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# Sermon Notes

April 18, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Never Out of Date

1 Timothy 4:6-10

### Sell-By

- ❖ The sell-by or use-by dates that comes stamped on supermarket items
  - helps us keep track of when fresh foods may spoil
  - suggests when other products may lose potency, flavor or effectiveness
- ❖ Scripture reveals something that not only has no sell-by date but which has the potential to improve with time
  - you CAN take it with you
  - promise for the present life AND the life to come

### Godliness

- ❖ Writing near the end of his life, Paul hammers home the importance of godliness
  - an urgent matter for the church
  - both a personal and a corporate issue
- ❖ Godliness is an active word that describes our response to God

- a fusion of fear and love for God
- provoked by our awe of God
- ❖ Godliness is not external... it is internal
  - Jesus strikes us with awe and then enables our active obedience of all He commands
  - John Calvin: "Godliness is the beginning, middle and end of the Christian living."
  - a godly person places God at the center of every activity and endeavor
- ❖ Godly living is built on the foundation of solid, reliable Bible teaching
  - if you intend to pursue godliness, you need to put your focus on the truth of God as it is revealed in the Word of God
  - truth explained... error exposed
  - a godly person will hold on to the exclusive claims of Christ and stand up for sound doctrine

### Irreverent, Silly Myths

- ❖ Possibly the gods and goddesses of pagan mythology
- ❖ *Silly myths* may refer to superstitious belief or the kind of folk wisdom commonly labeled as "old wives tales"
- ❖ Much of what passes itself off as "Christian teaching" is nothing more than *irreverent, silly myths*
  - "chicken-soup for the soul" theology
  - "sappy stories" do nothing for your spiritual well-being
  - "junk food" for the soul

- ❖ Dine on good teaching
- ❖ Eat a varied, well-balanced diet of fresh food and spiritual nourishment from God's Word
- ❖ Philip Ryken: "Refuse to become distracted by the trivial ideas of the day. Do not allow controversies in politics, sports, education, or even religion to distract you from solid biblical truth."

### Train Yourself

- ❖ Training takes work, time, effort, and discipline
  - legalism is self-centered, discipline is God-centered
  - "I will do this thing or refrain from doing that because I love God and want to please him."
- ❖ Paul gives us a picture from the world of sports and athletics
  - Paul knows great athletes are made not born
  - competing on a world-class level requires years of strenuous, daily training
  - the nurture and care of our souls requires no less effort than the effort expended by professional athletes
- ❖ Do your spiritual exercises
  - ***work out your salvation with fear and trembling***
  - no one can do this for you
  - use your personal trainer: the Holy Spirit!
  - the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to produce the life of God in the soul

- ❖ Pursuing godliness through the Word of God is a life long pursuit
  - prayer
  - ordinances
  - giving
  - acts of mercy
- ❖ A good "work out" is a complete "work out"
- ❖ Physical exercise is important and has its place
  - but, its benefits are limited... strictly temporary
  - godliness ***holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come***
- ❖ Striving, agony, strenuous work to proclaim the gospel
  - Jesus died for all kinds of people in all sorts of places, but you are not saved unless you believe in Him
  - you will not be disappointed if you believe in Jesus

### Personal Application

1. What misconceptions, if any, did you have about godliness prior to hearing this message? How has your understanding of what it means to pursue godliness changed?
2. Are there any ways in which you are being distracted by the 21st century equivalent of silly, irreverent myths?
3. What are you doing to train yourself to be godly? What might you want to add into your spiritual "exercise routine"?