

## THE GODLY FAMILY

### INTRODUCTION

What is Godliness? According to Strong's Concordance, the word "godliness" is translated from the Greek word for "piety" and is used in the New Testament fourteen times in the letters of Peter and Paul. **Godliness in the Bible is mainly used to describe a positive way of life influenced by God's word** resulting in people displaying His character.

Having focused on the men's camp on the godly man, the godly husband and the godly father, today we will conclude by looking at the what the characteristics of a godly family should be.

### MESSAGE

**2 Peter 1:5-7** (NKJV) But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

This scripture describes a process of growth in godliness:

- Virtue – moral goodness (fruit of the Spirit).
- Knowledge – what does the Word say?
- Self-control – fruit of the Spirit – we must resist the flesh!
- Perseverance – don't give up.
- **Godliness – Christlikeness.**
- Brotherly kindness - fruit of the Spirit.
- Love – more like our heavenly Father (Fruit of the Spirit).

If we focus on these seven virtues and apply them to our Christian family life, I believe we will be well set to be the godly families that we want to be.

### 1. A GODLY FAMILY IS A VIRTUOUS FAMILY.

The word virtue means "morally good". A virtuous family is one that is morally good. Here are some examples of what it means to be morally good:

- In a family that is morally good, there is not gender based violence.
- In a family that is morally good, parents don't abuse their children and the children don't dishonour their parents.
- In a family that is morally good, there is not sexual immorality, and marital infidelity.
- A family that is morally good lives in obedience to the teachings of the Bible.

Romans 3:23 tells us that all sin and fall short of the glory of God. **Our attempts to be morally good fall horribly short. How then can we be virtuous? We need the help of the Holy Spirit, and that means we need to be surrendered to the lordship of Jesus Christ.**

**Galatians 5:16** (NKJV) I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and **you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**

**Galatians 5:18** (NKJV) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The law represents those who try to be righteous by their own deeds (which is impossible), but the leading of the Holy Spirit enables us to walk in God's ways and not our ways. When we struggle with our fleshly nature, let us surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading. He will give us victory over our flesh.

***Friends, if we are going to be godly families who are virtuous, imitators of Jesus Christ, we can't do it in our own strength, we must be surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.***

## **2. A GODLY FAMILY KNOWS AND OBEYS GOD'S WORD**

**Romans 10:14-15 & 17** (NKJV) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It's not possible to know and obey God's word if we don't make a practice of hearing it taught, reading it and meditating on it. The only way the family will grow in godliness is if it is centered around God's word. **It can't only be heard on Sunday in church. It needs to be taught in the home by the father first, then the mother.** It can be the focus of family Bible study, dinner time conversation and in addition to that, church services and activities.

***If we want our family to grow in godliness, we need to take responsibility to center our home around the word of God. Is the Bible often read and used in our homes or is it just another dusty book on a shelf somewhere?***

## **3. A GODLY FAMILY DISPLAYS SELF-CONTROL**

The people who know a person the best is those that they live with. It's in our homes that we are known warts and all. We may keep our guard up in public, at work, at church or with friends, but when we are at home, we tend to let our guard down and our true character can be seen by all.

**Do we display self-control when among our family or is that where we lose our temper, fight, swear and say hurtful things?**

A godly family is one where the members respect one another and **don't feel free to "just lose it"** with one another.

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**. Against such there is no law.

James speaks about controlling our anger: **James 1:19-20** (NKJV) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **slow to wrath**; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Proverbs gives advice we would be wise to heed: **Proverbs 15:1** (NKJV) A soft answer turns away wrath, **But a harsh word stirs up anger**.

In 1 Corinthians 13 we read that love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 **or rude**. It does not demand its own way. It is **not irritable**, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

**When we lose our cool, love goes out the window!**

***If we desire to be a godly family, let us ask the Lord to help us to be patient and kind with one another and to forgive us for the times we have lost our temper with one another.***

#### **4. A GODLY FAMILY PERSEVERES**

Any child of God knows we need to persevere in our Christian walk so that we can attain the crown of life.

**James 1:12** (NIV) Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

**But we don't only need to persevere in our Christian walk, we need to persevere in love toward one another.**

**1 Corinthians 13:7-8a** (AMPC) **Love bears up under anything and everything that comes**, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening].<sup>8</sup> Love never fails...

***Are we willing to persevere in love towards our family members? Just like us they are not perfect and make mistakes sometimes and say and do things that cause hurt or that we simply don't like. In too many families, people no longer speak to each other or even see each other. That is not the perseverance in love that the Bible teaches us about. Is there a family member we have given up on? God challenging us today to go and make right?***

#### **5. A GODLY FAMILY IS CHRISTLIKE**

God created man and woman after His own image (Genesis 1:27), and part of being in His image is that we are to reflect His character in and through our life. **To be godly is to be Christlike.** A godly person is a person who can say like the Apostle Paul, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ".

**A godly family is a family that is made up of people who each seek to reflect God's character and nature through their own life and see His principles manifest in their family relationships and in their home.**

Here are a few examples of how we can reflect Christ's character in our family:

- Jesus served us, let us serve one another.
- Jesus laid down His life for us, let us prioritise our family over our own needs.
- Jesus showed compassion towards people, let us display compassion towards our family members.
- Jesus told us to forgive 70x7 times...
- This list can go on and on.

***Are we displaying the character of Christ in our home? When people see our family, do they see a reflection of our Saviour's character? Let us ask Him to increase and let us decrease, then our family will live in a godly home.***

## **6. A GODLY FAMILY DISPLAYS BROTHERLY KINDNESS**

Isn't it interesting that its not just called "kindness", it's called "brotherly kindness". Paul sees kindness as a characteristic one would expect in a family, but is that truly what we display in our homes?

**Is it possible that instead of brotherly kindness our household is full of selfishness and nastiness? We are still dealing with the flesh nature.**

How often do we see it portrayed in TV programs that someone will hog the bathroom, or that there will be sibling rivalry among children, or possibly we see the father lounging on the couch shouting orders to his wife. These may be stories, but they reflect what happens in normal people's homes.

If I were to go back to 1 Corinthians 13, the first thing we read about love is this..."love is patient, love is kind". Kindness is the fifth part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit we read about in Galatians 5.

***Do we as family members need to spend time reflecting on the kindness we are displaying toward our family members? With God, nothing is impossible, even the most difficult people can be transformed by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and begin displaying kindness on a level that will bless our family tremendously.***

## 7. A GODLY FAMILY LOVES

To be godly means we must reflect the character of God. The Bible teaches us that God is love. A godly family is a family that loves.

**1 Corinthians 16:14** (NKJV) Let all that you do be done with love.

**1 Peter 4:8** (NLT) Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

A family that knows how to love one another will not only be a godly family, but they will be a happy family. Love is the single greatest ingredient that can carry a family through that challenges and trials of life.

Finally, when we love one another as a family, that love becomes a witness to the whole world:

**John 13:35** (NKJV) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

***Let us eagerly desire to be godly families, but most importantly, let us desire to be families in which love is boundless. There is no better way to reflect the character of our God and His wonderful Son. Love on our family and our home is the greatest evidence that godliness is present***

## CONCLUSION

Once the Israelites had settled into the promised land and Joshua was nearing the end of his life, he called the people of Israel and their leaders together and he gave them an ultimatum.

**Joshua 24:14** (NKJV) And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua challenged the people of Israel, God's people that day and he said, "make a choice who you are going to serve, false gods and idols or the living God, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

God challenges us again today as we learn about being godly families. Who are we serving? Who or what is our idol and our god? Are we living in homes where we reflect His character? Are we going to be godly families?

Let us commit today that we will serve the Lord. Fathers, it's time to make a stand, don't lead your family in compromise, lead them in Christ. Mothers, choose to support your husbands in this and parents, take responsibility for leading your children in godliness. Children, honour your parents as they commit today to lead godly lives in godly households.

Yes, there may be things that need to change. Do you want to have a godly family? Pick up your cross with your family and choose to follow Jesus from this moment on.