

“Having a Form of Godliness”

By Tony Melton

Some folks say that if one believes that miracles have ceased, he or she is a person “having a form of godliness, but denying its power.” They quote from 2 Timothy 3:5.

In 2 Timothy chapter 3, the apostle Paul gave a list of immoral characteristics of people living in the last days. In these passages, the subject has nothing to do with miracles in the first century or so-called modern-day miracles. The context has reference to the decline of man’s moral standards. Paul says, “For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:2-4). Then, in the next verse after giving this list of immoral characteristics, he says, “Having a form of godliness, but denying its power.”

This list has reference to man’s ungodly moral character, not to miracles or tongue speaking. Paul was saying that the power of the Christian life is “godliness.” David Libscomb said, “Anyone denies the power of godliness when he professes to honor God, but refuses to obey his commandments.”

So whether you believe in modern-day miracles or not, the “power” of 2 Timothy 3:5 has nothing to do with miraculous power. The “power” which many are denying and denouncing is the power of a holy and godly life—a godly character that has the strength to influence people to come to Christ.