

### **1. What is Godliness?**

As we have discussed in class, the goal of being “sharers in the divine nature,” especially the glory and excellence of God and Christ, should be a central motivation in the Christian’s pursuit and practice of the virtues (faith, knowledge, self-control, etc . . .). The term “godliness” (2 Peter 1:6-7) appears at first to signify this pursuit of “godlikeness,” but actually means something more like “appropriate attitude and action toward God.” This is seen in the original Greek term: *eusebeia*. “*Eu*” means “good” or “proper;” “*sebeia*” means “fear” or “awe.” At a semantic level, therefore, godliness is “proper fear or awe.” Because of this, the term for “godliness” is sometimes translated as “worship” or “piety” (Acts 3:12) in the New Testament.

#### Exercise #1

According to the Bible, for what should reverence (godliness/worship) be had and shown?

- Timothy 2:2 (We will note the connection to Acts 25:21,25 in class)
- 1 Timothy 5:4
- Acts 17:23; Romans 1:25 (We will note the connection to Acts 17:17 in class)

### **2. Why Godliness?**

As with the other virtues, the Christians’ pursuit of godliness fulfills their god-given purpose. As with the other virtues, especially “knowledge,” there is a façade of virtue, as well as the real thing. People can have the appearance of reverence and awe for God, but not really possess its real power or purpose (2 Tim 3:2-5). Paul elsewhere gives two concrete ways in which people can have an “appearance of godliness,” but not be living a religious and reverent life for the right reasons: 1) people can seek to justify ungodly behavior by not teaching sound doctrine (“teaching that does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ”), all the while claiming to be godly (1 Timothy 6:1-3); and, 2) people use a cloak of “godliness” to promote argument and discord as a means to personal gain, including monetary profit (1 Timothy 6:4-7).

#### Exercise #2

In addition to identifying examples of the false godliness described above, read the following passages and list at least three purposes that genuine godliness should help to fulfill in our life.

- Titus 1:1
- Hebrews 12:28; Mark 7:7
- 2 Peter 3:11

### **3. How Godliness?**

Jesus Christ is an exemplar of reverence for God. The same term used for “godliness” in 2 Peter 1:6 is used in the Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 11:2: “And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him . . . the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD” (*eusebeia*). According to Hebrew 5:7, the nature of Jesus’ prayers exhibited his reverence (see, for example, Matthew 6: 9-10; John 12:27-28; Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 23:46)

#### Exercise #3:

According to the following passages, what attitudes and actions can cultivate godliness?

- 1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Tim 6:3
- 1 Timothy 3:16
- Ephesians 5:21
- 2 Peter 3:11