

“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” 1 Timothy 4:7-8

In the movie *Training Day*, Denzel Washington and Ethan Hawke star as two narcotics officers in the gang-ridden neighborhoods of South-Central Los Angeles. Jake Hoyt (played by Hawke) is assigned to the corrupt detective Alonzo Harris (played by Washington) so that Jake can be assessed and trained for such a difficult vocation. Hence, it is his “training day.”

Some of us have probably had to train for something at one time or another in our lives. For example, athletes need to train in order to acquire the skills necessary to perform at a high level. Soldiers need to train so that they can be prepared to face the enemy and protect themselves and others. We may even need to train in order to have the proper skills for a certain career or occupation, such as in the illustration above. But there is another kind of training that is necessary for the Christian life and that is training to be godly, which is what Paul speaks about in the above passage.

In the context of 1 Timothy, Paul is writing to Timothy who was a young pastor and Paul’s “***...true child in the faith***” (1:2). Paul wanted to impress upon Timothy his desire for him, above all else, to be godly as he seeks to lead those who are in his charge. You know, I think that one of the most important characteristics of a pastor is godliness. As important as gifts such as preaching, teaching, and leadership may be, I think that these are secondary to godly character. In fact, when Paul outlines the qualifications for overseers (pastors) and deacons in 1 Timothy 3, one should notice that all these qualifications have to do with godly character. Not one of them has to do with a certain skill set.

But this doesn’t mean that godly character is only for pastors and Christian leaders. The truth is that all of us are called to live godly lives. All of us are called and saved so that we can be “***transformed into the image of his Son***” (Rom. 8:28).

But the question is *How can I train to be godly?* In his book *Leading Me: Eight Practices for a Christian Leader’s Most Important Assignment*, author Steven A. Brown suggests 4 key dimensions to godliness which are spiritual intimacy, godly character, vibrant

relationships, and effective service.¹ To train ourselves in godliness, our spiritual intimacy with God through His Holy Spirit must be developed. This might mean that we need to be spending regular time with Him in prayer and in His Word. We also need to take a examine our character. Would it be described as godly? How can we tell? I think it was Dwight L. Moody who once said, “Character is what you are in the dark.” We may need to examine our relationships. Are they vibrant? In other words, are they full of energy and life? Are they meaningful and do they reflect the relationship that Christ has with His church? Lastly, what about our service? Are we serving? And if so, is it effective? Is it making a difference in the lives of others while bringing glory to God? Yes, these are a lot of questions but if we truly want to train ourselves to be godly, then they must be answered.

So, my hope and prayer for us is that we will learn to train ourselves in godliness and that we will put into practice the necessary disciplines to be conformed into the image of Christ because ***“godliness...holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”***

¹ Steven A. Brown. *Leading Me: Eight Practices for a Christian Leader's Most Important Assignment* (Brechin: Castle Quay Books, 2015) 143-144