

# Move Past The Miracles And Pursue The Mystery Of Godliness

by Sandeep Poonen

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*This sermon delves into the concept of godliness and the true essence of discipline, emphasizing that bodily discipline, while important, is not the ultimate path to godliness. The focus is on redirecting attention to the mystery of godliness, which is embodied in the life of Jesus and cannot be achieved through mere physical practices or formulas. The message highlights the call for believers to ascend the 'ladder of God' through Christ, to be seated in the heavenlies, and become messengers of God, bringing heaven down to earth through divine revelation and love.*

**Duration:** 12:25

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 4:7, 1 Timothy 6:6, 1 Timothy 3:16, John 1:47

**Topics:** "Godliness", "Divine Revelation"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the concept of godliness and the true essence of discipline, emphasizing that bodily discipline, while important, is not the ultimate path to godliness. The focus is on redirecting attention to the mystery of godliness, which is embodied in the life of Jesus and cannot be achieved through mere physical practices or formulas. The message highlights the call for believers to ascend the 'ladder of God' through Christ, to be seated in the heavenlies, and become messengers of God, bringing heaven down to earth through divine revelation and love.

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## Transcript

1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 7 and 8. Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness, for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. When we think of bodily discipline nowadays, those of us who are educated, especially in the educated parts of the world, we tend to think about what the world places a lot of emphasis on, and that's controlling what we eat, how much we eat, what we should eat, staying fit, and even things such as meditation, mindfulness, and so on. There's so much that the world thinks about as it comes to bodily discipline and that we could also think of as harmless activities.

We can work so hard for a good-looking body or a good-looking life, bigger cars, bigger houses, and we can see them as harmless accessories, harmless accessories to our godliness. But the desire for nice things, the desire to be rich, Paul says in 1 Timothy 6, is evil and it's a breeding ground for vanity, and we as Christians should fight all vanity and seek to be godly. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 6 that the right

accessory to a godly life is contentment, which is very different from what the world tells us with all of its vanities.

But that said, that's not, I don't think that's the main intention of this verse. I don't get the sense that Timothy was by any means a vain man. He was not obsessed with his body or his comfort like most Christians are today.

Paul was actually warning him, I think, about the other extreme. Timothy, like many pious Jews, could have thought that a strict bodily discipline was the secret to godliness. But I feel Paul is redirecting Timothy to focus on true godliness, which is different from what is attained by strict bodily discipline.

So that word godliness, Paul tells me actually what godliness is just a few verses earlier at the end of 1 Timothy 3, verse 16. So if you just look at a few verses earlier, it says 1 Timothy 3.16, By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness. He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory.

So the mystery of godliness is not a set of doctrines, it's the real living, pulsing, throbbing life of Jesus himself, the divine life that Jesus lived here on earth as a man, fully God and fully man, tempted as a man. The mystery of godliness is how Jesus lived. And Paul is saying that the dry acts of bodily discipline is not going to get us anywhere close to true godliness.

And Paul also tells me that this is a mystery. So it's not anything that we could obtain through a formula. Bodily disciplines and meditation, strict self-control, Bible study, prayer and fasting, those are all things that can be reduced to a formula.

But Paul says very clearly this is a mystery. So how do we get to know this mystery? The story of Nathanael in John chapter 1 actually shed some light on this for me and the brothers, brother David just also recently pointed to the story so I praise God for the way the Holy Spirit speaks. But in John chapter 1 we read this at the end of John chapter 1 verse 47.

If you want to turn there you can follow with me those five verses. John chapter 1 verse 47 till the end of the chapter. Jesus sees Nathanael coming to him because Philip had told him about Jesus.

Nathanael is coming to him and Jesus said to him, behold and Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit. And Nathanael said to him, how do you know me? Jesus answered and said to him, before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree I saw you. Verse 49 Nathanael answered to him, rabbi you are the son of God, you're the king of Israel.

Jesus answered and said to him, because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe you will see greater things than these? And he said to him, truly truly I say to you, you will see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man. So what we see here is that Jesus, sorry Nathanael sees the miraculous powers of Jesus who saw him even before Philip had called him when he was sitting alone under the fig tree and Jesus said, I saw you there. And Nathanael sees that and says, wow you're the son of God.

But Jesus responds with a remarkable statement which says when he said Nathanael, do you believe in me because I worked a miracle that I showed you that I can work miracles in your life? You will see greater things than that. And I was thinking about my own life and I'm sure all of us who have been born again can testify to some a few or many many miraculous things that Jesus has done in our lives. Like

Nathanael too, all of us Jesus has moved powerfully and spoken specifically to us to help us recognize that Jesus is the son of God, he's the messiah more than just a rabbi or a good teacher like most of the world may think of him.

But Jesus I'm seeing here was not satisfied with that acknowledgement from his disciples. He's not impressed by disciples who marvel at him and rave about him because of all the miracles he works in their lives. Even the multitude marveled at him and then killed him a few days later.

Jesus wants much more from his disciples. This is the greater thing he desires that we will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man. And Jesus is referring to a dream that Jacob had in Genesis 28, where Jacob saw a ladder that was set on the earth and was rising all the way to the heavens and the angels were ascending and descending on that ladder.

And God stood above the ladder and spoke to Jacob there. You can read about it in Genesis 28. And Jacob was so awestruck that when he woke up he built a pillar and poured oil in it and called this place Bethel which is the house of God.

And so what Jesus was saying here is you're going to see a greater thing than just the miracle of who I am. You're going to see the heavens opened and angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man. And I was wondering what that meant and I noticed that the word angel is also a word that just means messenger.

So that same word angels is used to talk about angels that are in heaven but also used to describe like in Revelation 2 and 3 earthly messengers of God. So I read that promise and that greater thing in a new way where it said the heavens will be opened and the messengers of God will ascend to heaven and descend on the son of man and God will speak. So brothers and sisters you and I are called to be those messengers of God.

Jesus is that ladder that came all the way from heaven and reached the earth and lived among us and he's called us now to be his messengers that ascend up to heaven that fellowship with God in the heavenlies and then descend and bring heaven down to earth. That heavenly life, the mystery of godliness is ours. That life of Jesus can be ours as we scale that ladder up to heaven, be seated in the heavenlies and hear about his life and bring heaven down to earth.

God said you know blessed are the feet of those who bring the good news. Those we have to bring the good news to those who are others who have not heard of it and we they won't hear it unless we preach it and we are sent. But that only comes as we scale up the ladder to heaven.

We ascend to heaven and then we come down and bring heaven down to earth. And Jacob woke up from this dream and he called this the house of God. This is Bethel the house of God and that's what the church the new covenant church is.

The new covenant church is filled with people who are ascending the ladder of God which is Christ up to heaven are seated in heaven on the heavenlies in the on the lap of God. See the mysteries of heaven and his love and the great sacrifice in the slain lamb and then come down from heaven to bring heaven down to earth. That's what the mystery of godliness is that we ought to bring.

Jesus was revealed in the flesh as it says in 1 Timothy 3 16. The mystery of godliness centers around Jesus who was revealed in the flesh. He was taken and became a man and he lived a sinless life and so

he was vindicated all the way down to his very heart and his spirit and the holy spirit bore witness to it by raising him and demonstrating that death was defeated forever.

And now I realize that the life of Jesus is only seen by God's messengers. It's not something I can get from bible study. It's the ladder that I have to scale up to heaven through Christ and be seated in the heavenlies and God wants to make me his messenger to taste of the divine nature of God to see his hatred for sin and his his love which is his very nature so that love may abound in my holiness.

And then I can you know as it says in 1 Timothy 3 16 it's seen by his messengers and proclaimed among the nations. God wants me to not just be seated there and be a monastic all by myself. He wants me to come down and proclaim this earth.

Proclaim to this earth not a theory or a theology or a doctrine but the life of God and God promises that people in the world will believe it too. Those who are we we too have believed it this way. We were fortunate to have the gospel proclaimed to us as messengers of heaven messengers before us came and taught us the truths of the gospel and we heard and God spoke to us through them through these other messengers who had ascended and descended from heaven.

We can believe too and God wants us to be messengers to other people too. Finally I want to say that you know in verse 9 after this passage that we memorized Paul says this phrase this is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance and there's only one other time that Paul uses this phrase that it's a trustworthy statement that deserves full acceptance and that's in 1 Timothy 1 15 which some of us may know where Paul says that Christ Jesus came to save sinners of which I am foremost. So I see Paul saying look there are two statements that deserve our full acceptance.

They are absolutely so massive that they deserve our full acceptance. One is the great salvation of Jesus for me personally where I am see myself as the chief of all sinners but the other statement is this mystery of godliness that is not achieved by bodily discipline. It's not achieved through any program or set of doctrines but it is as we scale the ladder of Christ as we meditate on the life of Christ as we are seated on the heavenlies on the lap of God and he unveils to us the mystery of the divine mystery of who Jesus is and that we and this is not an individual thing that there can be messengers plural who are staling and descending back from God and revealing the truth of Jesus to others and proclaiming it to others so that others can have their blind eyes open and this is these are the two statements that deserve our full acceptance.

This is what the house of God can be. This is what NCCF can be. A group of messengers who are in their daily life in their private life scaling up to heaven and saying God that's we want to where we want to be.

We want to receive your truth and then let us come down Lord and love one another as you have loved us. May God help us.

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