinned. Matthew 11:19
- Why do you think Jesus leaned this direction? So He could reach people, sure. Probably also because eating and drinking is good. Creation is good! Jesus was Co-Creator of the Universe with God, the Father. When He created the earth it says He saw that it was good, over and over again. Well, now He is tasting that it is good! BTW, remember, that Jesus will come back one day and we will have a physical New Earth with physical resurrected bodies. So what we eat and drink now is just a taste of what's to come!
- Where do you think Paul leaned?
 - Paul grew up on the ascetic, self-righteous, religious side. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, zealous, as to righteousness, under the law blameless. See Philippians 3:5-6. He was as separate as they come. Similar to John the Baptist.
 - Paul worked hard to become like those around him, like Jesus did.
 - Learned language and culture
 - Acts 16 – had Timothy circumcised when it was beneficial for the Gospel right after he helped make the decision that circumcision was unnecessary in Acts 15
 - Acts 17 – quoted poetry about the pagan god, Zeus, to bring the Gospel to the Athenians
 - Acts 21:37 – he spoke in Greek; Acts 21:40 – he spoke in Hebrew
 - Acts 22:25 – he identified himself as a Roman citizen when it was beneficial for the Gospel
 - Acts 23:6 – he identified with the Pharisees when it was advantageous for the Gospel
 - **1 Corinthians 5:9-10** ⁹I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.
 - Follow me as I follow Christ. 1 Cor. 11:1
- Both Jesus and Paul address the extreme of hedonism but not nearly as strongly as the extreme of asceticism.
- **1 Timothy 6:17b** ...who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

1 Timothy 4:6-11 ⁶If you put these things before the brothers (and sisters), you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ⁷Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. ¹¹Command and teach these things.

- “If you put these things before the brothers and sisters...” “Command and teach these things.”
- “...you will be a good servant (diakonos) of Christ Jesus...” **1 Timothy 4:6** Be a good servant (deacon). Leaders are servants! Teachers are serving by lifting up.
- “Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.” Specifically irreverent, wrong-headed myths about Creation.
- “For while bodily training is of some value...”
 - Why not try to sync up your spiritual and physical training?
 - We are embodied souls. We are BOTH physical AND spiritual beings.
 - It's amazing that God, who is Spirit, took on flesh to make a way for us not only to be in relationship with Him but to live forever as physically embodied souls.
- “Rather train yourself for godliness...godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also the life to come.”
 - Which is great, some value or value in every way?
 - Some value < value in every way
 - We get the best of both worlds. We get to have our cake and eat it too. This is the ultimate Deaver deal!

- How does training for godliness hold promise for the present life?
- How does training for godliness hold promise for the life to come?
- “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.”
- “For to this end we toil and strive...” Toiling and striving towards the end of godliness
 - The goal is maturity of all! See Colossians 1:28-29.—²⁸ Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹ For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.
 - Training for godliness is training to become more like Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God.
- Why do we work towards godliness? “...because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.”
 - “the LIVING God”—It’s important to point out that Yahweh is the LIVING God, as opposed to all of the made up deities of Greek and other mythologies.
 - Jesus Christ is the Savior of ALL people! He’s the Pathway for every human who has breathed. God the Father is the Way Maker for all of those who’ve been separated from Him through sin.
 - So the Savior for all people is Jesus! But not all people look to Him to be saved. So He’s ESPECIALLY the Savior of those who believe because they are actually saved, not just potentially saved.
 - This IS NOT teaching universalism, that all people are saved no matter what. However, it IS teaching that all people can be saved through the blood of Christ.

Aiming for love in the household of God!!!

- We must stand up in the middle of this tension like Jesus did and declare the Gospel to the world so they can understand it and either embrace or reject it.
- Jesus left the comforts of home to move into our neighborhood to influence the world. We must do the same. He became flesh.
- Our goal is to be as in the world as possible without being of the world. We must be as incarnate as possible without compromising the Gospel. We want to meet people right where they are with a clear conscience before God and man (Acts 24:16). We want to get down into the messy, dirty places in this world but remain pure & holy...like Jesus.

So how do we do this, how do we train for godliness?

- Categories – Tools to equip you. We need some categories to help us live in this tension well.
- Doctrine, Distinctives, Tradition

Doctrine

- Doctrine is the non-negotiable, theological boundaries of the Gospel
- Ex: The Apostles’ Creed
- 1 Timothy 4:16 (NIV) ¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.
- Healthy doctrine—That which brings human flourishing.
- You have to know the Word of God to live this out. The Word of God is the only offensive weapon in our possession.
- You must know clear biblical teaching.
- Doctrine can never change.
- **1 Timothy 3:16** Let’s recite this together, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ. No pressure at all. Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Distinctives

- Distinctives are Romans 14:1-4 issues – some have weak faith and some are not weak
- Gray areas
- Permissible yes, but is it beneficial? **1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1**
- Can our conversations please be around this question? Yes, it's permissible but is it beneficial for the cause of Christ? So many of people's questions are formed around whether things are right or wrong. For example, How far can I go with my girlfriend? Is it ok to drink alcohol? Etc. That's the wrong question. The question should be, "How will this either help promote or hinder the advancement of the Kingdom of God?"
- Distinctives can change over time.
- Alcohol – to drink or not to drink?
- Pork – to eat or not to eat?
- Face cards – to play cards or not to play cards
- Baptism – to dunk or not to dunk? Infants or adults?
- War – to fight or not to fight?
- Head coverings – to cover or not to cover?
- Yoga – to do yoga or not to do yoga

Tradition

- Tradition is cultural characteristics that are different everywhere.
- Tradition is up for grabs.
- We can't force our traditions on others when bringing the Gospel to them. We can't hinder people from coming to Christ because of our traditions.
- "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?" – Jesus Christ in Matthew 15:3, NASB
- Become cross-cultural for the sake of the Gospel!
- Where do you worship? In a church building or in a home or both?
- When do you worship?
- How do you pray? Eyes closed & hand folded or eyes open and hands extended or prostrate on the ground with head to the ground?
- When do you pray?
- What do you wear? Suit and tie, shorts and flip-flops or a long, white robe?
- What language do you speak? English, French, Chinese, Hindi, or Arabic?

Training for Godliness

Rubric for engaging the distinctives and tradition categories well.

1) Receive – some things we receive without hesitation.

2) Redeem – some things we redeem (i.e. fasting, praying, etc.). Eating meat that has been slaughtered while telling about why we don't sacrifice anymore.

3) Reject – some things we reject (i.e. polygamy, beating your wife or kids, drunkenness, etc.)
Reflection through the Word, prayer and community will guide you. Get in a LIFE Group.

Case Study:

Larry Norman, Album *Only Visiting This Planet*, Song *Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?*

My examples:

- High School parties
- KSU Marching Band Trombone Bible Study
- DU story
- Ultimate Frisbee

Reflection questions:

1. How are you honoring God by enjoying creation?
2. How are you becoming like those around you in ways that advance the Gospel?
3. How are you not conforming to this world for the sake of the Gospel?
4. How is God leading you to increasingly be IN the world but not OF it?
5. How are you training for godliness?

Applications:

1. Give thanks before eating. Cultivate gratitude.
2. Embrace a robust Doctrine of Creation AND Doctrine of Redemption.
3. Train for godliness through study of Scripture.
 - a. Discovery Groups in LIFE Groups
4. Connect neighboring to what you eat and drink.
 - a. LIFE Groups
 - b. How will our hands reach into our neighborhoods? Refer to the quilt.
5. Choose a challenging, seemingly gray area to prayerfully work through this week.
 - a. E.g. yoga, media consumption (movies, shows, advertisements, music, etc.), food and drink, attend certain weddings, officiate certain weddings, etc.
 - b. Alcohol usage
 - c. Ken Burns documentary on the Prohibition Era
 - d. “You really like your beer, don’t you?” “Yes I do. Thank you!”
 - e. Don’t pour out any alcohol unless it’s for your dead homies. Otherwise, that’s a party foul.
 - f. **Psalm 104:14-15** ¹⁴You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth ¹⁵and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.
 - g. Missional—Gotta know how to party well and sacrifice well.
 - h. Hospitality is needed to be a leader in the church. Fill that fridge with beer!

Questions?

PRAY!

Anticipated questions: