

# ☒ LIVING FOR ANOTHER WORLD

July 10, 2022 | *Godliness*

## PREPARATION

### A WORD ON THIS SERIES

This series will study the seven qualities found in 2 Peter 1:5–7. Peter said after stating them, “If these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8). None of us aspires to be ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. Instead, with the help of His divine power, we must seek all the things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). The word “life” in this verse refers to the transcendent life of one who has received salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a life lived now but with eternity in mind. C. S. Lewis described this life as “another world.” Each lesson in this series will examine the life of a biblical character who exhibits one of these seven qualities. None of these individuals was perfect, but they modeled these qualities for us and inspire us to do the same. This week, we will look at godliness in the life of Josiah, perhaps Judah’s most godly king.

### GETTING READY

Do you feel able to lead a godly life? Why or why not?

Read 2 Kings 22–23.

Ask God to help you understand what it means to be “godly.”

## THIS WEEK

### ☒ KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Josiah’s godly character stemmed from his commitment to God’s Word and the priority he placed on worship.

### ☒ THEOLOGY APPLIED

Godliness does not begin with you.

### ☒ MEDITATE

*“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12).*

## GETTING STARTED

+This section will introduce the quality of godliness by discussing ways people misunderstand it.

❓: *What makes godliness different from the qualities covered thus far in this series?*

❓: *What is the difference between a godly person and a religious person?*

Of all the qualities mentioned in 2 Peter 1:5–7, godliness probably seems the most demanding because the center of focus is God Himself. How could we, even on our best days, be compared in any sense with God? Peter, however, began his second epistle by saying “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). Godliness is also probably the most misunderstood quality in 2 Peter 1:5–7. Some people see godliness as a means by which God can be manipulated toward one’s own ends. This misunderstanding is present even in the Bible. When Peter and John healed a lame beggar, Peter had to clarify that their piety or godliness was not the reason the man was healed (Acts 3:12). The witnesses assumed Peter and John were so godly that they could entice God to heal the lame on their behalf.

People also frequently think godliness is a natural disposition. You either act with godliness or you do not. But Paul viewed godliness as something we can train ourselves to be (1 Timothy 4:7). Others mistake any religious act for godliness. In fact, the word Peter used here for “godliness,” *eusebeia*, was the word the wider culture used to refer to “religion.” But true godliness is more than mere religiosity. Godliness is the respect a person accords to God and the resulting adoption of God’s character. This lesson will examine the life of King Josiah, who was perhaps the most godly king in the Old Testament. His story shows how loving God’s Word and loving to worship Him are central to godliness.

❓: *How does godliness relate to our salvation in Jesus Christ?*

❓: *Why is it crucial for us to understand the proper role of godliness in the Christian faith?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – Although the world may misunderstand godliness, believers must be sure we do not. We must remember that godliness grows out of our relationship with God. It is not a means of obtaining a relationship with Him. Our relationship with God comes when we confess our sin and trust in Jesus for salvation. This is the very core of the gospel. We can never view godliness as a replacement for faith in Christ. No amount of godliness will ever save us. Nevertheless, true believers will to some extent exhibit the character of the God they serve. Paul spoke of an accord between faith in Christ and godliness (Titus 1:1). Thus godliness, is a crucial Christian quality.

## ▣ UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

+Josiah was the most godly king in the Old Testament, even more so than David, who was described as a man after God’s own heart (2 Kings 23:25). This lesson will examine his life as an example of godliness for us to follow. Two things stand out in Josiah’s life that led to his godly character. He prioritized worship, and he submitted to God’s Word.

### 1. GODLINESS PRIORITIZES WORSHIP.

### 2. GODLINESS SUBMITS TO GOD’S WORD.

## GOING DEEPER

*+This section will explore Josiah’s attitudes toward worship and God’s Word to provide an example of godliness for us. Josiah’s story is found in 2 Kings 22–23.*

### 1. GODLINESS PRIORITIZES WORSHIP.

#### ▣ 2 KINGS 22:3–7

**Q:** *What was the significance of the temple for the nation of Judah?*

**Q:** *Why would the people have allowed the temple to fall into disrepair?*

First and 2 Kings divide Israel and Judah’s kings between those who were faithful to God and those who were unfaithful. The phrases repeated throughout these books are “he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” and

“he did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord.” Josiah was a faithful king who did right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Kings 22:2). Amon and Manasseh, the previous two kings of Judah, were two of the wickedest kings in the nation’s history. Manasseh, Josiah’s grandfather, was particularly evil. Because of his wickedness, God determined to send the nation into exile (2 Kings 21:10–16; 23:26–27).

Josiah’s reign, however, offered the nation a momentary reprieve from God’s judgement. Second Kings begins Josiah’s story by recording the repairs he authorized to the temple (2 Kings 22:3–7). The temple was the center of Israel’s worship. Every ceremony and sacrifice were oriented around the temple. As the place where God’s presence resided among His people (1 Kings 8:1–11), it stood at the center of every festival and sacred occasion. The fact that Josiah’s forefathers allowed the temple to fall into disrepair illustrates their lack of concern for Israel’s God. But Josiah understood that the state of the temple reflected the state of the people’s hearts toward God. He prioritized worship by restoring the temple to its former glory.

🔗: *Why do Christians not worship at a temple?*

🔗: *How can we emulate Josiah’s godliness in this manner without a temple to restore?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – Josiah’s godliness led him to restore the temple and make it the center of Judah’s religious activity. The temple’s restoration was all about returning Judah’s worship to the one true God. Christians do not have a temple at the center of our worship. Whereas in the Old Testament, God indwelt a temple made of stones, in the New Testament, God indwells every believer. In 2 Timothy 1:14, Paul said to Timothy, “By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.” What is true of Timothy is true of every believer in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:11). Paul even referred to individual Christians as temples. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:18).

Although we do not worship at a temple like Josiah did, we can still emulate the godliness he showed in restoring the temple in at least two ways. First, since we are each in one sense a temple in which God dwells, we can emulate Josiah by keeping ourselves from sin that would defile our bodies and by growing in holiness. This was Paul’s concern in 1 Corinthians 6:18. The Corinthians had emphasized their spiritual existence to such an extent that they believed it did not matter if their bodies participated in immorality. Paul wrote to tell them it did matter because God dwelled within their bodies. For them to grow in godliness, they had to keep themselves from sin. The same is true for us. For the Spirit dwelling within us to help us grow in godliness (Galatians 5:22), we must

focus on keeping ourselves from sin.

Second, we can emulate Josiah's godliness by emphasizing corporate worship in our local church body. In his first letter, Peter referred to believers as "living stones ... being built up as a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Peter was likely creating a metaphor between the church and the temple. When the church gathers for worship, we function like the temple in the Old Testament. When we gather, we form a "temple" within which the worship of God is carried out. We emulate the godliness of Josiah when we commit to a local church body and gather with them in worship.

## ■ 2 KINGS 23:4-20

Q: *Who were Baal and Asherah (2 Kings 23:4)?*

Q: *The ESV places 2 Kings 23:1-20 under the heading "Josiah's Reforms." How did Josiah's reforms prioritize worship?*

Although the people were not worshipping the true God, they were still worshipping. The previous Judean kings had promoted the worship of foreign gods within Judah. Second Kings 23:4 refers to the gods Baal and Asherah. These were the gods of the nations surrounding Judah. Idols of these gods and articles used to worship them were even placed in the temple. These foreign gods came with their own priesthood to rival the priesthood of God. During his reign, Josiah resolved to remove from Judah every trace of the worship of foreign gods. He had the idols and vessels of Baal and Asherah removed from the temple and burned. He ridded every city in Judah of the priesthoods dedicated to the foreign gods. He tore down every building associated with the worship of foreign gods and leveled every high place and altar used to worship them.

Josiah did not even stop at the borders of Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel, sometimes referred to as "Samaria," originally formed with Judah the united kingdom of Israel. Ten tribes from the united kingdom broke off from Judah after the reign of Solomon. The ten northern tribes were never faithful to God, and they were defeated in the eighth century B.C. The inhabitants were exiled from the land, and exiles from other nations were brought in. During Josiah's time, this area remained in shambles, but Josiah knew that God should be worshipped there as well. Just as he removed every sign of foreign worship from Judah, he also did so in Samaria (2 Kings 23:15-20). His actions demonstrated his zeal for God's worship and his own godliness. He could not tolerate idolatry within the land that was supposed to be reserved for worshipping the one true God.

Q: *How is idolatry present in your life?*

Q: *Why does idolatry impede our growth in godliness?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – To grow in godliness, you need to be passionate about getting rid of false worship in your own life and in the community around you. If you are a committed follower of Christ, you may think you have nothing to worry about on this issue. You don't worship other gods or bow down to idols. But worship covers a wider context than we often consider. Worship is ultimately an expression of our allegiance. You may not sing to foreign gods or bow down to idols, but if anything overtakes your allegiance to God, you are a false worshipper. I grew up in a rural community where people enjoyed hunting and fishing. To my knowledge, no one ever sang a worship song to a deer or bowed down to a fish, but I saw plenty of false worship of these things growing up. When I went to college and entered the workplace, I saw people worshipping vacations, homes, automobiles, and 401ks. I never heard anyone singing to their Audi or bowing down to their 401k statement, but I saw plenty of false worship. None of these things is sinful in itself, but it is amazing how easily they can begin to infringe on our allegiance to God. If you want to grow in godliness, you need to continually scan your life for things taking the place of God and be ready to rid yourself of the false worship you have given to them.

## ■ 2 KINGS 23:21–27

Q: *What was the Passover celebration [Exodus 12]?*

Q: *Why had Israel and Judah failed to celebrate Passover?*

The Passover was a memorial supper celebrating Israel's exodus from Egypt. It was an occasion for the entire nation to reflect on the goodness and power of their God. Passover was supposed to be celebrated on a yearly basis (Exodus 12:1–14, 17–18; 13:10), but it seems ancient Israel rarely followed this ordinance or, at least, it was not the nation-wide celebration that was intended. Hezekiah, Josiah's great-grandfather, celebrated the Passover (2 Chronicles 30), but apparently only those who journeyed to Jerusalem kept the celebration. Although Hezekiah desired for the northern tribes to participate (2 Chronicles 30:1), it is uncertain how many of them did. Josiah,

however, commanded the entire nation to celebrate the Passover. Josiah's celebration of Passover, however, exceeded anything that had been seen in Israel or Judah since the days of the judges, hundreds of years earlier. Josiah prioritized worshipping God, both for himself and for those under his reign.

🕒: *How are the ordinances of the church an act of worship?*

🕒: *How can you prioritize worshipping God through the church's ordinances?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – Ancient Israel had multiple feasts and celebrations to worship God throughout the year. Under the new covenant, the church does not observe these festivals, but we do observe two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances are symbols of key elements of the Christian faith, and observing them is an important part of our worship. Witnessing a baptism and participating in the Lord's Supper are acts of worship. They express our allegiance to God. It is sad that so many Christians neglect these ordinances today. A few years ago, the church I was attending did not have a place to baptize people, so after the regular service, we went to another church's facility to use theirs. Less than a quarter of my church made the five-minute journey to witness this baptism. It is discouraging to think some believers see baptism and the Lord's Supper as something that adds time to a church service than as an act of worship. This viewpoint will hardly help you grow in godliness.

## 2. GODLINESS SUBMITS TO GOD'S WORD.

### 📖 2 KINGS 22:8-13

🕒: *Why did the discovery of the Book of the Law lead to Josiah's reforms?*

🕒: *What was Josiah's reaction to hearing from the Book of the Law?*

During Josiah's project to repair the temple, the high priest discovered the Book of the Law. The Book of the Law refers to either all or part of what we know as the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Old Testament. We cannot be certain if these books had completely faded from memory or if the priest located a particularly significant copy of these books. Whatever the case, the book was read in Josiah's presence, and it impacted him significantly. He

tore his cloths (2 Kings 22:11), which is symbolic of deep remorse and brokenness over sin. Josiah recognized that neither he nor the people were obeying God's Word, and he desired to change that. The desire to submit to God's Word reveals Josiah's godly character.

Q: *Why does God's Word convict us of sin?*

Q: *What are some other godly responses to God's Word?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – It is nearly impossible to grow in godliness apart from God's Word. Without regular time in His Word, you will struggle to understand His will, identify areas of sin in your life, and find the encouragement you need to pursue godliness. Find ways to increase your exposure to God's Word. Make sure you are keeping up with your regular devotional times. Consider turning off the radio on your commute to work and listening to an audio version of the Bible instead. Whatever it takes, allow yourself to submit to God's Word by taking in more of it.

## ■ 2 KINGS 22:13–20

Q: *Why did Josiah's servants go to a prophetess after hearing from the Word of God?*

Q: *How did the prophetess encourage Josiah?*

Josiah was convicted by God's Word, but he also had questions. He wanted to know if the punishments mentioned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 were a certainty or whether they could be avoided. So, he sent his servants to a prophetess named Huldah. Huldah gave them a mixed message. God had determined to judge Judah by sending it into exile. The sins of the previous kings and the previous generations had made it unavoidable (2 Kings 22:15–17). But Josiah would not have to witness the coming destruction. His godly response to the Word of God ensured that it would not happen until after his death.

Q: *How can reading the Bible with others encourage you to grow in godliness?*



**Q:** *What are the dangers of only reading God's Word on your own?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – Josiah sought help in understanding the Word of God and its implications for his lifetime. The men and women God called to prophesy in the Old Testament served as an extension of God's Word. They revealed His will to the people. Today, we do not look to prophets to help us understand God's Word or to receive an extra word from Him. We believe His revelation is completed in the New Testament, which is the testimony of Jesus's associates and one or two others (Hebrews 1:1–3). We should, however, seek help in understanding God's Word by reading and discussing it in community. This helps keep us from reading it in error because other believers can correct us through discussion and prayer. Reading the Bible in community can also help us draw more inspiration from God's Word because we are able to gain from the insights of others. Reading God's Word in community will help you grow in godliness.

## ■ 2 KINGS 23:1–3

**Q:** *Why did the king read God's Word to the people?*

**Q:** *If judgment was certain, why did Josiah carry out his religious reforms?*

Josiah must have been disappointed after hearing Huldah's words from his servants. Nevertheless, he understood that impending doom could not be an excuse for him or anyone else to disregard God's Word. He gathered all the leaders of Judah and read God's Word to them. He also covenanted in their presence to keep the commandments in it. Even though God's judgment was coming, Josiah's love for God drove him to remain as faithful as possible to God's Word and to lead the people in doing so as well.

**Q:** *How can you use God's Word to encourage others in godliness?*

**Q:** *How can you ensure your devotion to God's Word has implications beyond yourself?*

**APPLICATION POINT** – Just as Josiah wanted to lead others to obey God’s Word, Christians should want to use God’s Word to help others grow in godliness. You do not have to be a pastor or a small group leader/teacher to do this. Be willing to share with others how God is speaking to you through His Word. Your words may encourage others to grow in godliness.

## NEXT STEPS

*Josiah was Judah’s most godly king. He prioritized worship and submitted to God’s Word. In which of these areas do you have the most room to grow in godliness? After reflecting on the principles covered in this lesson, write down some steps you can take to grow in godliness.*

## PRAY

*+Use these prayer points to instill the lessons you learned from God’s Word this week.*

*-Father, help me to become more like you. Convict me of sin. Spur me on to Christ-likeness.*

*-Jesus, I cannot grow in godliness apart from your grace shown to me in your death and resurrection. Help me to focus on your grace so that I may grow in godliness.*

*-Father, make me humble enough to learn about you from others. Help me use what I learn to grow in godliness.*

*-God, forgive me for not prioritizing worship. Renew my heart so that I always long to show my allegiance to you.*