



MAIN SCRIPTURES

- II Peter 1:5-7; 2:12-22
- Daniel 1-10
- Numbers 22-24, 31:1-16

OBJECT LESSON: GODLINESS

- The Basics
- Incorporating Godliness
- Discarding Godliness

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“...to those who have obtained the same precious **faith** as we have obtained, and obtained it in the same way, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:” 2 Peter 1:1

“For this very reason you are required to do your part. Make every effort to add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; add to self-control, perseverance; add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

“If these things are yours and abound... and...if you do these things...” 2 Peter 1:8, 10

“He who lacks these things is nearsighted; he is approaching total blindness. It’s as if he has forgotten he’s been completely cleansed from his old sins.” 2 Peter 1:9

“Just as, **“The dog returns to his own vomit,”** and “the pig that has washed returns to wallowing in the mud.”” 2 Peter 2:22

INTRODUCTION: Object Lesson: Godliness

Faith is the foundation of the Christian life and it is a gift from God that came to you by way of His grace. And you must practice your faith if you wish to gain continual access to that grace. To do so, add these things to your faith in this precise sequence. First add virtue. That means to seek the Lord's voice for what is right in every matter and don't even attempt to seek new information or take any action before you are confident you're in alignment with God's will.

Once you are certain about God's directions, to truly demonstrate wisdom, begin by gathering any missing information before you act. It is only after you have the necessary knowledge to proceed judiciously that you should take any decisive action. It requires excellent self-control to both take wise action and to refrain from acting when God tells you to be still. It is also critical to recognize that challenges and temptations surely await; they will test you, misdirect you, and humble you. Nevertheless, one must stay the course to fulfill God's desires, and that takes perseverance. By the way, unless you humbly come to the conclusion that you made an error that must be corrected before you continue, persist until you succeed; a display of permanent self-control is part of the process. However, if you do discover you've made an error, it is prudent to retrace your steps to find your mistake. Begin by

reconsidering if you've misinterpreted God's original instructions and proceed from there.

This entire process is meant to be pursued in every area of life. Doing so is the very essence of godliness. No doubt, your imperfections will be exposed as you progress, but godliness is not characterized by perfection. Godliness, instead, is the authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection. It's hallmark is a never-ending desire to pursue God's will in all things, and to make the appropriate corrections along the way.

And that is how a disciple of Christ becomes an effective minister of reconciliation—one who readily imparts God's grace. His relentless pursuit of godliness has crafted him into a man whose surrendered life is poured out in sacrifice for the priorities of others. He is a beacon of brotherly affection who exudes kindness, a true disciple of Christ recognized by the love he shares. He imitates the character of Christ, and that is the constant meditation of his heart—to look more and more like Christ by how he loves.

God is love; so, to become love is to become like Christ. Thus, to imitate God's love is the only true measure of a perfect man—the full stature of Christ. And that is the goal of discipleship. Therefore, practice diligently if you wish to experience the fullness of God's precious and exceedingly great promises, the greatest of which is the promise to partake in God's Divine Nature.

THE BASICS

1. Everything Begins with Faith

A. Faith Like Mine

(1) Faith: The Foundation of Everything (See: [Faith Like Mine](#))

(a) Two Faiths: From Faith to Faith

1. “I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ; it is **the power of God for salvation** for everyone who believes, (Jew first also Greek). **In it is revealed God’s righteousness from faith to faith.** As it is written, “But the righteous shall live by faith.”” Romans 1:16-17

a) Righteousness: revealed through the gift of faith.

1) “...to those who have obtained the same precious **faith...**, in the same way, **by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:**” 2 Peter 1:1

b) Righteousness: revealed by the practice of faith!

1) “For this very reason you are required to do your part. **Make every effort to add to your faith...**” 2 Peter 1:5

(b) The gift of faith must become your practice of faith!

1. “Being therefore **justified by faith, we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ; through

whom **we also have our access by faith into this grace** in which we stand..." Romans 5:1-2

a) **Justified by Faith:**

- 1) The gift of faith came by way of God's grace.
- 2) It softened your heart to the Gospel of Salvation.
- 3) The Cross became real (believe-repent-confess).
- 4) All sins instantly forgiven; made right with God.
- 5) No longer in debt to God; now in harmony.

b) **Access by Faith:**

- 1) The practice of faith (you exercise the free gift).
- 2) How you gain continual access to God's grace.
- 3) It empowers you to live as a disciple.
- 4) Leave behind sin of your old life (new creation).
- 5) This distinguishes a disciples from a converts.

B. **Add P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E. Persistent Repetition Accelerates Character Transformation Impacting Christian Ethos.**

(1) The 7 Steps to Practice Faith ([Just Add P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E](#))

(a) Add to your faith: this order is as important as the steps!

1. **"For this very reason you are required to do your part. Make every effort to** add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; add to self-control, perseverance; **add to perseverance, godliness;** add to godliness, brotherly

affection; and add to brotherly affection, love." 2

Peter 1:5-7

a) **Faith (Ground 0):**

- 1) The foundation of the Christian life
- 2) A Gift from God that came by His grace
- 3) Practice faith to gain continual access to grace
- 4) Add these things to faith in this sequence:

b) **Virtue (Step 1):**

- 1) Moral excellence (1st) or coordinates will be off
- 2) Morality according to world is ever-changing
- 3) Virtue: whatever is morally excellent to God
- 4) To practice your faith consider:
 - a. What is right to God in this situation?
 - b. What does Yahweh think about this?
 - c. What is God's heart on this matter?

c) **Knowledge (Step 2):**

- 1) Additional information needed to act wisely
- 2) To do what is right: fill the knowledge gap
 - a. What am I missing?
 - b. What do I need to know before I act?

d) **Self-control (Step 3):** to act wisely (not by your first impulses and desires).

- 1) Wisdom: godly application of knowledge, instruction and understanding.
- 2) Once you know what God wants you to do and you have filled in the knowledge gap, you must have the self-control to do it.
- 3) Two arms of Self-Control:
 - a. **One:** take action.
 - b. **Two:** to constantly guard that your actions stay in alignment with virtue and knowledge.
- 4) Two components of Self-Control:
 - a. **Do:** once you know what to do and how to do it, you must do it.
 - b. **Do not do:** you must know what not to do and then don't do those things.
- 5) A life of self-control:
 - a. Tell yourself no when yes is so tempting.
 - b. Tell yourself yes when no is more convenient.
- e) **Perseverance (Step 4):** Doing what is right, no matter how hard, how long, or what the cost!
 - 1) **Suffering:** challenges and difficulties are part of the process. (Y'shua suffered, why not you?)
 - 2) No matter how long or what the challenges...
 - a. Persist in what God called you to do.

- b. Abstain from what God called you to abstain.
- 3) Perseverance is PERMANENT SELF-CONTROL.
 - a. You know what is right according to God!
 - b. You know how to do it and you do it!
 - c. You discipline yourself from straying off course, but it is still not working as planned!
 - d. The fruit is elusive; the breakthrough absent; suffering persists; and hope starts to fade...
 - e. Don't ever surrender! Don't give up!
 - f. Perseverance: permanent, relentless, never-ending self control
- f) **Godliness (Step 5):** holistic integrity!
 - 1) Characterized by the desire to be in alignment with God's in all areas, and then their pursuit...
 - a. All components of your spirit, soul and body are longing to be in complete agreement with what they were designed for by your Creator.
 - b. It does not mean you have perfected your quest, but that you perfected your pursuit!
 - c. The authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection.
- g) **Brotherly Affection (Step 6):**

- 1) Be kind to and prefer others and their needs over yourself and your own needs!
 - a. Christian Alert: It's never been about you!
 - b. Christ did everything for us, not for Himself.
 - c. That is the model of how we should live.
 - d. No greater love is there than to lay down our lives for others.

h) **Love (Step 7):**

- 1) God is love.
- 2) No fear in love; perfect love casts out fear.
- 3) Love is the bond of perfection.
- 4) We can experience God in us.
- 5) We can have the mind of God (think like God).
- 6) We can love like God. *"We love Him because He first loved us."*
- 7) Love is the Divine Nature; goal of discipleship.
- 8) To love like God is to become like Christ!

C. The 1 Thing

(1) Life-Altering Critical Negligence ([The 1 Thing](#))

(a) One thing can shipwreck everything!

1. **"He who lacks these things** is nearsighted; he is approaching total blindness. It's as if he's forgotten

he's been completely cleansed from his old sins." 2

Peter 1:9

- a) Lacks what? Practice adding to your Faith: Virtue...
- b) Cause of Blindness: living *in the past* prevents you from seeing *in the future*!
 - 1) Forgetting you've ALREADY been cleansed...
 - a. You will not pursue... adding to your faith...
(You will instead pursue your past sins!)
 - b. Fullness of God's promises becomes elusive.
 - c. Participation in Divine Nature—impossible!
- c) Why is forgetting so devastating?
 - 1) He who holds onto his past is bound to repeat it
 - a. ***"The dog returns to his own vomit,"*** and *"the pig that has washed returns to wallowing in the mud."* 2 Peter 2:22
- d) How then should you live?
 - 1) ***"For we have spent enough of our past time doing the desire of the Gentiles, and having walked in lewdness, lusts, drunken binges, orgies, carousings, and abominable idolatries."***
1 Peter 4:3
 - 2) *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every*

*weight, and **sin which clings so closely**, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**,*” Hebrews 12:1 ESV

- a. You’ve invested too much into your former pagan life. Don’t invest one more resource!
- b. Don’t even go near your past sins!
- c. Leave the past in the past and pursue becoming more like Christ every day!

(b) That is why YOU are being REMINDED!

1. “Therefore **I will not be negligent to remind you of these things**, though **you know them** and are **established in the present truth**. I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, **to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that the putting off of my tent comes swiftly**, even as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. Yes, **I will make every effort that you may always be able to remember these things** even after my departure.” 2 Peter 1:12-15 WEBUS

- a) What Peter has to say is so important that he uses his last words before his execution to remind his students, and us, of the these truths...
- b) Not new information; already fully established...

INCORPORATING GODLINESS

2. Adding Godliness to Perseverance

A. What does it mean to add Godliness to your Perseverance?

(1) Holistic Integrity!

(a) Add to your faith:

1. “For this very reason you are required to do your part.

Make every effort to add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control;

add to self-control, perseverance; **add to**

perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.” 2

Peter 1:5-7

2. The order is as important as the steps: **add to perseverance, godliness...**

a) **Perseverance (Step 4):** Persist in what God called you to do, or abstain from what God called you to abstain: no matter how hard, how long, or what the cost!

b) **Godliness (Step 5):** To be godly means you have the sincere desire to align every thought and action with God’s will, and that you willingly submit your human spirit to the Holy Spirit!

(2) Godliness is holistic

- (a) Sanctified: to become holy or set-apart.
 - 1. **“May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23 WEBUS
 - a) This process is meant to be pursued in every area of life.
 - b) Doing so is the very essence of godliness. Notice the holistic nature of sanctification: Spirit, Soul, and Body.
- (b) To exercise godliness...
 - 1. **“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables. Exercise yourself toward godliness.** For bodily exercise has some value, **but godliness has value in all things,** having the promise of the life which is now and of that which is to come.” 1 Timothy 4:7-8 WEBUS
 - a) A critical distinction of godliness is that it is meant to be practiced; it’s an exercise that has both temporal and eternal value.
 - b) Your imperfections will be exposed as you progress, but godliness is not characterized by perfection.

- c) Godliness is, instead, the authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection.
 - d) It's hallmark is a never-ending desire to pursue God's will in all things (Spirit, Soul, and Body), and to make the appropriate corrections along the way.
- (c) A sign of godliness: willing to submit to God
1. "But **godliness with contentment is great gain**. For we brought nothing into the world, and we certainly can't carry anything out." 1 Timothy 6:6-7 WEBUS
 - a) We can and should find complete satisfaction in the pursuit of the things of God.
 - b) Contentment is the hallmark of godliness, even...
 - 1) ...in the midst of the mistakes we make along the way.
 - 2) ...with the weaknesses that manifest in our characters.
 - 3) ...during the various difficulties that we encounter.
- (d) A sign of ungodliness: unwilling to submit to God
1. "For those **who live according to the flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, **but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit**. For

the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace; **because the mind of the flesh is hostile toward God, for it is not subject to God's law, neither indeed can it be.** Those who are in the flesh can't please God." Romans 8:5-8 WEBUS

- a) When you desire for the human spirit to animate your life you won't ever be capable of subjecting yourself to God's will.

B. Object Lesson: Godliness: the sincere desire to align every thought and action with God's will, and that you willingly submit your human spirit to the Spirit of God!

(1) The Backstory (Daniel 1:1-7)

(a) The Kingdom of Judah is captured by Babylon

1. Jehoiakim is king of Judah.
2. Nebuchadnezzar is the king of Babylon.
3. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and Yahweh allowed Jehoiakim to be defeated.
 - a) Some of the holy articles of the temple (the house of God) were stolen and brought to the house of Nebuchadnezzar's god and stored in the treasury.
4. Nebuchadnezzar instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to assemble the best of the men of Israel he captured...

- a) ...from among the royal family
 - b) ...from among the nobles
5. Holistic Qualifications (Godliness)...
- a) young and good-looking
 - b) no physical defects or moral compromise
 - c) gifted with wisdom in every facet of life
 - d) knowledgeable about a variety of topics and skills
 - e) quick to understand, discern, and perceive things
 - f) able to serve in the king's palace
 - g) able to teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans (the wisest people in the land)
6. The king will set them apart to nurture their development for three years...
- a) After they complete their indoctrination and training, the king will utilize their gifts and talents to his advantage throughout his kingdom.
 - b) To foster their development, the king will provide for them a daily provision of...
 - 1) the king's delicacies (food fit for Babylonian royalty)
 - 2) the king's wine (the same wine the king drank)
7. Among those choice men were...
- a) Daniel (given the name Belteshazzar)

- b) Hananiah (given the name Shadrach)
 - c) Mishael (given the name Meshach)
 - d) Azariah (given the name Abed-Nego)
- (2) The Story (Daniel 1-10): Daniel is set-apart in body, soul, and spirit.
- (a) Set-apart with a pure body (Daniel 1:8-16)
 1. **Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's delicacies**, nor with his wine.
 - a) Daniel did not want to risk being given food that would violate the food laws in the Scriptures.
 - b) He made a proposal to the chief of the eunuchs for an alternative diet, so he wouldn't defile himself.
 2. The chief of the eunuchs had fears...
 - a) First, the king would notice that some of the trainees appeared to age more quickly than others.
 - b) Then, he would discover it was those who refused his special delicacies.
 - c) Finally, his own life would be endangered because the king would hold him responsible.
 3. Daniel proposed a solution to the steward assigned to him and his friends' training...
 - a) Let's do a test run for ten days.

- b) We will eat only vegetables and drink only water.
- c) Then you can examine us.
- d) Compare our appearance to those who ate the king's delicacies and base your final decision on those findings.
- e) The steward consented to test them for ten days.

4. Outcome...

- a) At the end of ten days Daniel and his friends appeared better and healthier than all the young men who ate the king's delicacies.
- b) The steward removed their requirement to eat the delicacies and to drink the wine, and agreed to give them only vegetables and water.

(b) Set-apart as a wise soul (mind) (Daniel 1:17-21; 5)

1. God gave the four men the knowledge and wisdom to understand advanced writings.
2. Daniel also had the ability to interpret all types of visions and dreams.
3. At the end of the three years of training, they were brought before Nebuchadnezzar.
4. Then the king interviewed all the men in the training program but **none were as advanced as Daniel**, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

5. They were chosen to served closely with the king.
 - a) In every matter the king examined that required wisdom and understanding, he found them ten times more advanced than all the magicians and astrologers in his kingdom.
6. Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.
 - a) In Chapter 2 Nebuchadnezzar has his 1st dream that none of the Chaldeans can interpret until Daniel is summoned.
 - b) In Chapter 3 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refuse to bow to the gold statue, are tossed into the furnace and protected by God, which elicits Nebuchadnezzar's praise for Yahweh.
 - c) In Chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar has his 2nd dream and he knows "the Spirit of God is in Daniel" and that he alone, and no other wise men in the kingdom can interpret; and he does.
(Nebuchadnezzar turned into an animal.)
7. In Chapter 5 Nebuchadnezzar's son king Belshazzar has the famous dream, "the handwriting on the wall." He is told that...
 - a) There's a man in his kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.

- b) In the days of his father this man had the light, understanding and wisdom of the gods.
 - c) His father King Nebuchadnezzar made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.
 - d) He should summon Daniel to interpret the vision because he is excellent at these spiritual matters.
 - e) He has knowledge and understanding.
 - f) He can interpret dreams, solve riddles, and explain enigmas.
8. Daniel is called in to Interpret the writing on the wall:
- a) *“You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”*
 - b) That very night Belshazzar was slain and Darius the Mede received the kingdom.
9. In Chapter 9 Daniel prays for the people and gives the 70 week prophecy.
10. In Chapter 10 Daniel is given more prophecy and he afflicts his soul for **three weeks: Eats no pleasant food, no meat, no wine, nor did he anoint himself.**
11. In Chapters 11 and 12, more Prophecy.
- (c) Set-apart in his spirit (Daniel 6)

1. The plot against Daniel:
 - a) King Darius set 120 provincial governors over the whole kingdom.
 - b) And over these 120 governors he placed three chief overseers, of whom Daniel was one.
 - c) The provincial governors were accountable to the overseers to protect the king's interests.
 - d) Daniel distinguished himself above the chief overseers and governors, **because of his excellent spirit**; and the king considered making him ruler over the whole kingdom.
2. The chief overseers and governors sought to find some charge against Daniel, but they could find no fault, because he was faithful; **they could not find any errors he had made [no negligence or corruption in him]**.
 - a) These men said, *"We won't be able to make any claim against Daniel under our laws; so, we'll need to create a conflict between our laws and the law of his God."*
3. These leaders gathered before the king, first flattered him, and then gave him their diabolical counsel:
 - a) King Darius, live forever!

- b) All leaders, counselors and advisors in the kingdom have consulted together {conspired!} and we have a recommendation.
- c) You should establish a royal statute and decree that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, shall be cast into the den of lions.
- d) Sign it into law of the Medes and Persians, a law which no man can repeal.
- e) King Darius, without forethought, signed the written decree.

4. Daniel's death sentence:

- 1. Daniel knew that the decree was signed, but he went home to his upper room...
 - a) With his **windows open** toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times and prayed and gave thanks before his God (Yahweh).
 - b) He had been doing that since his youth (a custom from his Jewish heritage).
 - c) The men who plotted against Daniel saw him praying and making supplication before his God (the window was open!).

5. They went to the king to bring attention to his decree:

- a) *“Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, shall be cast into the den of lions?”*
 - b) The king answered, “It’s true; according to the law of Medes and Persians; the order stands and no man can repeal it.”
 - c) So they exposed Daniel: “Daniel does not respect you as king, nor the decree that you signed. He is still petitioning his God three times a day.”
6. When the King heard the report, he was greatly displeased with himself for signing that law.
- a) He was a great fan of Daniel and very impressed with his service to the kingdom.
 - b) He set his intentions on some way to deliver him; and he worked on a plan until sundown.
 - c) But, the schemers reminded Darius that according to the law of the Medes and Persians, no decree or statute established by the king may be changed.
 - d) The king had no choice but to command that Daniel be cast into the den of lions.
- 1) But not before he was able to say to Daniel...
“Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”

- e) Daniel was thrown in the lion's den and a stone was laid to cover the opening.
- f) The king sealed it with his signet ring and with the signets of his Lords.
 - 1) The purpose was to seal that Daniel's fate cannot be changed by man!

7. Daniel's Deliverance:

- a) The king returned to his palace.
- b) He spent the night fasting.
- c) He canceled his evening musicians.
- d) He could not sleep all night.

8. The king arose very early in the morning and hastened to the den of lions.

- a) When he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel.
- b) *"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"*
- c) Daniel replied, *"O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."*

9. The king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be removed from the den.
 - a) Daniel was lifted up out of the lion's den uninjured because he believed in his God.
10. The outcome of Daniel's spiritual tenacity:
 - a) Darius honored Yahweh.
 - b) A similar result as with king Nebuchadnezzar and his son king Belshazzar because of Daniel's godliness (his testimony in Body, Soul, and Spirit).
11. The king commanded that the men who had accused Daniel be cast into the lion's den
 - a) Not just them, but also their children and their wives.
 - b) The lions overpowered all of them and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever reached the bottom of the den.
12. King Darius then issued another decree:
 - a) To all peoples, nations, and languages throughout the land: May your peace and prosperity abound.
 - b) I decree in every dominion of my kingdom:
 - 1) Tremble in fear before the God of Daniel.
 - 2) He is the living God who endures forever.
 - 3) His kingdom shall never be destroyed.

- 4) His dominion shall never end.
- 5) He is the God who delivers and rescues.
- 6) He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.
- 7) He delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

13. **Daniel prospered** in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

- a) See Esther's story in: [The Queen who was Willing to Die](#) for a similar tale in which man deceives his king in an attempt to destroy his enemy.

DISCARDING GODLINESS

3. Discarding Godliness from your Perseverance

A. **Object Lesson: Ungodliness:** you are unwilling to align every thought and action with God's will; you will not submit your human spirit to the Spirit of God!

(1) The Backstory: Balak, the king of the Moabites is threatened by Israel's strength...

(a) Balak summons Balaam, a 'prophet of Yahweh', to employ his services. (Numbers 22:1-21)

1. Israel had camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

- a) Balak witnessed what Israel did to the Amorites.
 - b) The people of Moab were petrified and sick with dread seeing Israel's massive population.
 - c) They gathered the elders and warned... "Israel will devour everything around us, as an ox does grass."
2. Balak sends representatives to fetch the prophet Balaam with this message:
- a) A mass of people have arrived from Egypt.
 - b) They are so numerous that they cover the face of the earth and are encroaching our territory!
 - c) There are too many of them for us to fight so here are my thoughts...
 - d) I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed.
 - e) So, please come right away and curse them for me.
 - f) Then, perhaps I'll be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land.
3. Elders from both Moab and Midian departed to seek out Balaam:
- a) They brought with them the diviner's fee, the amount of money customarily paid to soothsayers.
 - b) They found Balaam, delivered Balak's message, and ask him to return with them.

4. Balaam's response:
 - a) Lodge here tonight; I'll consult Yahweh and tell you what He says.
 - b) God said Balaam, "*Who are these men with you?*"
 - c) Balaam tells God all about Balak's concerns (as if He doesn't know) and how he's hoping for a curse over Israel so he can defeat them.
 - d) God orders Balaam to not go with them, nor curse Israel because they are blessed.**
 - e) Balaam rose in the morning...
 - 1) told Balak's representatives to go home
 - 2) he could not return with them
 - 3) Yahweh has refused all their requests
 - f) They returned to Balak and reported Balaam response.
 - 1) This should have ended Balaam's interaction on the matter, as if it was not already ridiculous enough that he would request permission from Yahweh to curse Israel!
5. But Balak is just getting started...
 - a) He sends a larger entourage of more influential representatives to convince Balaam.

- b) They report to Balaam that Balak has upped his offer.
- c) *“If you don’t let anything stop you from coming, he will pay whatever fee you require, just please come curse Israel.”*

6. Balaam’s initial response is spot on...

- a) *“Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.”*

1) But then he does the unimaginable... he goes back a second time to question Yahweh.

2) **“Stay here tonight and I’ll go ask Yahweh what I should do.”**

7. Balaam’s desire to second guess God will lead to a cascade of bad decisions, ending in his own demise!

a) God knows what’s in Balaam’s heart and He gives him over to his lustful desires!

b) *“If the men want you to go with them, go; however, only say what I tell you to say.”*

c) The next morning Balaam **saddled his donkey** and went with Balak’s representatives.

(2) The Story (Numbers 22-25, 31)

(a) Balaam, his Donkey, and ‘the Angel’ (Numbers 22-24)

1. God's anger was aroused because he went!
 - a) Do you see it? God told him to go, but why? It was because Balaam's heart was dark; he wanted to take the bribe and Yahweh knew it!
 - b) On his ride the **'Angel of the Lord'** stood in his path to block his progress (but Balaam was too blind to see it!)
 - c) His donkey could see the Angel standing in the way with His sword drawn, so he turned off the path into the field.
 - d) Balaam **struck the donkey** to turn her back.
 - e) Then the Angel blocked the narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on both sides.
 - f) The donkey pushed against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot; he struck her **a second time**.
 - g) Then the Angel stood in a narrow passage where there was no way to pass.
 - h) Again, the donkey saw the Angel and this time she stopped to lay down; Balaam's became infuriated and he struck the donkey **a third time**.
2. Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey...
 - a) She said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these **three times?**"

- b) Balaam is so hardhearted that he seems unfazed by a talking donkey and is instead more concerned to defend his behavior.
- c) “Because you abused me. I wish I had sword in my hand; I would kill you!”
- d) The donkey reasons with Balaam, “I’ve been your faithful donkey for quite some time; have I ever behaved like this in the past?” Balaam says no!
- e) The Lord then **opened his eyes** to see the Angel standing in the way with His sword; he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

3. The Angel spoke to Balaam...

- a) Why did you strike your donkey three times?
- b) I came to stand in your way because what you are doing is perverse to **Me**.
- c) The donkey saw Me and turned aside three times. If she had not, surely I would have killed you.

4. Balaam replied...

- a) I have sinned; I did not know You stood in the way against me.
- b) If it displeases You, I will turn back.

- 1) Balaam is still clueless, as if the problem was that he did not see the Angel, as opposed to the fact that he had asked to go in the first place.
 - 2) And this again is why God allows Balaam to continue down the wrong path.
 - 3) Nevertheless, Yahweh again instructs him to say only what he is told to say.
- c) Balaam continued on with Balak's representatives.
5. When Balak heard Balaam was coming, he rushes out to meet him.
 - a) He questions why Balaam did not comply with his first earnest request.
 - b) *"Am I not able to honor you?"*
 6. Balaam says to Balak, "Look, I'm here!"
 - a) However, I do not have any power at all to proclaim anything other than the word God puts in my mouth!
 - b) So Balaam went with Balak and Balak fed Balaam and all the representatives.

(3) A Series of Four Prophecies

(a) Balaam's first Prophecy:

1. The next day Balak took Balaam up to the high places of Baal; from there he could see the extent of Israel.

2. Balaam had Balak **build seven altars** to prepare seven bulls and seven rams for sacrifice.
3. *Balak did just as Balaam ordered, and Balak and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar.
4. Balaam said to Balak, "Stand by your burnt offering, and I will go seek Yahweh; perhaps He will come meet me; whatever He shows me I will tell you."
 - a) This is fascinating on two levels:
 - 1) First, a second-rate prophet is ordering a king to do manual labor.
 - 2) Second, this is the first of **three times** that **seven altars** are prepared for sacrifices in order to seek the Lord, but all are an act of rebellion because Yahweh already spoke on the matter. (*We'll hear what God says about this a bit later.)
5. Balaam goes off in seclusion and God meets with him.
 - a) Balaam informs God that he prepared seven altars and offered on each altar a bull and a ram.
 - b) Yahweh instructs Balaam to return to Balak with this oracle...
 - 1) Balak brought me here to ask me to curse Jacob and denounce Israel!

- 2) How shall I curse whom God has not curse or denounce whom the Lord has not denounced?
 - 3) Everywhere I look I see a people dwelling independently, set-apart from other nations.
 - 4) Israel is so numerous you can't number even one-fourth of them.
 - 5) I could only wish I would be as righteous as them at my death! (Balaam could not be more unrighteous!)
6. Balak is furious with Balaam!
- a) What have you done to me?
 - b) I brought you here to curse my enemies, and instead you've blessed them bountifully!
7. Balaam responded...
- a) I must speak only Yahweh's word!
 - b) Humorously Ironic: this whole interaction would not even be happening if Balaam was not already in rebellion against God's original answer, and yet he acts as if he is honoring God! What's even more absurd is that he would even ask God if he could curse Israel at the onset!
- (b) Balaam's Second Prophecy:

1. Balak asks Balaam to go with him to another vantage point to look out over Israel.
 - a) From there Balaam will see only part of Israel's expanse; maybe he can curse them from there.
 - b) *Another seven altars are built and a bull and a ram is offered on each altar.
 - c) Again Balaam asks Balak to stand by while he goes elsewhere to inquire of the Lord.
2. The Lord meets Balaam and again instructs him what to say; go back and tell Balak...
3. Balak is there with his representatives; "What has the Lord spoken?"
 - a) Rise up, Balak, and hear! Listen to me!
 - b) God is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent. (In other words, He won't change his mind, and He does not make mistakes!)
 - c) Has He said something that He will not do? Or has He spoken a word that He will not make good on?
 - d) I have received a command to bless Israel; He has blessed them and there is nothing I can do to reverse His decision.

- e) He has observed no iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel.
 - f) The Lord God is with them and the shout of a King is among them.
 - g) God brought them out of Egypt with the strength of a wild ox.
 - h) There's no sorcery that will work against Jacob, nor any divination that will be effective against Israel.
 - i) It must be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'Oh, what God has done!'
 - j) A people rises like a lioness and lifts itself up like a lion; It shall not lie down until it devours its prey and drinks the blood of the slain.
4. Balak hates this new prophecy, so he tries to get Balaam to say nothing instead.
- a) How about you, "neither curse them, nor bless them?"
 - b) Balaam reminds Balak, "I must heed to speak only what the Lord has told me to speak!"
- (c) Balaam's Third Prophecy:
- 1. Balak asks Balaam to go with him to yet another vantage point to look out over Israel.

- a) *“Perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there.”*
 - b) It is shocking, but he decides to go.
 - c) Again, Balaam has Balak build seven altars and prepare seven bulls and seven rams.
 - d) *Again king Balak did as Balaam said and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.
2. This time, however, because Balaam already knew that the Lord’s blessing over Israel was permanent, he did not go as the other times (essentially what has been an act of sorcery), but he set his face toward Israel’s encampment.
3. He witnesses how Israel is beautifully ordered according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. He proclaimed his oracle, the utterance...
- a) ...of Balaam the son of Beor.
 - b) ...of the man whose eyes are opened.
 - c) ...of him who hears the words of God.
 - d) ...of him who sees the vision of the Almighty.
 - e) ...of him who falls down with eyes wide open!
 - f) *“How lovely are your tents, O Jacob! Your dwellings, O Israel! Like valleys that stretch out, Like gardens by the riverside, Like aloes planted by*

the Lord, Like cedars beside the waters. He shall pour water from his buckets, And his seed shall be in many waters. "His king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted. "God brings him out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox; He shall consume the nations, his enemies; He shall break their bones And pierce them with his arrows. 'He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?' "Blessed is he who blesses you, And cursed is he who curses you." Numbers 24:5-9

4. Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam...
 - a) "I called you to curse my enemies and instead you have bountifully blessed them three times!
 - b) "Go home! I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has prevented you from being honored."
5. Balaam said to Balak...
 - a) "Did I not tell your messengers that if Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do good or

bad of my own will. What the Lord says, that is what I must speak.”

b) I will go home, but first I will prophesy what Israel will do to your people in the latter days.

(d) Balaam’s Fourth Prophecy:

1. The utterance of Balaam...

a) ...the man whose eyes are opened

b) ...him who hears the words of God

c) ...him who has the knowledge of the Most High

d) ...him who sees the vision of the Almighty

e) ...him who falls down with eyes wide open

f) *“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult. “And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, While Israel does valiantly. Out of Jacob One shall have dominion, And destroy the remains of the city.”*

g) Then he prophesied against Amalek and the Kenites.

2. Balaam returned home; Balak also went his way.

(e) Israel’s Harlotry in Moab (Read Numbers 25):

1. Israel committed harlotry with the women of Moab.
 - a) They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods; the people ate and bowed to their gods.
 - b) Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.
 2. Then the Lord said to Moses...
 1. Take the leaders and hang the offenders before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.
- (f) Balaam dies! (Numbers 31:1-16)
1. They warred against the Midianites, just as the Lord commanded Moses, and they killed all the males.
 1. They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian.
 2. **Balaam the son of Beor was also killed with the sword.** [Joshua 13:22 *“The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, **the soothsayer**, among those who were killed by them.”*]
 2. And Moses said to them:
 - a) Have you kept any of the women alive?

- b) These women caused the children of Israel, **through the counsel of Balaam**, to trespass against the Lord.

B. The Ungodly Option:

(1) The doctrine of Balaam; Why did he do it?

(a) Prophets for Profit (See: [Flexible Prophets for Hire](#))

- 1. “But these [apostates] **speak evil of whatever they do not know**; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things **they corrupt themselves**. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have **run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit**, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.” Jude 1:10-11

a) Jude exposes that it was Balaam’s greed and lust for profit that motivated him!

(b) False Teachers

- 1. “But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, **speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness**, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot

cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. **They have a heart trained in covetous practices**, and are accursed children. They have **forsaken the right way** and gone astray, **following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.** These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. For **when they speak great swelling words of emptiness**, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, **they themselves are slaves of corruption**; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. ...But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: **"A dog returns to his own vomit,"** and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire." II Peter 2:12-22

- a) Will utterly perish in his own corruption.
- b) Will receive the wages of unrighteousness.
- c) A heart trained in covetous practices.

- d) Forsaken the right way and gone astray.
 - e) The way of Balaam the son of Beor.
 - 1) ...loved the wages of unrighteousness.
 - 2) ...rebuked for his iniquity by his dumb donkey who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the madness of the prophet.
 - 3) Speaks great swelling words of emptiness.
 - 4) A slave of corruption.
 - 5) As a dog returns to his own vomit!
- (c) Those who seek the services of Balaam!

1. "An Ammonite or Moabite **shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation** none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever, because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, **and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing** for you, because the Lord your God loves you. You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever."

Deuteronomy 23:3-6

- a) They hire a 'Balaam' to curse you.
 - b) The Lord never listens to a 'Balaam'.
 - c) The Lord turns the curse into a blessing.
 - d) Try it and you will be separated from God!
- (d) Are you compromised with the doctrine of Balaam?
1. ""And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: **"I know your works**, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And **you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith** even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, **because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.** Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.'"

Revelation 2:12-16

 - a) I know your works; some of you who hold the doctrine of Balaam.

- b) He taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
- c) Repent, or else God will fight against you with the sword of His mouth!
- (e) *With what shall I come before the Lord?
 1. "Hear now what the Lord says: "Arise, plead your case before the mountains, And let the hills hear your voice. Hear, O you mountains, the Lord's complaint, And you strong foundations of the earth; **For the Lord has a complaint against His people**, And He will contend with Israel. **"O My people, what have I done to you?** And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. **O My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled, And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, From Acacia Grove to Gilgal, That you may know the righteousness of the Lord."** **With what shall I come before the Lord, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings**, With calves a year old? Will the Lord be

pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; **And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?"** Micah 6:1-8

- a) The Lord has a complaint against you...
- b) Remember what king Balak counseled and what Balaam did so you know what is righteous to God!
- c) Shall I come before Yahweh with burnt offerings? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams?
- d) What does Yahweh require but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

(2) **Conclusion:** to Incorporate or Discard Godliness

(a) **Godliness:** the sincere desire to align every thought and action with God's will, and that you willingly submit your human spirit to the Spirit of God!

1. Set-apart with a pure body:

- a) Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's delicacies.
- b) He did not want to risk eating what would violate the food laws in the Scriptures.

- c) At the end of a ten day test Daniel appeared better and healthier than all the young men who ate the king's delicacies.
2. Set-apart as a wise soul (mind):
- a) As a result the king found no one as advanced as Daniel (and his friends) in knowledge and wisdom to understand advanced writings.
 - b) In every matter the king examined that required wisdom and understanding, he found them ten times more advanced than all the magicians and astrologers in his kingdom.
3. Set-apart in his spirit:
- a) Daniel distinguished himself above the chief overseers and governors, **because of his excellent spirit;** and the king considered making him ruler over the whole kingdom.
 - b) The chief overseers and governors sought to find some charge against Daniel, but they could find no fault in him (no errors, negligence, or corruption), because he was faithful.
 - c) They tricked the king into signing a decree that would prevent Daniel from praying to Yahweh, but he did anyway.

- d) Yahweh saved Daniel from the Lion's mouth!
 - e) The outcome of Daniel's spiritual tenacity: Darius honored Yahweh because of Daniel's godliness (his testimony in Body, Soul, and Spirit).
 - f) King Darius issued a decree that all people tremble in fear before the God of Daniel.
 - g) **Daniel prospered** in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.
- (b) **Ungodliness:** you are unwilling to align every thought and action with God's will; you will not submit your human spirit to the Spirit of God!
1. God orders Balaam to not go to Balak nor to curse Israel because they are blessed.
 2. This should end Balaam's interaction on the matter, as if it was not already ridiculous enough that he would request permission to curse Israel!
 3. But in rebellion and greed he continues to inquire: "Stay here and I'll go ask Yahweh what I should do."
 4. He builds 7 altars 3 different times to inquire of the Lord about something that is already established!
 5. His error is greed; Balaam is a prophet for profit!

6. Ultimately: through Balaam's counsel, a stumbling block came before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.
7. The children of Israel eventually killed Balaam, the soothsayer, by sword.

(3) God means what He says!

- (a) I am really not happy with what God is saying, so I have a great idea. If I present my case from a different point of view, I am sure Yahweh will adapt. If needed I will invest tremendous time and resources into getting Yahweh to agree with me. I can even convince a few godly people to back me up. With a new perspective and all that commitment and support, I'm certain Yahweh will change His mind. And let's face it, we need to be flexible with the way we interpret God's intentions! He doesn't always mean what appears so obvious. A better way to interpret these Scriptures is that, "As long as I have a good enough reason, Yahweh will comport with my desires." However, if you put it to the test, you will discover that the path of Daniel is much more profitable than the path of Balaam.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. Read the introduction three times.

- A. Define Godliness.
- B. Why does Godliness follow Perseverance as the next step in the practice of your faith?

2. Personal Object Lesson:

- A. Describe a time in your life when you actively pursued something physically, emotionally, or spiritually in alignment with God's will? What was the outcome?
- B. Describe a time in your life when you actively pursued something physically, emotionally, or spiritually against God's will? What was the outcome?

3. Transformation:

- A. What did you or will you do to correct your error in discussion point 2B?
- B. What will you do in the future to ensure you do not repeat the same mistake?