

Godliness

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This is a study of the Greek word **(eusebeia)**, used in the New Testament to express the idea of inner piety, spiritual maturity, or godliness. In Titus 1:1, the apostle Paul states that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the criterion of the faith of the chosen people of God who have a full and applied knowledge of the truth which is the standard for godliness.

The word **eusebeia** has an interesting history. It was first used by the Greek poet, Homer, in about 1000 BC. From Homer the word came into use in the classical Greek of Athens (Attic Greek) where it referred to personal piety in the fulfillment of human relationships. It was also used to describe a person who was faithful in fulfilling his duties to whatever Greek gods dominated the city in which he lived. The Attic Greek word always referred to the outward expression of piety, such as the giving of gifts to the god, participation in sacrifices and worship, or making a show of religion in public.

As the word **eusebeia** began to be used in the **koine** Greek, it came to mean inner piety, or spirituality, a duty which the believer owes to God in the inner man. The principle in the Titus context is that of the control or filling of the holy spirit which produces qualities of conformity to Christ.

The following scripture passages contain the word **eusebeia**, invariably translated godliness (in the KJV). Read these verses along with their contexts before continuing in the next section.

Acts 3:12

1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11

2 Tim. 3:5

2 Pet. 1:3,6,7; 3:11

Principles of eusebeia

A true man of God has qualities of inner piety which is the characteristics of a spiritually mature person. This is not a phony facade put on to please or impress people. The source of this godliness is the word of God. The godly person has not only learned doctrine academically, but he has also seen that word applied to his life in edification over a period of years.

Spirituality is an absolute quality, depending on a believer's walk with the Lord, and particularly on his maintaining his fellowship with the Lord through confession. But none of this is visible.

So, how can you tell when true spirituality and maturity are present? How do you know the difference between a godly man and one who is merely well educated and in control of himself? A carnal believer, the novice Christian, can be moral, can use the right vocabulary, can wear a suit and carry a Bible. He can fool some of the people some of the time.

But the godly believer is known by his fruits also called the fruit of the Holy Spirit and things that an unbeliever, or the carnal believer, cannot produce. Godliness is produced in the life of a Christian who is both learning doctrine and growing thereby through edification.

Read Gal 5:19-21 about the works of the flesh.

The works of the flesh are obvious enough. They are the product of an inner life controlled by the sin nature, by the trends and lusts of the soul. As a Christian grows in Christ, he gains victory over areas of weakness. The Christian way of life is characterized by the putting away of negatives, the sin

that so easily besets and by putting on the new man.

Read Gal. 5:22-26

Read Eph. 4:17-25.

The new man not only lives in the spirit which is **not visible**, but he also walks in the spirit which is **visible**. One of the great themes of the epistle to Titus is that of the outward walk, which is a demonstration to the world that the inner life which is claimed is genuine. Three illustrations are given in Titus 2.

1. In Titus 2:4,5, Young women are to be taught how to lead godly lives so that “the word of God be not blasphemed.” We have a responsibility for public opinion about the word of God.
2. In Titus 2:7,8, Titus himself is told to show himself a “*pattern of good works*” and to have “*sound speech that cannot be condemned*” in order not to supply detractors with ammunition for their criticisms.
3. And in Titus 2:9,10, Servants are to maintain godly lives in their relations to their masters in order that they might “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” We are to live as decorations”to the doctrine of God.

The whole letter to Titus is an inspired document which, among other things, provides many illustrations (in chapters 1 and 2) of how godliness (**eusebeia**) is supposed to be observed in the outward characteristics of believers of all ranks: overseers and elders, older men, older women, younger women, younger men, servants and Titus himself.

Godliness is the concept of the inward life and the outward appearance of the fruit of the spirit.

For example, in the spiritual fruit of **love** we see genuine care and regard for people, an impersonal love for people who are different, even though they

are enemies. This love results in the **philozenos** of Titus 1:8. See the notes on Characteristics of Impersonal Love. Love is the absence of mental attitude sins and sins of the tongue. The negatives have been eliminated from the believer’s life so that (1) he no longer hates, despises, disdains or envies other people, (2) he no longer maligns or ridicules them, and therefore (3) he is free to have a ministry with others that is not hindered by offensiveness or bitterness.

Joy is the spiritual fruit which enables a Christian to have happiness that does not depend on the details of life. He has a stable mental attitude from looking to Jesus and trusting the Father for everything. He does not fall into moody depression when things go wrong or he is criticized or maligned. He does not fall into wide emotional swings. He does not depend on others to prop up his happiness. I Tim. 6:6, “Godliness (**eusebeia**) with contentment is great gain...”

A believer who has **peace** is a master of the faith rest technique. He is nearly unflappable, because he has a lot of practice in placing every distress, every disaster, in the hands of the Lord. He is the most relaxed person in the neighborhood. He does not have chronic worry about the present or future. He knows that the Lord can handle everything. So he is not paranoid. Even if someone is really out to get him, he is relaxed and praying, even for the enemy who is plotting against him. He places great confidence in the Lord, especially regarding death, knowing and resting in the fact that being absent from the body means being present with the Lord. So he is **not** one of those who “through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” (Heb. 2:15).

For homework, you can make up your own descriptions for the remaining parts of the fruit of the spirit: longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Just remember that God’s plan for you is that you continue to be a godly Christian.