



Sermon Series: Character Counts

To be used with Session 2: Godliness

Sermon Title Possibilities: How Would God Rate Your Godliness?

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:1-11

Connection To Unit Theme: This sermon is designed to complement the Bible study “Godliness.” One of the biggest enablers of complacency is refusal to engage in self-reflection and introspection. As we continue this conversation about character, it is crucial that we are honest about our strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and areas of needed growth. God knows everything about us, including everything we have and everything we lack. As you and your congregation prepare to engage this next section, center yourselves strictly on what God thinks, and remember that just because people may have a favorable view of our behavior, doesn’t mean that God does.

Introduction: Many of us are familiar with the survey and evaluation forms we receive from retail establishments. The objective of these is to collect feedback to help each establishment improve, as well as continue the things that are working well and benefiting the business. Not only that, but people who serve in any time of managerial or leadership role are typically required to evaluate their employees. This is done to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas in which improvement is needed. In a likewise manner, God uses His word to present us with numerous opportunities to evaluate ourselves and identify where we are strong and where we need growth. Paul’s discourse to his protégé Timothy is one such example, as God uses the apostle to hold up a mirror and remind us of the behaviors to embrace as well as the behaviors to avoid.

1 Timothy 4:6-8 – The Benefits of Godly Character

Many of us look at God’s commandments and think in terms of what we “lose” or what we “don’t get to do.” For example, Godly Character charges us to be mindful of our conduct, our words, and our thoughts. And there are a number of these that we must avoid if we hope to maintain that character. This is partially why some people are resistant to Christianity or prefer more watered down and “easier” theologies. Rarely do we think consistently in terms of the blessings and perks that come with Godly character. The reality is that while God does indeed have some expectations of us that are difficult to achieve, there are a number of benefits that come with striving to reach them.

Paul tells Timothy in 1 Timothy 4 of some of these benefits. A portion of verse 8 tells us that, "...Godliness is beneficial in every way." This is crucial because the enemy is a pro at making garbage look like a treasure. He knows how to take our impatience and complacency and use it to make ungodliness look appealing. However, we must remember that there is nothing worth having that we can gain through ungodliness. We have way more to lose from ignoring God's standards. That's why Paul warns of "having nothing to do with irreverent and silly myths." Many a good person has fallen by the wayside due to pursuing the wrong path. God is the hope we have to avoid that fate.

1 Timothy 4:9-11 – Is God Your News Anchor?

"Good evening, and welcome to the 6 o'clock news. I'm your anchor..." Many of us know what comes next. Whether we've just gotten home from a busy day at work, or we're preparing for a busy evening, we know what it's like to watch the news. One thing that every news broadcast has is a news anchor. This person is a man or a woman that's the primary presenter of the evening's news stories. The broadcast can't continue without the presence and the words of the anchor.

Just as a news broadcast needs an anchor, so does each of our lives. There needs to be an authority by which we govern our lives. Someone needs to be the primary presenter of guidance and direction in our lives. Paul makes it clear that God is the only One qualified to fill such a role. This is why he says in verse 10 of 1 Timothy 4, "...we labor and strive for this, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of everyone, especially those that believe." In other words, He is our anchor and the news broadcast that is our lives cannot and will not go on without Him.

1 Timothy 4:12-16 – What Kind of Example Are You?

One of my grade-school teachers would always tell my class before we went outside to play, "Set a good example for the younger kids because they are watching you." I didn't grasp at the time what he meant, but for some reason that has stuck with me ever since. Now that I've gotten older and gained some maturity, I can see why it is important to set a good example. We never know who is watching us and some people do what they do and say what they say strictly because they see other individuals do it. What it comes down to is that it matters what kind of example we set and how we choose to conduct ourselves.

In the ultimate example wisdom and mentor/mentee relationship, Paul tells his young understudy to not only be mindful of his example, but he gives him specific areas to focus on. Verses 12-13 provide those areas, which include, "purity, speech, love, and faith." Moreover, he informs Timothy that he is not too young to be a quality example, and that the gifting he has is just as important as anyone else's. This is a word to believers of all ages, because as has been said by

many, our lives are sometimes the only Bible that some people will ever read. They may never open the book or come to church, but they will watch how those of us who profess Jesus choose to live our lives. And it matters what example we give them.

Conclusion: I'm reminded of something a professor often told us in Seminary, "You may not have done well on this exam, but there are other exams, and you will get other chances." While that was in the context of school and every term comes to an end, the reality is that we are given opportunities to improve. That is what God's word is for us. Each time we hear from God, we have a chance to look at our lives and make the necessary adjustments. The writer of this test is a primary example. Had God only evaluated him when he was Saul the Persecutor, he wouldn't have been pleased with the results. However, God gave him another chance and Saul became Paul, who is considered by many as the greatest New Testament author. And when God called him home, he received a much better evaluation. God has given us the same chance. It is not too late for us to get a good rating of, "Well done" from the Lord. We just have to pursue godliness and character.

Author Bio

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