

Greek Word Studies:

Godliness (2150) (eusebeia from eu = well + sebomai = reverence. Sebomai is in turn derived from "seb" which refers to sacred awe or reverence exhibited especially in actions) most literally means "well worship". It describes reverence or awe that is well directed.

**The rich are not always godly
but the godly are always rich.**

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Eusebeia is true religion that displays itself in reverence before what is majestic and divine in worship and in a life of active obedience which befits that reverence.

Eusebeia is a term used, not of God, but of men.

Eusebeia -15x in 15v in the NAS = Acts 3:12; 1Ti 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 4:8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2Ti 3:5; Titus 1:1; 2 Pet 1:3, 6f; 3:11

Eusebeia is found in the papyri referring to piety, reverence, loyalty as exhibited towards parents or deities. Such piety involved the offering of sacrifices and other cultic activities. It also meant honoring the gods by respecting elders, masters, rulers, and all the orders of life thought to be under the protection of the gods. Thus we read that the Platonists defined eus beia as "right conduct in regard to the gods." The Stoics said it was "knowledge of how God should be worshipped." Lucian said it described one who was "a lover of the gods." Finally, Xenophon said it characterized one who was "wise concerning the gods." In short one can see that even the secular idea of this word conveyed a concern and piety for deity (albeit tragically not the true and Living God). Christianity took eus beia and used it to describe the awesome respect that should be accorded to God. This attitude of one's heart is reflected in lifestyle characterized by reverence toward God and respect for the beliefs and practices related to Him.

Eus beia is that piety which is characterized by a Godward attitude and does that which is well pleasing to Him.

Eusebeia is "true religion; or true worship; and describes the person who gives God His rightful place by worshiping Him properly. Genuine worship is more than ;relevant; programs or catchy choruses " it reflects right reverence for God (godliness).

Marvin Vincent says that eusebeia

is from eu, well, and sebomai, to worship, so that the radical idea is worship rightly directed. Worship, however, is to be understood in its etymological sense, worth-ship, or reverence paid to worth, whether in God or man...In classical Greek the word is not confined to religion, but means also piety in the fulfilment of human relations.... Even in classical Greek, however, it is a standing word for piety in the religious sense, showing itself in right reverence; and is opposed to ungodliness, and profaneness." Vincent goes on to quote a secular definition of eus beia which is defined as "The recognition of dependence upon the gods, the confession of human dependence, the tribute of homage which man renders in the certainty that he needs their favor " all this is eus beia, manifest in conduct and conversation, in sacrifice and prayer." Vincent adds that this secular "definition may be almost literally transferred to the Christian word. It embraces the confession of the one living and true God, and life corresponding to this knowledge." (Bolding added. Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. 1, Page 3-677)

Eusebeia does not imply an inward, inherent holiness but is more accurately an externalized piety. Wuest adds that eus beia is "a holy reverence or respect for God, piety towards God. The word does not refer to a person's character as such, but to his attitude towards God." (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

C H Spurgeon in his sermon on a "form of godliness" (Read this pithy sermon "The Form of Godliness without the Power) offers several descriptions of true godliness, first asking...

What is that power? God Himself is the power of godliness, The Holy Spirit is the life and force of it (cp Jn 6:63).

Godliness is the power which brings a man to God, and binds him to Him.

Godliness is that which creates repentance towards God, and faith in Him.

Godliness is the result of a great change of heart in reference to God and his character.

Godliness looks towards God, and mourns its distance from Him; godliness hastens to draw nigh, and rests not till it is at home with God.

Godliness makes a man like God. Godliness leads a man to love God, and to serve God; it brings the fear of God before his eyes, and the love of God into his heart.

Godliness leads to consecration, to sanctification, to concentration.

The godly man seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33-note), and expects other things to be added to him.

Godliness makes a man commune with God, and gives him a partnership with God in his glorious designs; and so it prepares him to dwell with God for ever.

Many who have the form of godliness are strangers to this power, and so are in religion worldly, in prayer mechanical, in public one thing, and in private another. True godliness lies in spiritual power, and as they are without this, they are dead while they live. (Excerpt from The Form of Godliness without the Power)

John MacArthur...

Godliness is a right attitude and response toward the true Creator God; a preoccupation from the heart with holy and sacred realities. It is respect for what is due to God, and is thus the highest of all virtues. (MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press or Logos or Wordsearch)

The source of godliness is Christ Himself, Paul writing that "by common confession great is the mystery (hidden, sacred truth that is revealed in the NT) of godliness (eusebeia): He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory." (1Ti 3:16)

John MacArthur comments that the mystery of godliness

refers to the great truth of salvation and righteousness through Christ, which produces godliness (eusebeia) in those who believe. It is also possible to understand the mystery of godliness as a reference to Jesus, Who was the very revelation of true and perfect "godlikeness;" since He was God. Godliness, then, first refers to the incarnation and secondly to those who are saved and become the godly in Christ. (MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press)

GODLINESS IS ULTIMATELY GOD-LIKENESS

Peter in one of the great verses in Scripture states that Christ's "divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness (eusebeia), through the true (full, personal, experiential) knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and excellence." (2Pe 1:3-note) This reassuring verse clearly states that our Lord has made full provision for us to live a life pleasing to Him. This is our potential. But Peter states that it comes through the knowledge of Christ (which implies we must study and meditate on the Scriptures the Bible, pray, meditation...are you growing in the grace and knowledge of Him? cp 2Pe 3:18-note).

Godliness is not "letting go and letting God." There is no such thing as drifting into godliness. In fact the "stream of tendency" is against us! It is vital to remember that growth in godliness calls for strenuous involvement on our part. Thus Peter says

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith (faith is the foundation) supply moral excellence and in your moral excellence, knowledge and in your knowledge, self-control and in your self-control, perseverance and in your perseverance, godliness (eusebeia) and in your godliness (eusebeia),

brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love." (notes 2Pe 1:5; 1:6; 1:7)

Diligence is placed forward in the Greek for emphasis and denotes quick movement or haste as well as earnestness or zeal in performance. Peter is calling for an eager, zealous attitude which is the opposite of sluggishness and self-indulgence. Furthermore, the use of "all" underlines the comprehensiveness - the diligence must be neither halfhearted nor selective. How are you faring in this area beloved?

Paul similarly emphasizes the need to work out our salvation (Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13- note), exhorting Timothy to "have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline (pictures rigorous, self-sacrificing training athletes undergo in the gym) yourself for the purpose of godliness (eusēbeia);". (1Ti 4:7-note) Just as the Greek athlete exercised with a view to winning in the contests, Timothy (and all believers) is exhorted to exercise with a view to excelling in godliness. Spiritual self-discipline is the path to godly living.

Jerry Bridges author of a book I highly recommend (it's not that long) on the The Practice of Godliness (read some of the reviews!) (see also Study Guide) said...

Godliness... is devotion to God which results in a life that is pleasing to him....It is impossible to practice godliness without a constant, consistent and balanced intake of the Word of God in our lives....The truly godly person is not interested in becoming rich. He possesses inner resources which furnish riches far beyond that which earth can offer....The words 'godly' and 'godliness' actually appear only a few times in the New Testament; yet the entire book is a book on godliness....There is no higher compliment that can be paid to a Christian than to call him godly.

Godliness is no optional spiritual luxury for a few quaint Christians of a bygone era or for some group of super-saints of today. It is both the privilege and duty of every Christian to pursue godliness, to train himself to be godly, to study diligently the practice of godliness. We don't need any special talent or equipment. God has given to each one of us "everything we need for life and godliness" (2Pe 1:3-note). The most ordinary Christian has all that he needs, and the most talented Christian must use those same means in the practice of godliness....

Enoch walked with God (Ge 5:21, 22, 23, 24, He 11:5-note); he enjoyed a relationship with God; and he pleased God. We could accurately say he was devoted to God. This is the meaning of godliness. The New Testament word for godliness, in its original meaning, conveys the idea of a personal attitude toward God that results in actions that are pleasing to God. ἡ εὐσεβεία This personal attitude toward God is what we call devotion to God. But it is always devotion in action. It is not just a warm, emotional feeling about God, the kind of feeling we may get while singing some grand old hymn of praise or some modern-day chorus of worship. Neither is devotion to God merely a time of private Bible reading and prayer, a practice we sometimes call "devotions." Although this practice is vitally important to a godly person, we must not think of it as defining devotion for us. (The Practice of Godliness)

Godliness will not come automatically, but requires strenuous effort. Beloved, how are you doing in your growth in godliness? Are you making every effort, every day, to exercise self-discipline? Paul goes on to explain that whatever it takes it's worth it "for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness (eusēbeia) is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (1Ti 4:8-note) Every saint should meditate on the "trustworthy statement" (cf 1Ti 4:9-note) that a "daily investment" in godliness (whatever the cost in self-discipline and self-denial) will yield profits not only in the present but all eternity!

As Jim Elliot said...

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

John Calvin said that...

Godliness separates us from the pollutions of the world, and by true holiness unites us to God.

Paul warned Timothy that

If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound (healthy, wholesome, giving spiritual health) words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness (eusēbeia)." (1Ti

6:3)

Any doctrine that does not encourage, promote and in the end result in godly behavior is not based on Scripture. Conversely, a godly life is a good indicator one is being fed healthy, wholesome doctrine. As Erwin Lutzer put it...

The difference between worldliness and godliness is a renewed mind.

In his second epistle to Timothy Paul warns him about a fake eusebeia, for certain men were

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power and avoid (present imperative = command to make it your practice to avoid) such men as these. (2Ti 3:5-note)

Weymouth says

They will keep up a make-believe of piety and yet exclude its power.

Phillips says

They will maintain a façade of "religion" but their conduct will deny its validity.

Spurgeon put it quite pithily!

Periodical godliness is perpetual hypocrisy!

These men, like the pious, religious Pharisees, have an external appearance suggesting godliness but lacked the "real thing". They may have made a profession that they believe in Christ, but by their ungodly behavior, they show that they do not possess "the mystery of godliness" and thus are living a lie. They have no fruit in their life that evidences the power of God in their lives. They may have been reformed, but never regenerated. They may profess but do not possess Christ. They want to be religious and to have their sins at the same time, a dichotomy genuine godliness will not allow.

Paul warns Timothy of purveyors of unsound (false) doctrine "who suppose that godliness (eusebeia) is a means of gain." (1Ti 6:5) Simply stated these pseudo-saints peddled their phony professions of piety for personal profit. Times haven't changed much have they? Paul goes on to say that "godliness (eusebeia) actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment." (1Ti 6:6)

"Contentment" (autarkeia) actually means an inner sufficiency that keeps one at peace in spite of outward circumstances. Paul using the related word (autarkes) declare

"Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content (autarkes) in whatever circumstances I am." (Php 4:11-note)

This inner satisfaction is a "fruit" of godliness in the heart, not wealth in the hand. Dependence on material things will never bring genuine inner peace. As MacDonald says "to have real godliness and at the same time to be satisfied with one's personal circumstances is more than money can buy." (Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

In Paul's last use of eusebeia in first Timothy, he exhorts his protégé to flee (present tense = continually) from these things (like "love of money"), you man of God and pursue (present tense = continually press on decisively toward) righteousness, godliness (eusebeia), faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. (1Ti 6:11) As alluded to earlier godliness is not automatic but involves life long discipline and effort.

In the last NT use of eusebeia Peter teaches that godliness is the heart and soul of Christian character writing that "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way (heavens passing away, earth burned up), what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" (2Pe 3:11, 12- note)

Godliness is a practical awareness of God in every aspect of life.

Godliness is not talking godly but living godly.

Godliness reflects an attitude centered on living out one's life in God's presence with a desire motivated by love for Him and empowered by His grace to be pleasing to Him in all things.

Godliness refers to having the proper attitude and conduct before God in everything.

J I Packer wrote that...

Godliness, to the Puritans, was essentially a matter of conscience, inasmuch as it consisted in a hearty, disciplined, "considerate" (thoughtful) response to known evangelical truth, and centered upon the getting and keeping of a good conscience. (Packer, J. I.. *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan vision of the Christian life*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books. 1994)

Godliness refers to the true reverence toward God which comes from knowledge. It is a right attitude toward God and His holiness, majesty, and love

ISBE defines...

Godliness, as denoting character and conduct determined by the principle of love or fear of God in the heart, is the summing up of genuine religion. There can be no true religion without it -- only a dead "form" (2Pe 3:5-note;). (Godliness -The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:1915 edition J. Orr, Ed)

J. Knox Chamblin writes that...

Godliness is the reverent awareness of God's sovereignty over every aspect of life, and the attendant determination to honor him in all one's conduct. "Godliness" and "holiness" denote one reality (the terms are joined in 1Ti 2:2; and 2Pe 3:11).

Godliness depends on knowing God's revealed truth. Paul speaks of "the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness" (Titus 1:1), and of "godly sorrow that leads to salvation" (2Co 7:10). Peter declares that God's "divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him" (2Pe 1:3). God imparts knowledge of himself by revealing his Son.

The godly person is committed to obeying God in the world: "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will" (Jn 9:31). The shape of obedience is clarified by the terms to which "godliness" is joined. "But you, man of God, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness" (1Ti 6:11). "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love" (2Pe 1:5-7)"qualities which, in turn, deepen one's "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:8). Christ, moreover, furnishes power for the godly life: "Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" asks Peter (Acts 3:12). Without divine power, godliness becomes an empty form (2Ti 3:5).

Godliness in both respects (knowledge of God and holiness of life) is jeopardized by the propagation of falsehood: "If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain" (1Ti 6:3, 4, 5). Accordingly, "the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Ro 1:18).

Godliness is costly: "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2Ti 3:12). Hope of eternal life enables them to endure. "The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment" (2Pe 2:9; 3:11, 12). "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" (1Ti 4:7, 8). Grace teaches us "to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12, 13). Seeing this life in light of the next encourages "godliness with contentment" (1Ti 6:6, 7). (Godly, Godliness - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of

Biblical Theology - this is an excellent resource I highly recommend) (Hardbound Edition) (Wordsearch Computer Edition) (Logos Computer Edition)

Easton defines godliness as...

the whole of practical piety. It supposes knowledge, veneration, affection, dependence, submission, gratitude, and obedience. (Easton's Bible dictionary)

Barton writes that...

Godliness means correct behavior and genuine Christian faith, first in the heart but also in visible expression according to the standard of God's Word. It takes self-control, continual work, and commitment day by day as we strive to please God despite our sinfulness and weaknesses. But as we can train our bodies for physical feats, we can approach the various aspect of our spiritual life as training in godliness." (Barton, B. B., et al. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus. Life application Bible commentary Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers or Logos or Wordsearch)

Godliness means more than religious profession and godly conduct; it also means the reality and power of a vital union with God.

Godliness refers to behavior that reflects the character of God and presupposes a desire to please God in all the relationships of life.

Godliness embodies reverence toward God, a genuine, heartfelt acknowledgment of His holiness.

John Piper...

Godliness...means a love for the things of God and a walk in the ways of God.

Meisinger...

Godliness is godly living, living according to the will of God. It is the kind of obedience that results from walking in the Spirit (Ro 8:4-note) (Meisinger, George: Chafer Theological Seminary Journal V1)

Godliness is that inner attitude of reverence which seeks to please God in every thought, word or deed.

Godliness desires to be rightly related to both God and men, and brings the sanctifying presence of God into every relationship of one's life.

Godliness is living one's life with a "Coram Deo" mindset, ever as before the face of God.

Godliness is a practical awareness of God in every area of life—a God-consciousness.

The godly man or woman lives above the petty things of life, the passions and pressures that control the lives of others. The godly individual seeks to do the will of God making the kind of decisions that are right and noble, not taking the "easy" path simply to avoid either pain or trial. That's Biblical godliness!

John MacArthur adds that

To be godly is to live reverently, loyally, and obediently toward God. Peter means that the genuine believer ought not to ask God for something more (as if something necessary to sustain his growth, strength, and perseverance was missing) to become godly, because he already has every spiritual resource to manifest, sustain, and perfect godly living

Any "Christian" teaching which claims that religious knowledge emancipates from the obligations of morality is false!

Those gripped by God's truth walk in harmony with the demands of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. They understand that there is an intimate connection between a living, dynamic possession of truth and genuine godliness—a lesson the Cretan church needed to learn and to live out before an island filled with ungodliness.

Why is truth that manifests itself in godliness so important? The renowned nineteenth-century Scottish preacher Alexander Maclaren answers this question writing that

The world takes its notions of God, most of all, from the people who say that they belong to God's family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. They see us; they only hear about Jesus Christ

The foundation for a credible witness by the Cretan saints to the veracity of the gospel was not so much what they said as how they lived.

Charles Stanley writes that

Godly people order their lives around godly counsel. They seek friends with fellow believers, not with the lost. They get enjoyment, encouragement, and refreshment from the Word of God. Godly people will successfully stand the storms of life, are fruitful, and prosper in all they do. Godly people are contented. They are not anxious or fretting. A sweet quietness marks them. The beginning of being a godly person is receiving Jesus Christ as Savior. That's the foundation to build on." (Stanley, C. F. In Touch with God. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

J.C. Ryle, in the introduction to a book of biographical sketches of Christian leaders such as George Whitefield and John Wesley made the following statement --

They taught constantly the inseparable connection between true faith and personal holiness. They never allowed for a moment that any church membership or religious profession was the proof of a man's being a true Christian if he lived an ungodly life. A true Christian, they maintained, must always be known by his fruits; and those fruits must be plainly manifest and unmistakable in all relations of life. "No fruits, no grace," was the unvarying tenor of their preaching." (Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century. page 28. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth.) (Bolding added)

John MacArthur writes that

There is no effective spiritual ministry apart from personal godliness, since ministry is the overflow of a godly life." He quotes "J. Oswald Sanders (who) wrote, "Spiritual ends can be achieved only by spiritual men who employ spiritual methods;" (MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press)

R. C. Sproul in Pleasing God, writing on the association of sound doctrine and godly living, says that

We must reject a false dichotomy between doctrine and life. We can have sound doctrine without a sanctified life. But it is extremely difficult to progress in sanctification without sound doctrine. Sound doctrine is not a sufficient condition to produce a sound life. It does not yield sanctification automatically. Sound doctrine is a necessary condition for sanctification. It is a vital prerequisite. It is like oxygen and fire. The mere presence of oxygen does not guarantee a fire, but you can't have a fire without it." (Pleasing God. Tyndale House, 1988) (Bolding added)

Donald Whitney writes that

Godly people are disciplined people. It has always been so. Call to mind...heroes of church history...they were all disciplined people. In my own pastoral and personal Christian experience, I can't say that I've ever known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline. Godliness comes through discipline." (Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life. NavPress, 1991)

Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised (3SAMI) long ages ago, (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: ep' elpidi zoes aioniou, en epeggeilato (3SAMI) o apseudes theos pro chronon aionion, Barclay: and whose whole work is founded on the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. (Westminster Press)

KJV: In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Phillips: and in the hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the beginning of time (Phillips: Touchstone)

Wuest: upon the basis of an expectation of life eternal which God who cannot lie promised before eternal times (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: upon hope of life age-during, which God, who doth not lie, did promise before times of ages,

IN THE HOPE: ep elpidi: (Titus 2:7,13 3:7 Jn 5:39 6:68 Ro 2:7 5:2,4 Col 1:27 1Th 5:8 2Ti 1:1 2Ti 2:10 1Pe 1:3,4 1Jn 2:25 3:2,3 Jude 1:21)

In (epi) - The Greek preposition epi which means "upon" or in this context "based upon". The preposition suggests that such hope is the basis on which the superstructure of genuine godliness is built, our future hope being a motivating and even "energizing" truth that effects the daily choices we make. Our hope reminds us that we are simply passing through this world and that it is not our home. Or epi could mean "with a view to" Paul's thought then being that all of his ministry is "with a view to" the absolute certainty (hope) of eternal life.