

Godly Relationships

**Embry Hills Church of Christ
Fall 2020**

Godly Relationships

Definition of Godliness; Discussion of Influence

Lesson 1

Course overview

Lesson	Title	Content	Date
Foundational Lessons			
1	Introduction and Overview	Introduction – Godliness and Influence	Sun. Sept. 20, 2020
2	Purity and the Nature of Men and Women	Purity, the differences of Men and Women	Wed. Sept. 23, 2020
3	Selflessness and Sacrifice	Selflessness, Humility, Meekness	Sun. Sept. 27, 2020
4	Contentment and Kindness	Contentment and Kindness	Wed. Sept. 30, 2020
5	Forbearance and Forgiveness	Forbearance and Forgiveness	Sun. Oct. 4, 2020
Lessons on Specific Relationships			
6	Friends and Co-Workers	A Christian's interactions with friends and co-workers	Wed. Oct. 7, 2020
7	Parents and Family	The relationship of adult children with their parents and extended family	Sun. Oct. 11, 2020
8	Dating and Marriage	Exercising godliness when dating or married	Wed. Oct. 14, 2020
Case Studies			
9	Case Studies 1	Demonstrating godly influence with friends and co-workers	Sun. Oct. 18, 2020
10	Case Studies 2	Godly use of social media	Wed. Oct. 21, 2020
11	Case Studies 3	Parents and Children	Sun. Oct. 25, 2020
12	Case Studies 4	Maintaining purity	Wed. Oct. 28, 2020
13	Case Studies 5 and Review	Living alone - a life of service and purpose	Sun. Nov. 1, 2020

A. Godliness

1. Godliness defined
 - a. Greek *eusebia* – literally, "to worship well", "to be very devout"
 - b. Vine: "A piety ... characterized by a God-ward attitude; does what is well-pleasing to Him"
 - c. ISBE: "character & conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart"
 - d. God-centered living: learning, obeying, with all decisions & actions informed by accountability to God and desire to please Him.
2. Godliness expressed and developed
 - a. For what kind of things is godliness useful (I Tim 4:8)?
 - b. Is it commanded of both men & women? How is it expressed (I Tim 2:2, 10)?
 - c. What kind of living is associated with "godliness" (II Pet 3:11)?

B. *Opposite of godliness: earth centered, or self-centered*

1. Ps 1:1-5 – vs 1, also translated “wicked” [ESV]
2. For whom is law needed? Why? (I Tim 1:9)
3. What is the fate of the ungodly in judgment (I Pet 4:18; II Pet 2:6; 3:7; Jude 4,15,18)?

C. *With a God-centered view, what is the purpose of family relationships?*

1. Ephesians 5:25-27, I Corinthians 7:13,16
2. I Peter 3:1
3. Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 23:13,14; III John 3,4

D. *Relationships and Influence*

1. Are all relationships beneficial to building godliness in ourselves or others? Should we always work to strengthen every relationship in our lives? When should we not?
 - a. II Timothy 3:5
 - b. Titus 3:10; I Cor. 5:11; II John 10-11;
 - c. Galatians 6:1c
 - d. II Cor 6:14-16
 - e. I Cor 15:33
2. How was Timothy to regulate his relationships with other Christians (I Tim 5:1-2)?
3. List (by first name) someone in your life who:
 - a. Has great influence (emotional, intellectual, financial, direct supervision, or other interdependency) on you, and is an encouragement to godliness (or preventive force for ungodliness, impurity, or unbelief)
 - b. Has only limited influence (though you have frequent contact), but is an encouragement to godliness and purity
 - c. Has (or could grow to have) great influence, but is an influence toward ungodliness (or temptation to give in to desires like anger, gossip, dishonesty, vulgarity, or other immorality)
 - d. Has little influence (though you have frequent contact) on you, but is an influence toward ungodliness, impurity, or unbelief.

E. *In-Class Discussion Questions*

1. How is godliness related to:
 - a. Identity and self-image
 - b. Purpose and motive for decisions and actions
 - c. Wisdom and interpretation of life events
 - d. Personal strength and security (endurance)
 - e. Repentance and restoration
2. As we assess the various relationships in our lives, should some of these be strengthened? Some weakened? Some evaluated and/or tested? On what basis and for what purpose?
3. List some practical ways to measure/assess godliness in ourselves:
4. What are ways of strengthening or diminishing the influence that relationships have on us?

Godly Relationships

Purity and the Nature of Men and Women Lesson 2

A. Introduction – Review

Review the Relationship Grid below and be prepared to give examples of relationships that might fit into each of the four quadrants:

Relationship Grid

		Direction of Influence	
		UNGODLY	GODLY
Strength of Relationship	HIGH	Ungodly Influence; Powerful Relationship	Godly Influence; Powerful Relationship
	LOW	Ungodly Influence; Weak Relationship	Godly Influence; Weak Relationship

B. Purity

1. Purity defined
 - a. Usually found its adjective form: “pure”. Two Greek words are translated pure: *hagnos* and *katharos*.
 - b. Vine’s: *Hagnos* – pure from defilement, not contaminated (same root word as *hagios* = holy). *Katharos* – pure, as being cleansed.
 - c. Dictionary of New Testament Theology: “*hagnos* is a word originally connected with a root meaning holy; it signifies a qualitative holiness or purity belonging to the deity and the associated things or persons.” “*Kathros* – indicating physical or moral cleanliness in persons and things”
2. Purity expressed and developed
 - a. Timothy was commanded to “keep yourself pure (*hagnos*)” – I Tim 5:22. Note this is contrasted to taking part in the sins of others.

- b. We are trained to be pure (*hagnos*) (Tit 2:5) and purify ourselves as Christ is pure (*hagnos*).
- c. Purity is to be seen in our conduct (I Peter 3:2) and example (I Timothy 4:2).
- d. Purity is also connected with our motives. We are to have a pure (*katharos*) heart as contrasted to youthful passions.
- e. I Peter 2:22 – how are we purified? What is produced by a pure (*katharos*) heart?

B. Differences in Men and Women

1. What was the beginning of the role (and temperament) difference between men and women (I Timothy 2:13-14; I Corinthians 11:8-9)?
2. Read I Thessalonians 2:7-9, and 10-12. List the ways Paul acted like a mother and like a father.
3. Contrast the various sex-specific commands and warnings. What differences between men and women are implied?
 - a. Men – I Tim 2:8; Matt 5:28; Titus 2:6-8; Eph 5:25, 28; I Pet 3:8
 - b. Women – I Tim 2:9-15; I Tim 5:13; Titus 2:3-5; Eph 5:22; I Pet 3:1-7; II Tim 3:6

In-Class Discussion Questions

1. Will the differences noted above produce different challenges to godliness and purity? Explain.
2. List some practical ways to measure/assess purity in ourselves:
3. Because of the differences in our temperaments, are there relationships that present more of a spiritual challenge to men? If so, provide examples and explain.
4. Likewise, are there relationships that present more of a spiritual challenge to women? If so, provide examples and explain.

Godly Relationships

Selflessness and Sacrifice Lesson 3

Overall Goals of the 13 Lesson Study

During our study, we will establish a number of individual goals – spiritual improvement that each one of us should desire to accomplish. Please make some suggestions for potential goals for the class:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Introduction

Our study began with an examination of the roles of godliness and purity, not only in our close relationships, but in our lives in general. We will continue to look at spiritual qualities that God expects of all of us, but particularly ones that have an important role in establishing Godly relationships.

A. Exercise – Role of Selflessness

1. List things you believe cause relationships to end (friendships, partnerships, roommates, marriages, etc.):

2. Note which of the items in your list are attributable, at least in part, to selfishness or self-centeredness:

B. Selflessness Defined

1. List scriptural qualities that are reflected in the attitude of selflessness (e.g. mercy, meekness)

2. Who are characters in the Bible who were known for their selflessness:

C. Scriptural Basis

1. Read Mark 8:34-37
 - a. What did Jesus predict immediately prior to this statement?
 - b. What three things does Jesus require of anyone who would come after him?

2. Read Philippians 2:1-5

- a. The discussion here follows a call to have a manner of life worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27).
 - b. What does Paul ask them to do or have in vs. 2?
 - c. In both vs. 3 and vs. 4, Paul describes something to do and something not to do. What are they?
 - d. Who is the ultimate example of sacrifice? Why?
3. Read I Corinthians 13:4-7
 - a. Which descriptions of love in vs. 4-7 reflect an attitude of unselfishness?
 - b. Which ones reflect a willingness to make a sacrifice?
4. Read James 3:13-18
 - a. What kind of wisdom is mentioned in vs. 13?
 - b. What two negative qualities are mentioned in vs. 14 and in vs. 16? What is the result?
 - c. What quality in vs. 17 speaks to unselfishness?
5. Read Ephesians 5:22-33. We will study this passage in much more detail later in this study. For now, identify one statement that indicates a husband should be selfless and one that indicates a wife should also be selfless.

D. Application Questions

1. Why is unselfishness a difficult quality to maintain in a relationship?
2. What other sins tend to be produced by selfishness or an unwillingness to sacrifice for others?

Godly Relationships

Contentment and Kindness

Lesson 4

Introduction

Our first three lessons have focused on establishing the foundation of character needed by all Christians who desire to have Godly relationships. The most important trait is that of Godliness, for Godliness will serve to produce other important traits even in the midst of stress and hardship. It is the basis on which we build the right character. We have looked at selflessness and sacrifice. In this lesson, we will look at contentment and kindness. While these two traits are not as directly related to each other as was true of the characteristics of our last two lessons, they are, nevertheless, essential qualities for the kind of influence that God expects us to exercise in our relationships.

A. Contentment Defined

1. Greek: *autarkeia* – satisfaction with what one has
2. Thayers: Sufficient for one's self, strong enough or possessing enough to need no aid or support, independent of external circumstances

B. Scriptural Basis

1. Read I Timothy 6:6-10
 - a. What is contentment coupled with in vs. 6?
 - b. What does Paul say should be enough to bring us contentment? What is his reasoning?
 - c. What is the problem with simply desiring to be rich? List the potential consequences:
2. Read Philippians 4:10-13
 - a. What does Paul say he has learned? Does he offer any limitation to this lesson? Given his life's circumstances, is this a powerful message?
 - b. What else does Paul say that he is capable of (vs. 13)?
 - c. Look back at Philippians 4:4-9. Note the spirit of peace and contentment that seems to prevail in this passage. What does Paul say to do or not do in order to have this spirit? Does this also sound like the exercise of godliness?

C. Application Questions

1. How does your level of contentment have a profound effect on your relationships? List several relationships and the effect of contentment.
2. What factors in an individual's background tend to have a significant influence on his or her attitude toward material things?

D. Kindness Defined

1. Greek: chrestotes – goodness of heart, gracious

E. Scriptural Basis

1. Read Colossians 3:12-14 and Ephesians 4:31-32
 - a. Note in both passages the relationship of kindness and forbearance or forgiveness.
 - b. What words or qualities are associated with kindness in these two passages?
2. Read Matthew 7:12. Would the Golden Rule serve as a useful standard for kindness in our relationships? Why or why not?
3. Read Romans 2:4, 11:22, Ephesians 2:7 and Titus 3:4.
 - a. Who is said to be kind toward us?
 - b. How has he shown this?

F. Application Questions

1. What role does the tongue play in exercising kindness?
2. What makes it difficult for us to maintain kindness in a relationship?
3. List expressions of kindness that you have received from others that have made a deep impression on you:

Godly Relationships

Forbearing and Forgiving Lesson 5

- A. **Key Text:** *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (Col 3:12-13)*
- B. **Forbearance** (bearing with one another) **defined.**
1. Greek, *anechomai* – lit. to hold oneself up against, that is, (figuratively) put up with; bear with endure, forbear, suffer.
 2. Describe situations when forbearance is required:
 - a. Romans 15:1
 - b. Galatians 6:2
 - c. II Cor 6:3-6 (see v 6)
 - d. Ephesians 4:1-3
- C. **Forgiveness defined.**
1. Greek, *charizomai* – to grant as a favor, that is, gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue; deliver, (frankly) forgive, (freely) give, grant.
 2. Other Bible teaching about forgiveness
 - a. What (who) is our pattern? (Col 3:13; Ephesians 4:32)? How does this motivate us?
 - b. What depends upon it? (Matt 18:35; Matt 6:12, 14-16; Mark 11:25-26)
 - c. How often must we do it? (Matt 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)
 3. Bible examples:
 - a. Matt 18:23-34 – The Unforgiving Servant
 - What did the master require of the servant in order to forgive him?
 - What motivated the master to forgive the enormous debt?
 - Was the servant required to demonstrate a “change of character” first?
 - b. Luke 16:11-32 – The Prodigal Son
 - What was the father’s attitude (willingness to forgive) toward his son during his rebellion?
 - What was required of the son by his father for him to obtain forgiveness?
 - What was the emotional reaction of the father to his son’s repentance?
 - What additional penalties did the father impose?
 - c. Luke 7:36-48 – The Sinful Woman at Simon’s house

- What sins was the woman probably guilty of?
- What conditions did Jesus place on her forgiveness?
- What did Jesus say the forgiveness would produce in the debtor (&woman)?

D. **Prerequisites.** Explain how the qualities listed in Col 3:12 enable forbearing and forgiving.

1. tender mercies (pity, sympathy, inward affection)
2. kindness (usefulness, excellence in demeanor, gentleness, goodness)
3. humility (“humiliation of mind,” modesty, lowliness of mind)
4. meekness (gentleness, humbleness)
5. longsuffering (“long-tempered,” fortitude, patience, not retaliatory)

E. **Opposites**

1. What opposite characteristics are listed in Eph 4:31?
2. What opposite behavior are we tempted to pursue (Rom 12:17-21)?

F. **Applications**

1. How would you distinguish between forbearing and forgiving? When is each required? For the list below, choose which is required. Your friend...
 - a. Is too short and that inconveniences you
 - b. lies to you over a minor matter
 - c. has a habit that annoys you
 - d. continues an annoying habit after you ask them to stop
 - e. accidentally loses a large amount of money
 - f. disagrees with you that he/she has done anything wrong
2. Why is it so difficult to have the proper emotions (joy) when someone repents of a wrong done to us and asks forgiveness?

Is it always difficult? When is it not?
3. What are some “counterfeits” of forgiveness? (see for example James 3:14,17)
4. In practical terms, what should be different about our behavior (kindness, tolerance, selflessness) toward someone who has wronged us before and after they repent?
5. What is to be the treatment of those who take advantage of us (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:35-36)? Would this responsibility intensify if they are closely related and/or we have a special opportunity to use that relationship to influence them for good?
6. What qualities and exercises can help us develop our ability to forgive as God does?

Godly Relationships

Friends and Co-Workers Lesson 6

Influential Exiles

A common message of the New Testament is that Christians should recognize they do not belong to this world. A full acceptance of this fact gives us strength to overcome the influences and temptations of this life. An example of such teaching is the description of Abraham and other heroes of faith (Hebrews 11:13-16) who are said to have *“died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.”*

And yet we are repeatedly told we must balance this attitude with a recognition that we have to live among the unbelievers of this world (I Corinthians 5:9-10), and set an example for them that would draw them to Christ. This would be especially applicable to work situations – or any place we spend most of our time – where our godly behavior is expected to be a stark contrast to those who live self-indulgent lives. But there is an application for our friendships – carefully ensuring that they do not unduly pull us toward the world, but rather that we are lights of godliness to all of our associates.

1. Read Philippians 2:14-15.
¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world
 - a. How is the world described?
 - b. What is our responsibility in the world?
 - c. What is said of the actions we are to take and the character that we are to have?
 - d. Would this behavior and character stand out in your workplace? Would it be noticed by friends who are believers in Christ?
2. Read I Corinthians 15:33 and II Corinthians 6:14
³³Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?
 - a. In the context of I Corinthians 15 (cf. vs. 12-19) how might bad company affect our morals?
 - b. What are other ways that ungodly friendships can have a dangerous effect on our morals?

- c. Does II Corinthians 6:14 teach that we should not work alongside ungodly co-workers? Explain why or why not:
 - d. Be prepared to explain II Corinthians 6:14 in light of the Chart on Godly and Ungodly Influences:
3. Read I Peter 2:11-12.
- ¹¹Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*
- a. How does Peter make it clear that we both live in the world and live apart from it?
 - b. What kind of conduct must we have among unbelievers (Gentiles)? How would this conduct be seen by others in your workplace? What would friends notice?
 - c. What may be the initial result of our example? Why do you think the example may be more powerful over time? If this is true, what trait is being required of us?
 - d. What may the ultimate result of our example?

Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount

1. Read Matthew 5:14-16. Here again we see the theme of living in, but different from the world. *¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*
2. Based on the passage, what does it mean to let your light shine? What will be the result in the lives of those who see this?
3. Given the context of this passage, it seems clear that our good works, which are to be seen, are to result from possessing the character described in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). For each of the eight beatitudes be prepared to explain how possessing that character would have an impact on friends or co-workers:

Godly Relationships

Adult Children, Parents, and Extended Family Lesson 7

Introduction. The stages of life bring changing relationships, responsibilities, and challenges in our family relationships, especially in the close bond between parents and children. The ideal situation, of course, is a common faith passed down through the generations (II Tim 1:5) and expressed between them in godly, loving behavior. However, shortcomings in godliness and unfaithfulness in parents and/or children corrupt that ideal and require the aspects of character presented earlier (godliness, purity, contentment, kindness, selflessness, humility, forbearance) to deal with the difficulties created.

A. Bible Commands to Children. List the command and age of the child indicated in each command.

Bible Ref.	Command or Implied Principle	Implied Age of child		
		young child	young adult	mature adult
Ex 20:12; Lv 19:3; Dt 5:16	<i>Honor / Revere Father & Mother</i>	✓	✓	✓
Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20				
Mk 7:10-13; Mat 15:1-9;				
I Tim 5:4,8,16; Ezek 22:6-7				
II Tim 3:2; Rom 1:30				
I Tim 5:1-2;19-20; Lv 19:32				
Prov 1:8-9; 4:1; 6:20-22; 23:22				
Prov 17:6,25; 23:24-25; 17:6				
Dt 21:20; Ex 21:15				

1. List the types “honoring” of parents implied in the passages above?

Might a son’s responsibility be different from a daughter’s? Explain.

2. What ideal assumption about the character of parents is implied in [most of] these commands?

3. Does Bible imply that there may be parent-child relationships where this assumption is not only incorrect, but also harmful (Lk 14:26; 18:28-30; Dt 33:8-11)?

D. Attitudes and Actions Toward Siblings

1. Does the Bible indicate that disagreements, jealousy, selfishness, dishonesty, and mistreatment are likely to occur within families, especially among siblings? List some Bible examples.

2. Do the Bible warnings about the dangers of association with evil (e.g. II Cor 6:14-17, and see Dt 13:6-11) change when dealing with family members? List some guidelines, including preventive and preparatory measures that would help in dealing with siblings and other near-relatives that are:
 - a. Unfaithful and/or rebellious Christians (see I Cor 5:9-11)
 - b. Have never been Christians, and are simply 'of the World'.

3. What additional complications arise because of family relationships?

4. What are some wrong responses to this difficulty?

5. What suggested practices can you recommend?

Godly Relationships

Dating and Marriage

Lesson 8

Two Different Relationships

While connected in many ways, dating and marriage are two very different relationships. The most obvious difference is a dating relationship— like a friendship or a work relationship — is one we may choose to end with little or no consequences, while the marriage relationship is intended by God to be one that lasts until the death of either the husband or wife. The challenges posed by a relationship intended to last a lifetime are far greater than one that may only last a matter of weeks. So, why study the two in one lesson (beyond the fact that this class is limited to 13 lessons)?

One obvious answer is we marry someone whom we have dated. A better understanding of what God expects of a husband or wife will have an effect on a Christian's attitude and behavior when dating someone. It should have a profound effect on decisions about the future of that relationship. In our study we have stressed the need for us to maintain a godly character in every relationship. In this lesson, we will examine how essential that character is when we are romantically involved with someone and in a marriage relationship.

Godly Character in Dating

We are using the term dating to cover a wide range of one to one relationships between a man and a woman. It may describe the initial stage of a new relationship forming out of an existing friendship or the circumstance of a couple who are engaged and planning on marrying soon. And the many one-to-one relationships in between those two extremes. Consider these questions and warnings:

1. What emotions are stirred within us when in a dating relationship? Give examples of how those emotions may produce strong temptations to sin.
2. Read I Corinthians 15:33 and II Corinthians 6:14

³³ *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*

¹⁴ *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

- a. Why are these passages especially important to keep in mind regarding the person we are dating?
 - b. Why is it wise to have formed deep associations with Christians who will speak to us honestly when we are unduly influenced by someone?
3. For each of the character traits below, answer the questions that follow:
 - a. Godliness
 - b. Purity
 - c. Selflessness and self-sacrifice
 - d. Willingness to forgive and to forbear

- e. Kindness
- f. Contentment

How will the possession of this trait help me to set an example that will influence the person I am dating to follow God?

What temptations may be offered in this relationship that make it hard for me to maintain this character?

Why is this character trait essential in a person whom I might marry?

Godly Character in Marriage

There is a separate 13 lesson study and material titled *Godly Marriages* that uses the scriptural foundations of this study on *Godly Relationships* to help husbands and wives form and maintain the “one flesh” relationship described in Ephesians 5:31. In less than one full lesson, we can hardly touch on the depth of that material. But as you consider the special value of a life-long partnership with a spouse, remember these four foundational statements:

- Trust God’s plan
- Take responsibility to do right yourself
- Remember salvation (yours and theirs) is the ultimate goal
- Your strength will come from your faith in God

All four have a special role in marriage, but concentrate on the third. Given marriage is not a relationship we can choose to end, it is especially important that we accept responsibility for the salvation of our spouse and work sacrificially to that end. We must be individuals who exercise godly influence on our spouses and not ones who are pulled into ungodliness by them. Consider the following passages:

1. For Husbands – Ephesians 5:25-29
 - a. What is the goal a husband has for his wife?
 - b. How would he act to accomplish that goal?
2. For Wives – I Peter 3:1-6
 - a. What is the goal of a wife with an unbelieving (or ungodly) husband?
 - b. How will she act to accomplish that goal?
3. For each of the character traits below, answer the questions that follow:
 - a. Godliness
 - b. Purity
 - c. Selflessness and self-sacrifice
 - d. Willingness to forgive and to forbear
 - e. Kindness
 - f. Contentment

How will the possession of this trait help create a lasting relationship with my spouse?

What temptations are presented to me when my spouse lacks this character?