

## THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

~Other Speakers S-Z: Major Ian Thomas:

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Godliness is a mystery! Fail to grasp this fact and you will never understand the nature of godliness.

God did not create you to have just an ape-like capacity to imitate God. There would be no mystery in that, nor would this lift you morally much above the status of a monkey or a parrot! The capacity to imitate is vested in the one who imitates, and does not derive from, nor necessarily share the motives of the person being imitated, who remains passive and impersonal to the act of imitation.

In direct contrast to this, godliness or Godlikeness is the direct and exclusive consequence of God's activity in man. Not the consequence of your capacity to imitate God, but the consequence of God's capacity to reproduce Himself in you! This is the nature of the mystery!

Remove the mystery or try to explain it away, and the result must inevitably be disastrous, for you will no longer be anchored to anything absolute; you will be at liberty to choose your own God the object of your own imitation; and your "godliness" will be the measure of your conformity to the object of your choice.

The moment you come to realize that only God can make a man godly, you are left with no option but to find God, and to know God, and to let God be God in and through you, whoever He may be and this will leave you with no margin for picking and choosing for there is only one God, and He is absolute, and He made you expressly for Himself!

From: The Mystery of Godliness. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. ©1964.