

Defining “Godliness”: *Eusebeia*: a “Manner of Life as God would Have It”; Developed through the Unique Spiritual Life & Delegated Power of the Spirit

In the New Testament. In the Pastorals εὐσέβεια denotes a particular manner of life. ... the relation of man to self, other men, and God. 1 Timothy 2:2 has conduct in view: “that ... we might lead a pattern of life in all godliness [our duty to God] and reverence [integrity].” The way of life controlled by εὐσέβεια separates the doctrine of false teachers from “sound” doctrine. This knowledge is called “sound” in contrast with the “sick” teaching of opponents (1 Timothy 6:3 [“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, (v. 4) he is conceited and understands nothing ...”). These have something which looks like εὐσέβεια, but they deny its power, i.e., its influence in shaping life (2 Timothy 3:5 [“... holding to a form of godliness (μόρφωσις εὐσεβείας, [*morphōsis eusebeias*]), although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.”]). (pp. 181-82)

εὐσέβεια means “piety,” i.e., conduct in relation to God. The piety of the Pastorals is different from that of Judaism and the Greek world. Jewish piety is controlled by the Law. There is no trace of a legalistic bondage of εὐσέβεια in the Pastorals. It is not an ideal but a manner of life which can supply the norm for the doctrine. Without definition it is clear what the “sound” doctrine is that corresponds to piety. In the common use of εὐσέβεια in the Pastorals distinction is made from the ecstatic Gnosticising movement in the churches. This movement proclaimed asceticism and regarded creation as evil or bad. In this connection it came to despise all secular orders and standards, to reject authority, to emancipate women and to regard the family with contempt. The author of the Pastorals could not allow that this whole approach of his adversaries was εὐσέβεια, a true honouring of God, since God was for him the Creator and Redeemer of all men. But he extends the concept to cover all man’s conduct, and he uses it to denote respect for the divinely created orders which his opponents despise. In the Pastorals, then, εὐσέβεια denotes a manner of life. It is the honouring of God the Creator and Redeemer of all men.

The author always has in view the effect of the walk of Christians on those who are without. While his adversaries, or at least most of them, are not concerned about their influence on non-Christians, the author believes that a way of life ἐν εὐσεβείᾳ can elicit a verdict from those who are without by confronting them with piety, with the honouring and serving of God.¹ (p. 183)

24. From this analysis we draw the conclusion that *eusebeia* refers to a lifestyle, a “manner of life,” but one that is unique to the Church Age believer and is dedicated to God out of a mental attitude of reverence, duty, and reciprocity.
25. To produce such a lifestyle one must accumulate the knowledge of what constitutes an authentic manner of life dedicated to God.

¹ Werner Foerster, “εὐσέβεια,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Friedrich, ed., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. and ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 7:177, 181-83.

26. The only way that an authentic lifestyle can be developed is from the production of maximum doctrine in the soul of the believer.
27. We have previously characterized this lifestyle as wheel-tracks of righteousness, behavior patterns and character traits that are so facilitated in the soul that the believer's lifestyle represents his true self. How he thinks is who he is and what he thinks is expressed by his manner of life.
28. Other ways to define *eusebeia* are "a manner of life as God would have it" or "a lifestyle dedicated to God."
29. In the Church Age, the believer has his very own spiritual life which allows him to live his life in the light of eternity.
30. The soul of the Church Age believer functions in the perfect environment provided by the filling of the Holy Spirit and accompanied by the delegated power of divine omnipotence.
31. The Church Age believer has available the filling of the Holy Spirit, a perfect environment for learning that is free of any category of sin; he benefits from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit who will "teach him all things" if he has a willingness to learn; benefits from delegated omnipotence to execute the plan of God once learned.
32. Through spiritual growth under this system the believer is able to develop and execute a "manner of life as God would have it": *eusebeia*.
33. The spiritual life available to the Church Age believer is unique in human history having never been available in any other dispensation.
34. Paul refers to it in 1 Timothy 3:16 as the "mystery of a manner of life as God would have it." It is this mystery that makes the Church Age believer unique and if developed makes him the most powerful combatant in the Invisible War.
35. Thus this mystery must be examined so that individual believers can learn how to function in a local church where development of the "manner of life as God would have it" occurs.