

Godliness

A 3-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®
 Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This series examines one of the central themes in Paul’s Pastoral Epistles — godliness. Keith Blades traces the concept from its roots in Genesis 1:26-27 (“God-like-ness”) through Israel’s program and into the unique privilege of the Body of Christ in the Dispensation of Grace. Across three lessons, Keith defines godliness as having three essential components (thinking like God, doing things God’s way, and laboring with God), explores the mystery of godliness revealed in 1 Timothy 3:16, and traces the evolution of both worldly and Christian ungodliness. This series is an ideal companion study to Romans 12–16 and Paul’s Pastoral Epistles.



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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	What Godliness Is: The Three Components of God-Like-ness
Lesson 2	The Mystery of Godliness and the Gentile Privilege in the Body of Christ
Lesson 3	The Evolution of Worldly Ungodliness and Christian Ungodliness

Lesson Summaries

L1

What Godliness Is *The Three Components of God-Like-ness*

- Godliness is the ultimate objective of the renewing of the mind in Romans 12–16 — the grand aim of all edification in this dispensation
- The term comes directly from Genesis 1:26-27: “God-like-ness” — man was created in God’s image and after His likeness
- Godliness has three essential components: (1) thinking like God thinks, (2) doing things God’s way, (3) laboring with God in what He is doing
 - Each component is associated with a member of the Godhead: Father (thinking), Son (doing), Spirit (laboring)
 - These three correspond to the three components of man’s being: spirit, soul, and body
- God’s original design was to educate Adam into godliness — the scheduled morning Bible study in the Garden (Genesis 2–3) was interrupted by the fall

- Isaiah 50:4-5 shows Christ as the last Adam perfectly fulfilling that design, learning from the Father each morning
- Man's fall introduced ungodliness — the exact opposite of all three components, as laid out in Paul's indictment in Romans 1:18-32
- Israel was created to be a godly nation: given God's word, covenants, and promises to think His thoughts, do His ways, and labor with Him
 - Israel ultimately failed and required a Redeemer; their only hope was One who could accomplish godliness on their behalf
- The three components of our sanctified position in Christ equip every believer for godliness in the Dispensation of Grace
 - Dead to sin (thinking like God), alive unto God in Christ (doing things His way), treated as sons (laboring with Him)

L2

The Mystery of Godliness *The Gentile Privilege in This Dispensation of Grace*

- Applying the three-component definition of godliness to the Pastoral Epistles illuminates every occurrence of the term
 - 1 Timothy 1:3-5: Godly edifying — the objective of the local assembly is to produce godliness in its members
 - 1 Timothy 2:9-10: Women professing godliness — thinking, doing, and laboring with God affects outward conduct and adornment
 - 1 Timothy 4:7-8: "Exercise thyself unto godliness" — godliness requires deliberate exertion; it is profitable unto all things
 - 1 Timothy 6:3-6: Warning against those who suppose godliness is gain — they were applying Israel's conditional blessing (Deut. 28) in the wrong dispensation; undispensational, not unscriptural
- The mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:15-16) is not that godliness itself was hidden — it is that God now reveals godliness as the goal for Gentiles gathered into the Body of Christ
- 1 Timothy 3:16 presents a six-part synopsis of God's redemptive plan for godliness: Incarnation → Justified in the Spirit → Seen of angels → Preached unto the Gentiles → Believed in the world → Received into glory
 - "Seen of angels" — Christ on display to principalities at His ascension; connects to the Body of Christ's heavenly vocation
 - "Preached unto the Gentiles" — the grand new element: those once consigned to ungodliness are now recipients of the gospel
- Before this dispensation, Gentiles were consigned to ungodliness (Acts 14:16): dead in sins, walking in their own ways, without God in the world (Ephesians 2:1-3, 11-12)
- Believers in this dispensation have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness — the parallel of Israel's remnant (2 Peter 1:2-4) now extended to the Body of Christ
- The heavenly vocation of the Body of Christ requires godliness — as members of a new creation, we are positioned to govern and reign with Christ in the heavenly places

L3

The Evolution of Ungodliness *Worldly and Christian Ungodliness*

- Ungodliness evolves throughout redemptive history — there is a biblical

doctrine of evolution tracing man's progressive departure from God-likeness

Worldly Ungodliness

- The old world before the flood was a “world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:4-6) — Satan accelerated the corruption of the sin nature; God judged it with the flood
- Human government and nationalism were instituted after the flood as a restraining dam — but man's ungodliness continued to develop
- Romans 1:18, 28-32: God's wrath is revealed (not yet executed) against ungodliness — the reprobate mind and its catalogue of sins reflect all three components of ungodliness in reverse
- 2 Timothy 3:1-4: Perilous times in the last days of this dispensation — the same characteristics as Romans 1, evolved even further during the Dispensation of Grace
- Jude 14-15: Enoch's prophecy describes the most ungodly class of humanity who will ever live — the word “ungodly” appears four times in a single verse
- The zenith of worldly ungodliness: Revelation 19:11-19 — man assembles to make war against Christ at His return; the anticipated, prophesied climax of all human history

Christian Ungodliness

- Christian ungodliness arises when members of the Body of Christ depart from sound doctrine and operate on Israel's program in this dispensation
- 1 Timothy 4:1: “Departing from the faith” — seducing spirits draw sincere believers to doctrines of devils (e.g., forbidding to marry, abstaining from meats — Israel's program misapplied)
- 2 Timothy 2:15-16: Rightly dividing the Word of Truth is the safeguard; profane and vain babblings increase unto more ungodliness — Christian ungodliness is progressive, not instantaneous
 - Christian ungodliness can come from earnest, sincere believers who are simply undispensational — the remedy is always right division

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Godliness Is a Dispensational Issue

What godliness looks like differs between Israel's program and the Body of Christ's program. The pastors in 1 Timothy 6 were not being unscriptural — they were being undispensational. Applying Israel's conditional material blessings (Deuteronomy 28) as the measure of godliness is a category error in this Dispensation of Grace. Thinking like God does, doing things His way, and laboring with Him is always dispensationally conditioned by what God is doing in a given administration.

The Mystery of Godliness: Gentiles and the Body of Christ

The mystery aspect of godliness is not that godliness itself was unknown — it is that God purposed to make godliness the issue for Gentiles gathered into the Body of Christ. Before this dispensation, God

consigned all nations to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16). That which was formerly a “foreign program” for Gentiles is now their very calling and privilege in this age of grace.

Sanctification and Godliness: Our Equipped Position in Christ

The three components of our sanctified position in Christ — dead to sin, alive unto God, and treated as sons — directly equip us for each component of godliness. This is not a program to achieve; it is a position from which to operate. Understanding this prevents both the error of passivity (ignoring doctrine) and the error of legalism (seeking to achieve godliness by the flesh).

Two Tracks of Ungodliness: Worldly and Christian

Keith distinguishes two distinct tracks of ungodliness. Worldly ungodliness is the evolution of mankind’s rejection of God from the flood through to the Day of the Lord’s wrath. Christian ungodliness is a separate phenomenon: members of the Body of Christ becoming undispensational, departing from sound doctrine, and increasing unto ungodliness through profane and vain babblings. Both tracks are prophesied, and both reach their climax at the close of this age.

Key Scripture References

Genesis 1:26-27	God creates man in His image and after His likeness — the foundational definition of godliness
Isaiah 50:4-5	Christ as the last Adam, perfectly educated by the Father each morning — the model of godliness
Romans 1:18-32	Wrath revealed against all ungodliness — the three components of man’s ungodliness traced in Paul’s indictment of the Gentile world
Romans 9:22	God enduring with longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction — the backdrop to this dispensation of grace
1 Timothy 1:3-5	Godly edifying in the assembly — the purpose of sound doctrine in the local church
1 Timothy 3:15-16	The mystery of godliness — a six-part synopsis of God’s redemptive plan culminating in the Gentiles and the Body of Christ
1 Timothy 4:7-8	Exercise thyself unto godliness — godliness requires exertion and is profitable unto all things
1 Timothy 6:3-6	Doctrine according to godliness — the danger of confusing godliness with material gain (undispensational application)
2 Timothy 2:15-16	Rightly dividing the Word of Truth — the primary safeguard against Christian ungodliness
2 Timothy 3:1-5	Perilous times in the last days — the evolution of ungodliness within the Dispensation of Grace

Jude 14-15	Enoch's ancient prophecy — the most ungodly class of humanity at the close of the age ("ungodly" used four times in one verse)
Revelation 19:11-19	The zenith of worldly ungodliness — man assembles to make war against Christ at His return

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