

# HOW TO LIVE A GODLY LIFE

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## Text: I Timothy 6:11-12

In the movie Karate Kid, young Daniel asks Mister Miagi to teach him karate. Miagi agrees under one condition: Daniel must submit totally to his instruction and never question his methods. Daniel shows up the next day eager to learn. To his chagrin, Mister Miagi has him paint a fence. Miagi demonstrates the precise motion for the job: up and down, up and down. Daniel takes days to finish the job.

Next, Miagi has him scrub the deck using a prescribed stroke. Again the job takes days. Daniel wonders, What does this have to do with karate? but he says nothing. Next, Miagi tells Daniel to wash and wax three weather-beaten cars and again prescribes the motion. Finally, Daniel reaches his limit: "I thought you were going to teach me karate, but all you have done is have me do your unwanted chores!"

Daniel has broken Miagi's one condition, and the old man's face pulses with anger. "I have been teaching you karate! Defend yourself!" Miagi thrusts his arm at Daniel, who instinctively defends himself with an arm motion exactly like that used in one of his chores. Miagi unleashes a vicious kick, and again Daniel averts the blow with a motion used in his chores. After Daniel successfully defends himself from several more blows, Miagi simply walks away, leaving Daniel to discover what the master had known all along: skill comes from repeating the correct but seemingly mundane actions. The same is true of godliness.

-- Duke Winsler, El Segundo, California. Leadership, Vol. 16, no. 4.

At times the human mind questions the value of continuous prayer, devotions and worship. These powerful activities become commonplace and mundane over the years too many because what they once did out of love they now do out of habit. After a while the value of the habit is not even clearly seen.

The challenge for the Christian is not to give up what may have become a mundane task, but rather to relearn the value of the activities and thereby become reenergized and passionate about them again.

In our text, Paul points out to Timothy several pitfalls to avoid and *actions* to take in keeping his life pleasing to the Lord.

## **I. PURSUE ONLY WHAT GOD APPROVES (v.11b).**

### **A. Pursue a godly life (v.6).**

Andrew Fuller wrote, "Sin is to be overcome, not so much by maintaining a direct opposition to it, as by cultivating opposite principles. If you wish to kill the weeds in your garden, plant it with good seed. When the ground is well occupied there is less need for the labor of the hoe. If a man wished to quench fire, he might fight it with his hands until he was burned to death; the only way is to apply an opposite element." -- Andrew Fuller

■ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Quotable Spurgeon*, (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, Inc, 1990)

### **B. Pursue faith.**

### **C. Pursue a life that can endure (v.14).**

What Paul is literally saying is, "Pursue and keep on pursuing."

### **D. Pursue gentleness (v.2c).**

## **II. FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH (v.12a).**

### **A. We are fighting for our Christian faith (vv.3-5).**

At the very heart of the Christian gospel is a cross—the symbol of suffering and sacrifice, of hurt and pain and humiliation and rejection. I want no part of the Christian message which does not call me to involvement, requires of me no sacrifice, takes from me no comfort, requires of me less than the best I have to give. The duty of a Christian is to be faithful, not popular or successful.

-- Donald Wildmon in *NFD Journal*. *Christianity Today*, Vol. 31, no. 10.

## **B. We are fighting against the enemies of the faith (v.20).**

Sometimes the enemies of the faith are those who would pervert the gospel or teach heresy. But sometimes the enemies of the faith can be found much closer to home, such as: complacency, sin, doubt, fear...

## **III. TAKE HOLD OF ETERNAL LIFE (v.12b).**

*Verse 12 reads, "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." NIV italics and bold added*

### **A. Everlasting life is your destiny.**

We are destined for redemption if we will believe.

### **B. Others will be following your example for good or bad.**

In *No Greater Power*, Richard C. Halverson wrote, "Sure we believe in freedom of speech.

You've got the right to say anything you like.

But others don't have to listen! They're under no obligation to tune you in; when they do, they can also tune you out anytime they wish.

Your right to speak is guaranteed--but you must earn the right to be listened to. It depends solely on your integrity. Integrity is the prerequisite to acceptance.

If you expect to be paid attention to, back it up with your life. Let your walk correspond to your talk.

This is fundamental to your witness for Christ. Many so-called Christians listen too little, talk too much, and live lives that contradict what they say. Their "witness" betrays Christ-and alienates those to whom they speak.

Jesus said, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).

-- Richard C. Halverson in *No Greater Power*. Christian Reader, Vol. 25, no. 1.

## CONCLUSION

Newsweek (11/19/90) ran an article titled "Letters in the Sand," a compilation of letters written by military personnel to family and friends in the States during the Gulf War. One was written by Marine Corporal Preston Coffey. He told a friend, "We are talking about Marines, not the Boy Scouts. We all joined the service knowing full well what might be expected of us." He signed off with the Marine motto, Semper Paratus, Latin for "always faithful."

The Bible says, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

-- Richie Lewis in Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching (Baker), from the editors of Leadership.

We know what God expects of us. We know what we must do. But do we know that God can and will give us the strength and passion for the commitment. If we are willing to take the necessary *actions* then God will provide the victory.