



# IN PURSUIT OF GODLINESS

## SERMON OUTLINE

BY DR. TONY EVANS

### MESSAGE ONE: THE MEANING OF GODLINESS

#### SUGGESTED PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 6:3-11 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup>If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, <sup>4</sup>he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup>and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. <sup>6</sup>But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. <sup>7</sup>For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. <sup>8</sup>If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. <sup>9</sup>But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup>For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. <sup>11</sup>But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

#### MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message on **The Meaning of Godliness** is to instruct believers in how to achieve their full potential as individuals who are living lives of godliness to the fullest, seeking after God with all their hearts, and striving to fill their lives with more of Him in everything they do.

#### INTRODUCTION:

As Christians, we have been assigned a task. First Timothy 4:8 says, "For bodily discipline is only a little profit but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." Paul says our assignment is to pursue godliness, because it is profitable both for the life we now live and the life we will live forever as believers.

This means we need to understand clearly what godliness is and what it is not. It is possible to have a false kind of godliness because Paul warned Timothy about people who "[hold to] a form of godliness, although they have

denied its power; Avoid such men as these" (2 Timothy 3:5). It is crucial that we understand the difference between true godliness and its mere "form." The Greek word for "form" means a shape, a silhouette, or an outline, not the full substance.

When you see a person's shadow, you are seeing only their silhouette. What this means for the issue of godliness is that it's possible to look the part of a godly person without having any reality. How do you know if you're looking at the shadow instead of the real thing? Because the Bible says that false godliness has no spiritual power attached to it. It's like putting on a Superman outfit but not being able to fly. Someone who is impersonating Superman has the form power and of flight, and the attire of power and of flight, but without the accompanying power to pull off what the form declares can be done, the form is useless. The person wearing this outfit had better not be jumping off any buildings.

This form of godliness without real power is called religion. Religion gives the impression of something related to God that's real. You can look religious, you can use religious vocabulary, and you can carry a Bible, and yet still be devoid of God's power. Many of us know what it is like to go to church for years and not be changed; to be in the "vicinity" of God and not have the power to make us more like Him, which is more godly. The location of church, in and of itself, is not sufficient for the purpose. Godliness is always associated with power.

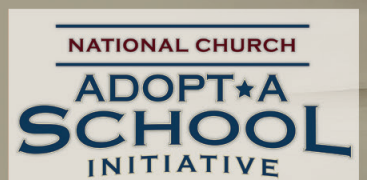
#### SERMON POINTS:

##### 1. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GODLINESS IS NOT.

**It is possible to have all the outward trappings of godliness with no inner reality.**

- For many people, church is God's donut shop—a sweet place with no substance.
- True godliness has His power attached to it.

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**Religion by itself can provide us with these outward forms while not providing any power.**

- Many religious people fall into this trap.
- Godliness is not an event you attend and leave unchanged.

**2. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT GODLINESS IS A LIFESTYLE THAT CONSISTENTLY REFLECTS GOD'S CHARACTER.**

**Living in the light of His presence puts you on the road to true godliness.**

- The godly person is obsessed with God's presence.
- A godly person is consistently evaluating things from God's perspective.

**Godliness requires that you agree with God in everything He says.**

- Challenging God means you have set yourself up as your own idol.
- The Bible says that God is always true even if it makes everyone else a liar (Romans 3:4).

**Godliness requires a prior decision that God's Word is true, period.**

- Scripture must overrule our ideas and opinions.
- The devil is many people's professor, teaching them the "doctrines of demons" (1 Timothy 4:1).

**3. WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT THERE ARE ENEMIES OF GODLINESS.**

**Worldliness is the devil's tool to combat true godliness (2 Timothy 2:16).**

- This world's system is firmly under the devil's control.
- Worldliness is a mindset that leaves God out of the equation.

**Christians cannot breathe the "air" of worldliness and still be Godly.**

- The world is an alien environment for the Christian.

- We have all we need to thrive in an environment of godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
- God has given us new desires and appetites.
- The godly person is one who is "starving" for God.
- This hunger is one confirmation of our salvation.

### SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS:

**THE DONUT SHOP:** Lots of people like to go to the donut shop because everything in there is sweet. Everything tastes so good. But no matter how often you go to the donut shop, you're probably not better off healthwise for being there. In fact, the more often you go, the worse off you will be because there is no nutritional value in donuts. For many people, church is God's donut shop. They want to hear a sweet song, a sweet word, everything sprinkled with sugar—but no real spiritual substance. That's having a form of godliness while denying its power.

**AM/FM RADIO:** I listen to only two stations on my car radio, one AM and one FM. Depending on what I want to hear at any given time, I flip back and forth between the stations using the button on my dashboard. There are two spiritual stations the Christian can listen to. There is the heavenly station that tunes us into God and an earthly station that disconnects us from God. Far too many Christians spend far too much time listening to the world's station during the week. They flip to the God station on Sunday, but as soon as church is over they flip back and listen to the world's station.

**HIGHWAY DRIVING:** If I'm driving down the highway and a policeman pulls up beside me, I'm forced to drive in the light of his presence. His presence affects my driving. My foot goes off of the accelerator and left toward the brake. If I am going faster than him, but still within the speed limit, I won't pass him because I am affected by his presence. Once I know he is there, it changes my driving habits. However, if he drives off, and I am no longer in the light of his presence, I can go back to my same old sinful ways. The reason I can go back to my sinful lifestyle of driving

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**our mission field is not merely across the sea.  
it is across the street.**





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over the speed limit is that I am no longer driving in the light of his presence. The moment I see that he left me and I can dismiss him from my mind, my lifestyle changes. When it came to driving, I had become a sinful man. However, if the policeman showed up again, I got holy again. The reason I would get holy is because his presence would've shown up. That's the effect of living and acting with an awareness of someone's presence.

**COLLEGE DEGREES:** People who have a master's degree sometimes want to go and earn their doctoral degree because a Ph.D. is considered the top of the line in a particular field. But there are also financial benefits to earning a doctorate, and most people who go to all that work don't do it just to have the title after their name. Their value in the marketplace is enhanced, or should be, when they earn a doctorate. Well, in the same way pursuing godliness has great benefits to it. That's what Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:6.

### SERMON LINES:

This message will introduce the biblical concept of godliness as the true, lifelong pursuit and assignment for Christians.

This message will also help you distinguish between true godliness and the worldly "form of godliness" that may have all the outward trappings but none of the inward reality.

### QUOTES BY DR. TONY EVANS:

"Too many people are not experiencing more of God because they don't live in His presence—they only visit His presence. As long as you are visiting, you can leave."

"Religion can give the *impression* of something related to God that's not real. You can look religious, wear religious clothes, use religious vocabulary, and even carry a religious book, the Bible. You can hang out with religious people, and yet there can be no power."

"Once you say, 'I don't think God's right,' you have judged God. If you judge God, you have become your own god, and another god is an idol."

"You don't have to be a criminal to be worldly. All you have to do is leave God out of the equation and you just became worldly."

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