

A Practical Study of Titus

Growth Toward Godliness “Beginning to Look More Like Jesus”

Study Number One – The Process of Godliness – Titus 1:1-4

When we approach this particular study of Titus, I've read this little book one zillion times. I feel like a lot of books in the Bible you read them and then you kind of say “Hey, one of these days I'm going to go study that book.” And then you never get around to it.

It's only got 45 verses in it. But wow, what truth and what a message. The Book of Titus very relevant and practical.

Let me say just a couple of words about the guy to whom it's written.

Titus was a convert of the apostle Paul.

There are quite a group of men who surrounded the apostle Paul and supported him in his ministry. He, too, had an itinerant traveling type ministry from pillar to post. And he had a lot of guys who came along and who are friends and partners and helpers in the teaching ministry.

One of these guys was Titus. Titus is not mentioned much in

the New Testament. In fact, he's not even mentioned in the gospel in the Book of Acts where Timothy is mentioned many times.

Timothy was a very close associate of the apostle. He was raised by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. And I think he looked to the apostle Paul as his male image. And Paul kind of became a father to him and I guess that's why Timothy's mentioned a lot.

I look on Titus as just the direct opposite. Titus came to know Christ and he hit the ground running. He is the kind of guy that you had to put a reign on to hold him back.

You know there are two kinds of people. There are the kind of people that do not understand and have to set a fire under to get them motivated and get them to get with the program. And then there are the guys you've got to constantly be retraining and hold them back.

I think that's the way Timothy and Titus were. You know, Paul a lot of times had to say "Timothy, stir up the gift. We need to get on with it." You know, come on. Get with the program.

Titus, man he's blowing and going every time you see him.

There are three times that Titus is seen in the scriptures and they all start with C's.

The first time you see him is in the Council of Jerusalem and this is recorded in Acts 15. So what happened in that situation?

When you see him, you see him first at the COUNCIL in Jerusalem. At the council in Jerusalem they were coming to real grips with the tremendous controversy in the church.

The controversy centered around how a person becomes a Christian and what happens after he becomes a Christian.

There were some on one side who said “Well, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a person becomes a Christian.”

Others are saying “No, it’s not just faith in Jesus Christ. You’ve got to keep the Law too. You’ve got to perform certain things.”

So what did they do? But they bring Titus in. He’s a Gentile convert and he doesn’t hardly know the Law. And he stands up before the prestigious group of theologians and gives his testimony.

And as a result of his testimony, the whole group were convinced that it is salvation by faith and faith alone, because here’s a Gentile that doesn’t even know the Law whose life has been drastically changed through a relationship to Christ. Talk about a pressurized situation and being under the microscope. There he was and he passed the test.

He's not any different the second time you see him. He's in the city of CORINTH. Paul's toughest church was Corinth. The people fought with each other, they got drunk at the Lord's supper. They were so confused about the charismatic phenomena and the spiritual gifts, and the doctrine of the resurrection. They were going to law courts against each other and there was a guy living in flagrant immorality right in the church.

Do you know what Titus did? He goes in, he straightens it out.

You know there are two kinds of people. There are the kind of people who go into a mess and straighten it out. And there are the kind of people who can go into a mess and make it worse.

Well Titus was the kind who could go in and straighten it out.

Do you know what he did? He went in, straightened out the situation in Corinth by telling the people what they ought to do and then he took an offering for the poor souls in Jerusalem.

Now that's amazing. If you can go in and tell people what they need to know and then turn around and take an offering from them for the poor saints in Jerusalem, you've really accomplished something. And Titus did that in Corinth.

And then the next time you see him is where it fits into the study today.

Paul had a real vision for the Island of CRETE in the Aegean Sea. And when he got there, it was a mess. Who do you call on? “Titus, you stay here.” And he’s on the Island of Crete and this letter is being written to him on planning the strategy for the ministry on the Island of Crete. They are very sophisticated Christians, island farmer-like people. And so he’s got a tough group to work with.

And he’s on the Island of Crete when the letter is written. Being on an island is kind of lonely. He’s out there in the middle of the sea and Titus, I’m sure, was delighted to receive this letter.

He’s the kind of guy that you send on Mission Impossible. I’m sure Titus would have faded out and crawled into the woodwork if he’d have to go into some of these critical situations. So Paul has a great deal of wisdom in who he deploys in certain places to carry on certain ministries.

Somebody said of Dundas, that old Scotsman: “He ain’t no orator, but he’ll go out with you in any kind of weather.” (source unknown)

And that’s Titus. He’s that type of person.

You’re really going to love him as you see him and relate to him in this particular study. This whole approach to go to Crete is to show people godliness, and not talk much about it.

And his life is going to bear close scrutiny as we go through this study.

Now this series of studies is titled:

Growth Toward Godliness.

1. I'm going to show the **PROCESS** today in the first four verses.
2. We're going to look at the **PICTURE** and what it looks like in human flesh. You're going to see that next week—fifteen characteristics to the godly lifestyle. Come and see if you pass.
3. Then we're going to look at the **PERVERSION** of Godliness. Why is it that people are hypocritical in the Christian faith? Why can't their lives bear up under scrutiny? There's a reason for that. And it's in study #3.
4. How are you supposed to act toward me if you're godly and how am I supposed to act toward you if I'm godly? We're going to look at godliness in relationships. It's one thing to be godly in isolation and it's another thing to be godly in relationships.
5. And we're going to see the foundation for it—the **PLATFORM** for the godly life.
6. Then we're going to see the **PATH** to it in chapter 3.

7. We're going to see the PROOF of it.
8. Then we're going to see some flesh and blood men who are the PARTNERS of godliness, whose lives do bear up under scrutiny in our last study together.

But now as we come to Study #1, we're going to look at the PROCESS.

You know you can go to Skaggs and you can go to the grocery store and you can go almost anyplace now and you'll see a little stand. If you just spin it around and what do you see on it? All kinds of Christian books. It's amazing isn't it? Every time you turn there's another Christian book. There're paperbacks of all kinds.

So you pick up one *Man in Black: Johnny Cash*. You go home and you read it and say "How wow! This is fantastic! That guy's life has changed!" And so what do you want? "Well, I sure hope that happens to me someday."

They told you their experience and man you got excited about it.

Well here's some gal, man she got it all together. And you're trying to get it together but you can't remember where you put and so there you are, all messed up.

Why is it that we're saturated in the Christian community

with books that speak about evangelism but nobody tells you what to do after you become a Christian?

Or there are so many people running around today who think that once you become a Christian it's like a life insurance policy. You're going to draw on it when you flick it in. But that's it. You know, there's nothing really relevant to right now.

And the Bible talks a lot about the godly life. And so what we're going to be looking at is something very, very important.

What can you expect after you become a Christian? What is the godly life? And why aren't more people walking around who are godly? And who's life can in fact bear up under close scrutiny and not be worried about ulterior motives or phoniness in their lives.

Now I want to hassle you for a couple of minutes. Ok? You came not to be entertained anyway. You want to have something to think about. So let me bounce a couple off you. Ok?

This is going to bite someone.

Godliness does not come by a decision but by daily discipline.

Whew! You didn't even like the word did you?

Godliness is the result of changes wrought in your life through

an exposure to truth and an ever-deepening relationship to Jesus Christ.

Becoming a Christian is like saying “I do” in your marriage and then the rest of it is working it out so you become one—an ever-deepening oneness in your relationship of marriage.

Spirituality—here’s another one—does not result from your SERVICE. Whew! And here you thought that taking an offering and being an usher and serving on the committees and going to Sunday school and church and prayer meeting and every time the door is open, going to 17 Bible classes and been involved in everything is making you spiritual. Might I tell you, if that were the case, we’d have some spiritual guys today.

Wasn’t it Ray Stedman who said “Mary had a little sheep, it joined the Baptist church and died from lack of sleep.”

Well that’s it.

There are people who believe, but mind you that godliness is involved in activity! Service! Going places and doing things!

And that is not worth it. You know if I were the evil one and I wanted to render ineffective the church of Jesus Christ, I’d get people who’ve finally come to faith so busy they didn’t have time to spend it with the Lord in His Word.

You know, Lane Adams wrote a great book on *How Come It’s*

Taking Me So Long to Get Better?

I just love that title and I love the book. He tells a story about being the youngest of three boys in his home in Mississippi. And mom every year at their birthday would always put the book on top of their head at the door jamb and mark it underneath about how high they were. And he says he went through the trauma at ten realizing he would never catch up with his older brother—in age or height. And he would six times a year to stretch himself up to see if he'd grown any. And he said “In those days I kept wondering how long come it's taking me so long to get bigger and now I'm wondering how come it's taking me so long to get better.”

And you know a lot of Christians are going through that. They are worn out by the hassle, they consecrated, re-consecrated, dedicated, re-dedicated, baptized, re-baptized, joined, re-joined. And like one little kid said at camp this summer: “This is the sixth time I've accepted Jesus. I hope this one takes.”

You know, I mean, that's really the feeling that a lot of people have.

And then we've got all these other people running around saying there's a certain experience you can have and you'll become godly instantaneously.

Or you can join a church, you can attend a Bible class, and you can get actively involved in service and none of these produce the desired result.

Most of us are living between the two things:

1. the regrets of yesterday and
2. the fears of tomorrow.

Because we really realize that when we look back we become discouraged and when we look ahead we get scared to death because we wonder if anything's real and because our lives aren't really changed all that much.

Well that's why this study's important. It is Growth Toward Godliness. It's what happens after a person comes to Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. And what are God's objectives in your life at that point.

Now, isn't that neat? Right in the first verse we get the process. And that's what you want to know anyway. That's worth the whole study.

So let's look at verse 1 on your sheets in the Process of Godliness and I'm going to take it a phrase at a time and then I'm going to give you three words to underline that fit into it. Ok.

v. 1 Paul, a bonds slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God's chosen-out ones and a knowledge of truth which is according to godliness,

“Paul”—you can write all over these. These are yours. Put your name on them and take them home.

“Paul, a bonds slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God’s chosen-out ones and a knowledge of truth which is according to godliness,”

I’m sure that God is working in Paul’s life when I tell you He passes the test. This guy had a life-changing experience on the Damascus Road. After becoming a Christian his life was totally rearranged and he became a man who had one desire—to know Christ.

And because of the stature of his godly life, a lot of other guys came around and were willing to take hold and serve with him. He formed a fantastic company of people committed to Christ because of his own godly lifestyle.

Paul says “I’m two things”:

1. “[I’m] a bonds slave of God”—I gave up my rights to myself in the relationship to Christ.

Secondly:

2. “[I’m] an apostle...”

You see his ministry was actually flowing out of the fact that he was becoming godly.

He became actually a SENT ONE of Jesus Christ, a missionary.

What did he give himself for?

There are THREE KEY words in that verse. You can just underline them and we'll go back and pick them up because here's the process.

Underline the word "FAITH" first.

Then underline the word "TRUTH."

And then underline the word "GODLINESS."

Alright, he says I'm giving myself as "a bonds slave...and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's chosen-out ones."

Now I know that scared you to death. You saw a "chosen out one" and you think "Well maybe I'm not one that's chosen."

Now don't get worried about that. You know. Don't get hassled on that.

When you're dealing with God He knows everything.

Maybe you thought that if I said, you know, "today I know what the stock market is going to do the rest of this year." You all would be more quiet than when E.F. Hutton speaks.

You'd want to know what's going on. God knows ahead of time what you're going to do today with Jesus Christ if you're here in this class and you're not a Christian. You know that?

You knew it wasn't going to be a "whosoever will" or "whosoever won't." He knows the decision you're going to make.

And on the basis of that decision, He made a projection so that when you walk through the door of invitation of "whosoever will may come," He's going to turn around and look back and say "chosen him before the foundation of the world," because God already knew it.

And on the basis of that, you're a "chosen-out one."

You see, God loves you so much that He'll never force Himself on you. He'll give you the right to choose and you've got a free will to make a choice. But He already knows the decision you're going make before you ever make it.

So Paul's giving himself in evangelism to "the faith of God's chosen-out ones." He's around ministering, expressing the single condition of salvation, which is faith.

The Bible says in:

Ephesians 2:8, 9

It's by grace we've been saved, through faith; and that not

of ourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

It's like Christmas. You've got some gifts. How did you get them? You received them. You took them from the hand of the Giver.

The Father's saying "I've got a gift for you. It's an unspeakable gift. It's the gift of My Son. It's yours for the taking by faith. It is the provision for salvation. It's the provision for eternal life if you receive Him by faith."

Now does the apostle Paul drop it off at that point after he makes a statement like this with regards to faith? No. He's not only interested in evangelism, he also wants to edify and exhort.

So the second word is the word "TRUTH."

From "FAITH" to "TRUTH."

He realizes that an important part of the Christian life is the taking in of DIVINE TRUTH.

Now there's a principal and here it is:

Godliness does not come by experience but by an intake of truth and an ever deepening relationship with the Lord.

Let me say it another way:

The more I know His Word, the more I know Him and what He wants of me.

If you're a brand new Christian today, sitting in this class and you've come to kind of study the Bible because you knew that was one of the things you ought to do, and you've got a hunger for the Word. I'd give you two assignments. They both start with a "F":

1. FELLOWSHIP with your heavenly Father.

Bring before Him your thoughts. Bring before Him your actions. Ask Him if it's pleasing to Him.

Pray you're sensitive to those things, you begin to have an openness and a fellowship to the Father.

Secondly:

2. Get lots of FOOD from His table.

The FELLOWSHIP is your SENSITIVITY.

The FOOD is for your STRENGTH.

And those two things together will really put you a long ways down the road toward an ever deepening relationship with Christ and a change of lifestyle.

The “knowledge of truth,” the Psalmist said, makes you:

Psalm 1:3

... like a tree planted by the rivers of water that is going to bring forth fruit in its season...

Notice what it says, the last phrase:

“which is according to godliness.”

The more I know Him, the more I know what He wants of me, I go from FAITH to TRUTH to GODLINESS. And that's the whole purpose behind this whole thing.

There's the process. You want to put it in three little F's:

1. FAITH to
2. FOOD to
3. FRUIT.

You begin to change. And the change is the godly lifestyle that's produced as a result of the exposure to truth.

Well see, if we really believe that, why aren't we spending

more time concentrating on seeing that young Christians get truth? Instead of getting a bug out of some book in a store that tells about some movie star who's come out of darkness into light?

I know many Christians that that's all they live on! Getting another high off of somebody else who's become a Christian, they've gotten real excited about it. And they have no time to take truth into their lives and as a result of that, they never really do grow up in the faith.

You know I've yet to meet an undisciplined, godly person. Do you know that?

To do these things that I'm talking about involves you make some decisions. You're going to do it and follow the prescription, the process, and watch it begin to work.

You've got to make some decisions that that's what you're going to do after you become a Christian for you to really begin to become godly.

I'll tell you another thing, I can determine how godly you are today by the amount of time you've had in the Word today, this last week, this last month and this last year.

You see, it works. The process is there. And if you'll set these as top priority, you'll begin to change.

I read a book this summer by F. B. Meyer. I read everything

that's in print on him and this one kind of caught my attention. It was called *A Diary of the Devout Life* and I discovered it was an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, but he said some great things in it. And one statement that really got to me was this:

(The Directory of the Devout Life by F. B. Meyer)

Do not be content to drift through life. Do not be satisfied to be a piece of driftwood, swept to and fro by the ebb and flow of the stream. Do not be a creature of circumstance because it is certain that if you are not living with a divine purpose for God and eternity, you are certainly living for yourself, for your ease, for your indolent enjoyment, or to get through the years with as little fret and friction as possible; which at the heart of it and in such a world as this, so abject and needy, is undiluted selfishness. To have no purpose is to have the worse purpose. To have no ambition is to be living for self. To have no intention is to be drifting along the broad road in company with the many that god in there at to their own destruction. (source unknown)

That kind of gets to you, doesn't it?

Alright, let me put it another way:

Godliness is the result of growth in the truth.

You are, as the changes will be wrought in your life, not by experiences which you have but by your exposure to truth and

your obedience to the Word.

Let me say it this way:

Godliness is the way I am as a result of His Word working in my life.

Why we've got so many hypocrites in the church? You know, that's one of the blatant excuses for never becoming a Christian—because you've got so many hypocrites in the church. Why? Why are there so many phony Christians? Because you can't get close to them because the Word isn't working in their lives. Because if it were, they would in fact be able to be under close scrutiny and you would see changes being wrought and their wives and children would talk about it. And so would the people at the church and in business or place of employment. That person is becoming godly.

So when you don't have time to be in the Word because you're so busy doing everything else, you've got to act it. And so you almost put on your acting ability and become a Hollywood star when it becomes a crucial deal. You know your entrances, your queues and the exits and the right words to say. And you've got a couple of verses memorized to punctuate the thing to show just how spiritual you are.

You know Jesus talked about that very thing. This is convicting. Excuse me but this will eat your lunch.

You know starting in Matthew 13, on the parables of the

kingdom, you know what the first one is? It's the story of the SOWER who went forth to sow the seed. And what is the seed in that parable? It's the Word of God.

That seed falls in four types:

1. It falls on very hard soil and it lays there. And it says the birds of the air come down and snatch it away before it can even begin to take root. And for many people, that's the way it is in their Christian lives. The Word just falls on the surface and it never really gets down and changes them.

And that might be some of you sitting here today. You've heard so many sermons and you have been through so many things that you are just so defensive today that nothing I could say, or nothing that the Spirit of God could say through His Word would get through that hard heart to get down and to get it to take root in your life to make you a godly person. And as soon as you get out the door, it'll just be snatched away and you'll forget it.

2. There is a second type of soil that it falls on. It is a rocky type of soil. It does take root but as the plant starts to come up, which is the change and the godly lifestyle getting ready to produce fruit, the heat comes down on it and because it doesn't have much root, it just shrivels up and withers. Do you know what that is? That is when some tragedy or some event comes into your life that you get mad at God. You just kind of shrivel up.

You know, I've been around enough tragedy and difficulty and heartbreak in the last few years to know that there are an awful lot of Christians that live like that. They have suffered the traumatic experience of a loved one that has been snatched into the presence of the Lord prematurely and they're very resentful and bitter about that. Or maybe a child, whether it's a divorce, maybe it's something else, but right now you might be sitting here and you're not very godly because you're so filled with feelings of bitterness and resentment toward the way God has dealt with you.

And as the heat came on from above, this little plant that was starting to prosper just folded up. And you're not a very good advertisement. You don't like living with yourself the way you are and you certainly don't display the joy and the abundant life that God intends to manifest through you because of that.

3. And maybe you're like the third type that it fell down in the soil and it started to take root but it found that it was in foreign territory because there were all kinds of weeds around it. And those weeds overtook the plant that was starting to grow and choked out the life of it.

You know what those weeds are? Those weeds are the cares of this world—the materialism. They're getting so caught up in everything else that this little godly life that's getting started to bloom just gets choked out, living by the philosophy of the world.

The world will sell you anything from sex to spaghetti. Get all

you get, can all you get, and poison all the rest. That's the philosophy of the world out there. And that can destroy more guys who get caught up in the syndrome of flying down freeways with a little prayer "Bless this day and I hope it works out. Amen." And "Lord, I'm too tired tonight to spend any time with You" while you flop in the sack.

Godliness will never result from that kind of an attitude toward Him. It is the Father's desire that from your faith there will come fruit, which is your witness for Him. And some people never get this. And the reason the Evil One is so effective in keeping from fruit coming over here is because he has destroyed the heart of the thing, which is spending time in the truth so your life will bear up under the close scrutiny and somebody who can say "Hey, I want it."

Wouldn't it be neat if just one time in your witness for Christ, somebody asks you about your faith you could say "What you see is what you get!" Wouldn't that be neat? Huh?

Man, we would turn the world upside down when people start asking us that. "Hey, what makes you tick?"

"Well what you see is what you get! Let me tell you about what's happening in my life and how God has changed me."

Godliness does not come by your service but godliness provides the foundation for your witness. There it is. It is the fruit that is the automatic byproduct of the godly life. And you don't have to run out and fake this and be phony and knock

down your doors. A real relationship—the process.

Look at verse 2.

v. 2 in the hope of life eternal, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

“in the hope of life eternal, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,”

You say “boy, you really lost me in all that.”

Alright, what’s the process in verse 1?

FAITH to FOOD to FRUIT.

Why does that develop a “hope for life eternal”?

OK, let me tell you a little story.

When you really recognize for the first time that I’m talking about faith that really works and your life starts to change, I’m telling you it’s going to be like a series of dominoes. You’re going to get so excited that you’re going to begin to say “Oh this works! And because it works, soon I shall be like Him for I shall see Him as He is! If this works, I know His other promises are truth and I’m going to be with Him one of these days.”

And boy you get a Christian that convinced and that excited,

you've got a hard time holding him down! It is "in hope of life eternal."

Well this last year, it's really been fun for our staff. We always kind of set goals each year and we had our little Christmas party and we set our goals for 1980. And I love some of the goals this year because most of them centered around getting to know the Lord better and developing a deeper walk with Him.

But last year we were setting our goals for 1979. And one of my goals for 1979 was to get tired of being a 46-year-old fat boy so I was going to lose 38 pounds. And then the other goal was I was going to run in a marathon, which I've always wanted to do because I've always been fiddling around a little bit jogging and running. And I was going to do those two together.

Well came March and we got back from the ski trip and I was bulging at 218 and hadn't done anything with that goal. And I thought, well, I'm going to get right behind it or I'm going to have face the end of the year and the staff without this thing done. So in April I went on this kick, you know, the grapefruit and dry toast and I tell you one thing, if you're fat don't eat cottage cheese because nothing but fat folks eat it. That's really the truth. It doesn't do much good.

At the end of April I finally lost 2 pounds. So I was 216. But you know what those 2 pounds do? They got me so excited, within two months I lost all the rest of it. And I began to see I

could do it so I just stepped up my running a few more miles and I just put away all the desserts and all that junk I didn't need anyway and just started eating fish and salads and that kind of good stuff. And turning down the ice cream and the cookies for a while and low and behold, I was tipping at about 178 to 180 and I was getting so much energy I couldn't burn it all up running.

First thing I got up to 12, 13, 14, 15. I said good grief, now I'm gone this far, I'm going to make that marathon. So I went into October and November training like crazy. And December 8th I ran it. I finished in Sin City, Las Vegas. Boy talk about a fun place to run a marathon. Out in the middle of desert in the heat, I was able to run the 26.2 and when I got to the finish line they said "Don Anderson from Tyler, Texas. He's 46 years of age." And oh my gosh, I'm saying "Yay, hey, I made it!" That little taste of what it's going to be like to go to glory.

What got me so excited and motivated by doing all that? Huh? Because I had a little tiny bit of success at the beginning. The reason there are so many dead Christians sitting around vegetating and in the church they're sitting, soaking, and souring is because they've really had not got ahold of what I just told you. And that is, they're stuffing their heads full of content and they're not practicing the truth and implementing it in their lives. And the process breaks down somewhere. And as a result, a real authentic godly lifestyle that can really prove under the acid test that they're changing and becoming godly won't bear up under the test. And they're not very excited.

Paul says once this process is followed, it's "in hope of life eternal, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago."

God won't lie. He's not funning us at all!

Numbers 23:19 said:

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie; nor a son of man that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and then not fulfill?

GODLINESS is here for now and GLORY comes later!

And so the process just carries right on.

"Soon I will be like him for I shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

You'll notice verse 3 says:

v. 3 but in His own seasons He made known His word in a proclamation with which I was entrusted in accordance with the commandment of God, our Savior;

"but in His own seasons He made known His word in a

proclamation with which I was entrusted in accordance with the commandment of God, our Savior;”

At God’s right time, He revealed to the apostle the truth that he has just been sharing with us. And it was in His own season “in accordance with ...God, our Savior.”

And our last verse for today.

v. 4 to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

“to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”

Oh I love that.

Wouldn’t it be neat to have your name in there? What if your name was in there and there was a little statement after your name. What would be the statement in the Bible?

Boy would I like to go down in history as being:

“Titus, my true child in a common faith.”

Now I’ve got to explain that just a little bit to you. You know, Paul had a feeling that whenever he led somebody to Christ, he actually gave birth to somebody. He became a spiritual father.

This is one of the most humorous stories in the New Testament and it's one of my very favorite Bible studies is on the book of Philemon.

You know the study of Philemon? It's only 25 verses long and it's back there by Titus so if you've missed Titus you might have missed it too because it's only one page. And I'll forgive you but let me tell you the story.

Philemon was a very wealthy businessman in the city of either Colossae or Laodicea. And one day he flew on a business trip over to the city of Ephesus. And when he got there, the guy that he was going to be meeting with was going to a Christian businessmen's luncheon to hear a visiting Bible teacher.

And when he got to lunch, low and behold, the Apostle Paul's the speaker. And at the end of the thing, Philemon says "Hey man, I've got to have what you've got." And he prayed to receive Christ. Caught American 101 back and Apphia was waiting for him at the airport and before they got to the house she pulled over and had to receive Christ and they got home and led Archippus to the Lord.

Now there are three of them the founder of Christians and Onesimus is the servant in the house and he doesn't buy this new religion yet. Fallen out of bed into Bible class is not very fun because people were coming to the house to meet and have the church meeting.

Onesimus decided the only way to get out of there is you don't fight it and you don't join it, so let's get gone. So he stole what he could get from Philemon and took off for the biggest city in the world where there are 60 million slaves, the city of Rome.

He stayed there for a little while but he got picked up on a drug charge and thrown in prison and low and behold, who's sitting in the cell next to him but the Apostle Paul. They start talking and Paul's the one who started this whole thing and he says "Good grief! I can't get away from them. I might as well give in."

And right there in the cell, Philemon—I mean Onesimus—becomes a Christian.

When Paul writes the letter back to Philemon after Onesimus gets out of prison, this letter of recommendation says: "I want to write to you about my son, who I gave birth to in prison" (Philemon 10).

And Philemon received the letter that Onesimus is now a brother in Christ. So Titus is a true child in a common faith. He's seen enough to realize that he's the real deal, he's the genuine article, he's solid stuff, he's a true child in a common faith.

Ok, now why do we look at those four words? There are these reasons, and I summarize my thinking with SEVEN PRINCIPLES.

Principle #1: Godliness does not come by experience but by an intake of the Word of God.

[Principle] #2: The more I know His Word, the more I know what He wants of me.

[Principle] #3: The process is from FAITH to FOOD to FRUIT
Or from FAITH to TRUTH to GODLINESS.

[Principle] #4: Godliness is the result of growth in the truth.

Now I'm going to lay a heavy on you in this next one because I want you to really search your heart right now as we begin to apply this.

[Principle #5:] The expression of your new life in Christ will be seen in a hunger for the Word.

Let me just hit that from one other direction because this is very convicting.

An authentic new birth will be accompanied with an appetite for the Word.

Are you hungry? You know, if you don't have an appetite for the Word, I've got a question whether you're a Christian. I mean let's just pierce through the whole thing. If you really find the Word dead and dry and dusty and you don't like it and you just as soon neglect it except for the times you have to

endure it on Sunday, I've got a question about whether you're a Christian.

Jeremiah said: "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart." (Jer. 15:16)

An authentic new birth will be accompanied with an appetite for the Word.

[Principle] #6: Godliness does not come by service.

Godliness does not come by service. It comes by seeking God and studying truth.

Godliness does not come by service but seeking God and studying truth.

And then last but not least:

[Principle #7:] Godliness provides your foundation for your witness.

Because as you are demonstrating what you are in your changed lifestyle, it gives you the right to be heard.

Godliness is the foundation for your witness.

Where did this study find you today? You've come to it a tad bit suspicious about the whole thing.

As we discerned through these things, where are you in the process?

Have you walked through the door yet? Have you come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

You know, that's the beginning point friend. When all else is said and done, it is by faith you receive Christ as Savior.

Jesus says to the church at Laodicea: "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I'll come into him, have fellowship with him and he with Me."
(Rev. 3:20)

He's waiting to come into your life.

If the Spirit of God is speaking to you about this matter, and that's a decision you want to talk about, contact me. I'll call you or come anywhere, anytime, to share Christ with you and help you. And a lot of other people in this room would do the very same thing. But I'm not going to hassle you or pressure you on that. But I am concerned about you.

Number two, are you feeding? How much of truth are you really taking into your life? And then that answers number three. Do you know why the life is so ineffective if it's not very much. Or why you're experiencing fruit and blessing and the abundant life, because you are taking in truth.

But perhaps you're a believer and you've been worn out by the hassles of meetings and dinners and weren't any better off. You've been to the high life, the low life, the new life, better life, the bad life, anything.

Can I give you a statement that's very simple but packs a wallop?

When all else fails, read the instructions.

You know I've had a precision experience these last seven years seeing quite a number in our classes come to know Christ. One of them was one of the most beautiful experiences just this last tour.

This dear couple came and the first night he was there, we were studying Gideon & Samson and he says: "Who in the h@#* is Gideon?"

Second week he came back and says: "Hey, I found out I'm him."

Third week he came back and he says: "Well I'm the all-American acolyte, been in church since I was a kid but I'm not a born-again Christian and I know it."

Very verbal.

Fourth night he brought his wife. The fifth night he invited me to come to his house. He's a banker but he'd been through a lot of sorrow and heartbreak.

One of his kids has cerebral palsy, his wife has cancer. Neither one of them are believers.

After talking until 11:30, his wife popped up and said: "Honey are you trying to run a credit check on God with all these questions? Frankly I'm ready to receive Christ."

At 11:50 both of them prayed to invite Christ into their lives. And when they finished praying, the old clock in the hall struck twelve as though God said "Now this is the first day of the rest of your life."

That's beautiful. It moves me to tears every time it happens. But I got a letter from them afterwards and this letter tells you that it really happened.

See if you can get the phrase out of the letter that told me everything's alright with Ken and Judy and they really know Christ.

Jesus Christ is our Savior now through all of our trials and sorrows. We never imagined what a powerful and loving friend we had in Jesus. Thank you again for showing us the way to salvation. Thank you for opening our Bibles for us and making the contents of this great book come alive.

Judy and I find ourselves turning to our Bibles more and more each day. It is truly amazing how God directs our thoughts and priorities when we let Him and even when we are trying hard not to let Him.

(from letter dated 05/29/1979)

The phrase “we are turning Bibles more and more each day.”

Do you know what? That was last night. And they’re making progress.

Man I get four and five paged letters and write back six or eight, ten chapters to them of things because I don’t get to see them all that much. But I do see progress and do see growth.

I hope, if you’re hungry, that through these studies you’ll discover a meaningful life in Jesus Christ.

Father we thank You for today. It’s been so beautiful to be together and to study Your Word. Lord, some of these folks here are very dear, old and precious friends. I thank You for them, for the encouragement they’ve been to us and to our lives and for the manifestation of a changed and godly life. Lord, encourage them in their lives, in the struggles of following the processes that You bring into their lives to produce and to hasten that good work, coupled with the knowledge of Your Word. And Lord there are some here today that my heart goes out to because I really don’t know where they stand with You. And I would really pray that there would be such an attractiveness of the Savior lifted up in these

studies that they'd really want to come to know Him. Thanks for being such a great friend and walking with us hand in hand through this life. And thanks, too, that we can count on the grace that's adequate to meet every need that is going to come down our path. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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**A Practical Study of TITUS:
Growth Toward Godliness**

“Beginning to Look More Like Jesus”

STUDY NUMBER ONE – THE PROCESS OF GODLINESS

– TITUS 1:1-4

NOTES

v. 1 Paul, a bonds slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of God’s chosen-out ones and a knowledge of truth which is according to godliness,
v. 2 in the hope of life eternal, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,
v. 3 but in His own seasons He made known His word in a proclamation with which I was entrusted in accordance with the commandment of God, our Savior;
v. 4 to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Titus 1:1-4 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. How does Paul characterize himself, according to verse 1?

3. Can you outline the process toward godliness in verse 1? The key words are faith, truth, and godliness.

4. What picture of God do we get in verse 2?

5. When did God make known His word, according to verse 3? Read Galatians 4:4, 5 also in this regard.

6. How was the word of God made known to the apostle? (2 Timothy 3:16, 17 and 2 Peter 1:19-21).

7. How is Titus characterized, according to verse 4?

8. With what greeting does he conclude verse 4?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Godliness does not come by experience, but by intake of the Word of God and the deepening of the relationship with the Lord.

LESSON #2: The more I know His Word, the more I know Him and what He wants of me.

LESSON #3: The process is from faith to food to fruit.

LESSON #4: Godliness is the result of growth in the truth.

LESSON #5: The expression of my new life in Christ will be seen in a hunger for the Word.

LESSON #6: Godliness does not come by service.

LESSON #7: Godliness provides the foundation for a witness.

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