

The Two Keys to a Life of Godliness 1 Timothy 4:5-9

Introduction:

1. I have met several people through the years that have claimed 1 Timothy 4:8 as their life verse (at least the first part of the verse: “*For bodily exercise profiteth little...*”).
 - Of course, this phrase has a context. Paul wasn’t teaching people to lie around like couch potatoes, eating chips and popcorn, and watching TV.
2. The context has to do with comparing physical exercise to spiritual exercise. vs. 7
 - The point is, you can spend a lot of time trying to make fit and beautify your outward body, but it will still ultimately die and perish.
3. But the time we spend building up our inner spirit is time well spent because there is profit now, but also in eternity (vs. 8). This is a win/win. Most things are either good up front and bad later, or bad up front and good later. **Illustration:** Eating Krispy Kreme donuts vs. exercise.
4. Godliness is profitable now and later! A life of spiritual growth and Christ-like character has positive impact now, and you will also reap the benefits out into eternity.
5. Paul says, “*Exercise thyself unto godliness...*” It is worth the effort. It is profitable unto all things. A godly, Christ-like life will enhance everything about your life.
6. Did you know that there are two essential keys to a life of godliness? You don’t have to rely on me for either one of these. If you are a believer, they are both available to you any time.
7. The two keys to godliness are found in verse 5.

The first key to godliness is the Word of God.

1. Paul just warned about false teachers in verses 1-4. Their focus is on outward religious rules and fables (vs. 7). False teachers tell stories and try to move people’s emotions in order to get them to do what *they* want them to do. They are starving people spiritually. There is little or no Bible.
2. When religious teachers focus on stories and religious rules, their followers become spiritually anemic. Rather than relying upon God and His Word, they rely upon the religious teachers and the religious system that is being promoted.
3. Notice the difference in verse 6. A “*good minister*” is nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine (the Bible). Because of this, he is able to feed his flock the same nourishment.
4. It is God’s Word that enlightens and instructs our minds as to what true godliness is. Remember, the context has to do with dietary laws that false teachers teach. vs. 3-4
 - The context of verse 5 isn’t that you say a prayer and wave the Bible over a piece of meat, and it magically becomes healthy and good for you. The meaning is far deeper.
 - It is the idea that it is the Word of God and prayer that enables the believer to see things clearly and live by faith and in a good conscience. You see through the false doctrine of the false teacher.

- We realize that this piece of meat has no power to affect us spiritually, for good or bad. Our focus isn't on dietary laws, but on Christ, and on His provision for our physical nourishment (*"received with thanksgiving"*). Now that piece of meat has been sanctified (set apart) for the proper usage (physical strength and energy).
5. We can apply this to every area of our lives.
 6. It is God's Word that enlightens our minds and puts everything in the proper light. It gives us wisdom to view everything properly (our house, car, job, family, money, possessions). God's Word brings everything into focus.
 7. We are *"nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine."* It brings growth.
 8. Christian, do you desire to live a godly life? It has profit here and in eternity. But it will not happen apart from God's Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 9. But there is a second essential to a godly life. Look at verse 5 again.

The second key to godliness is prayer.

1. The Word of God renews your mind. It allows you to see things clearly and fills your mind with divine wisdom. It's the truth of God (taken in, learned, and used) that purifies our thinking to allow us to view things and use things correctly.
2. But have you ever noticed that **knowing** the right thing to do and **doing** it are two different things? Romans 7:18-21
3. It is the spiritual work of prayer that enables the believer to act on what He is learning from God's Word. It is prayer that provides spiritual energy and strength to **follow** God's Word.
 - In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, notice how a godly, peaceful life and prayer go hand in hand. cf. Philippians 4:6-7
4. A prayerless people are a powerless people. It doesn't matter how much of God's Word that you have learned. If you fail to pray, you will lack the power needed to live God's Word. You can know the Bible cover to cover, but if you neglect prayer you can get carnal real quick.
5. Our motto at CrossRoads is "Learning the Bible; Living the Bible." You have to learn it before you can live it, but you won't live it if you are failing to pray. Most of our failures in the Christian life are prayer failures.
6. There are people who know God's Word, but they do not apply it to the details of their lives.
 - This results in a prideful, puffed-up attitude, but not spiritual growth. The intake of spiritual truth is to be **used**. You take what you have learned and apply that truth to the details of your life.
 - But this will not happen consistently apart from prayer.
7. As you pray, and God empowers you to apply God's Word to the details of your life, you begin to live a life of godliness.

In Conclusion:

1. Notice verse 7: *"...exercise thyself unto godliness."*
2. How much good does physical exercise do for me if I do it once per month? What if you lift weights once or twice per month? Do you think you will build strength and muscle?

3. I think this is why Paul said, "*Exercise thyself...*" The key is consistency. Just like with physical exercise, you will get the results you want based on your level of dedication and commitment.
4. Paul said about Epaphras, "*Always laboring fervently for you in prayers...*"
 - Just as muscles aren't built overnight, neither is a godly life. Just as muscles aren't built without sacrifice, neither is a godly life. There is some time and effort involved.
5. According to verse 9, what I have just told you is trustworthy and acceptable. Godliness will bring forth good results in this life and in the life to come!