

Bible Study

1 Timothy 6:3-19

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.

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time – God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Instructions for Leader

Materials needed: newsprint and marker, colored pencils, crayons or markers.

Procedure:

1. Pass out copies of the scripture passage (1 Timothy 6:3-19) to all participants. Explain that the passage speaks (among other things) about financial issues. Ask participants to underline each word or phrase that has some reference to money or any financial matter as the passage is read aloud. Ask several participants read aloud one paragraph each. At the end of the reading, ask people to name some of the words or phrases they have circled.
2. Explain that although a lot of financial terms are used in the passage, the words have different meanings in different places. Point out the last paragraph as an example where the word “rich” has three different meanings. Explain that Paul is using familiar words to point out a contrast between two different ways of looking at money. We can call these two different ways: “false doctrines” and “sound instruction” (see the first sentence of the passage). Write those two phrases at the top of two different pieces of newsprint or two different columns on a chalkboard. Ask the participants to read through the passage again silently. As they do so they should underline or circle, using one color, words or phrases that apply to the “false doctrines” way of looking at money and using a different color, words or phrases that illustrate “sound instruction.”
3. When participants have finished the assignment, ask people to name aloud some of the words they have associated with each of the two categories. Write their suggestions in the proper columns. The lists may look something like this:

False Doctrines

Conceited
Understands nothing
Envy
Strife
Temptation
Robbed of the truth
Foolish and harmful desires

Sound Instruction

godly teaching
contentment
righteousness
faith
gentleness
honor
eternal life

Ask the participants to reflect on the two lists. Indicate that Paul is painting a picture of two different ways of thinking about the resources God provides. Ask: What is the difference?

4. Conclude by reflecting that faithful followers of Christ attempt to distinguish between “false doctrines” and “sound instruction” concerning money in both their individual and their congregational lives.