

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will do Bible study together about one important aspect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. We will use a very easy Bible study method called the five steps method. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. The fourth series of 5 Bible studies is about living in the world. We will be studying the following 5 Bible topics: “Money in the world”, “Truthfulness in the world”, “Temptations in the world”, “Spiritual warfare in the world” and “Suffering in the world”. Today’s Bible study is: A DISCIPLE IS WISE IN HANDLING MONEY IN THE WORLD.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read 1 Timothy 6:3-12,17-19. Let us take turns to read one verse each.

1 Timothy 6:3-12,17-19. “If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, (T) 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 (S) 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. (T) But godliness with contentment is great gain. (S) For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. (T) But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. (S) 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. (T) 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 kinds of grief. (S) But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. (T) 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. ... (S) Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant not 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. (T) Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. (S) In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in this Bible passage. “Which truth in this passage is important for you?” or “Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?” Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(S) An important truth for me is in 1 Timothy 6:6, which says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” Some time ago I thought that the only great gain is making money. But now I see that godliness and contentment is a far greater gain than money and wealth. I want to discover more how to be content and live a godly life.

(T) An important truth for me is in 1 Timothy 6:18-19, which say that I should be rich, not in money, but in good deeds. I should invest my money for the future age, that is, for heaven. I want to learn how to make the best financial investments in the kingdom of God, so that I may truly lay up a treasure in heaven, where money cannot devaluate or be stolen.

(S) **STEP 3. QUESTION**

Let us try to understand all the truths in this passage and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. “Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask?” Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question. How do false teachers consider godliness as a means of financial gain?

(T) At that time, there were false teachers who indulged in a strange mixture of truth from the Bible with their own fancy imagination. Their hair-splitting disputes were concerned with speculations about the Jewish law and fictitious Jewish genealogical stories. They would take a name from any of the lists of pedigrees in Genesis or Chronicles and expand it into a nice story. This was part of the regular synagogue teaching and was later recorded in the Jewish Scriptures, called the Haggadah and Talmud. These false teachers made a big financial business out of their false teachings. They first made a show of their religion so that everyone became aware of them. Then they conducted religious courses and charged exorbitant fees for their instructions. In this way, they misused their so-called “godliness” as a means to get rich. In our day, such false teachers are still very active. Everywhere in the world they give religious courses and expect people to pay high fees in return. Other false religious groups in the world buy the allegiance of new people with money, with expensive gifts and with

privileged positions in the community. These false teachers are liars and Revelation 21:8 says that all liars will be thrown in the fiery lake of burning sulphur!

2nd Question. Why is the love of money called “a root of all kinds of evil”?

(S) It is not money, but *the love of money* that causes a problem in life. The love of money is not the *only* root of all kinds of evil, because “bitterness” or an unforgiving spirit likewise causes many kinds of evil. In the Bible we read how the love of money has caused much evil. In Mark 10:21-22, a rich young man turned away from following Jesus Christ, because he was selfish and he loved his riches more than he loved Jesus. In Luke 16, a rich man was selfish and neglected to be kind to a poor man, called Lazarus. The rich man died and went to hell. In Luke 22, Judas agreed to betray Jesus for money. He later committed suicide. In Acts 5, two Christians called Ananias and Sapphira, told lies about their money and fell down dead. In James 5, the rich people hoarded wealth for themselves, lived luxurious and self-indulgent lives, while they neglected to pay the wages of their employees and even murdered innocent people in order to get rich. James warns that in the end of their lives, such people will be slaughtered in hell! The love of money has caused people to marry somebody for his or her money and as a consequence they fell into many marriage problems. The love of money has caused businessmen to cheat, bribe and be involved in corruption. The love of money has caused politicians to tell lies, to commit financial scandals and even to exploit their own country in order to get rich. The love of money has caused many people to steal, rob and murder. Surely, the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil!

3rd Question. What kind of influence can money have on your life?

(T) In Ecclesiastes 5:10-17 we read, “Whoever loves money never has money enough, whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. ... Those who consume his goods, increase. ... The abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.” Money can never satisfy you and can never give you peace in life. In Luke 12:13-21 we read about a rich man who produced a good crop. He decided to build large barns to store his crops and then to settle down. He said to himself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” But God said to him, “You fool! This very night you will die. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God. Money and wealth can cause you to miss the highest priority in life and that is to love and serve God. In Mark 4:18-19 we read about the sower who sowed some of his seed among the thorns. This picture represents people who hear the word of God, but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Money and wealth can choke the word of God out of your life, so that the word of God will have no influence on your life at all. In Matthew 6:24 we read, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” Money and wealth can cause you to become an idolater and serve the money-god. In summary, the love of money and wealth can have a bad influence on a Christian. It can destroy his satisfaction and priorities in life and it can cause him to turn away from God’s Word and from serving God. Later we will see how Christians can use money to have good influence.

4th Question. What is “corruption”?

(S) “Corruption” is acquiring money and wealth in a wicked way and using money to do wickedness. For example, Leviticus 19:11-13 says that “stealing and robbing” is corruption. Psalm 37:21 says that “not returning money you have borrowed” is corruption. James 5:4 says that “withholding the wages of your employees” is corruption. Deuteronomy 25:13-15 says that dishonesty and cheating is corruption. Proverbs 11:2 and 16:8 say that “ill-gotten treasures” or “gain with injustice” is corruption. Examples of ill-gotten gains are making money through the sale of lottery tickets or betting. Proverbs 17:8,23 say that “giving bribes” and “receiving bribes” are corruption. Christians must know that bribery in all its forms is corruption. “Tea money” or “large relational gifts that accompany business deals” are corruption. Paying money in order to settle a case in a law court in your favour or to remove an undesirable opponent is corruption. Proverbs 28:8 says that demanding “exorbitant interest” on loans is corruption. All “loan-sharks” are people who make money through corruption. Ecclesiastes 7:7 says that “extortion” is corruption. All people who demand “protection money” are corrupt. These clear teachings in the Bible say that God hates all kinds of dishonesty and corruption. Making money through the sale of drugs and laundering such money is corruption. Selling fake receipts is corruption. Printing false money and credit cards is corruption. The modern world is full of corruption!

5th Question. What is bribery?

What will happen to people who give and receive bribes and who are corrupt?

(T) Bribery means that you give money or gifts in order to buy a favour. The Bible warns every person who gives or receives bribes that he or she will become morally corrupt and unjust. But bribery has very serious

consequences. By giving or receiving bribes, people support criminals and increase the suffering of innocent people. Bribery will bring trouble to his own family. Bribery will cause ruin to his country, his city and his church. However, the worst consequences of bribery are that God will curse the person that gives or receives bribes (Deuteronomy 27:25), that God will destroy his family and his possessions as a punishment (Job 15:34) and finally that God will throw him in the fire of hell, because he had caused others to sin (Matthew 18:7-9).

6th Question. Is it wrong for a Christian to be rich?

(S) 1 Timothy 6:17-19 clearly teaches that it is not wrong to be rich. It is wrong to desire to be rich and chase after money. It is wrong to get rich by corruption. But if a person is rich, because God has entrusted many things to him, then it is not wrong. God entrusts all these riches to him, because God wants him to serve other people with his riches. 1 Timothy 6:17 says that the rich Christian may not be snobbish or smug. He may not be proud and arrogant or depend on his wealth instead of on God. A rich Christian should be humble and dependent on God. He may enjoy what God has given to him. But in 1 Timothy 6:18 God commands him to be rich in doing good deeds. A rich Christian must be generous and willing to share. In 1 Timothy 6:19 God says that a rich Christian must lay up treasures for themselves with respect to the coming age, that is, with respect to what is going to happen after they die. This explains that his good deeds and sharing must not simply be towards various philanthropic goals, but must be towards furthering God's kingdom on earth. God has given rich Christians a very special task in his kingdom. They must invest their money and wealth in the wisest possible way in the kingdom of God. For example, they could share their wealth with Christians who have needs. This happened in the first church at Jerusalem. Or they could support missionaries and missionary work everywhere in the world. This happens in many places today.

7th Question. What should be the life-style of all Christians?

(T) In Daniel 6:3-4 we read, "Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent." Corruption was not only present in the ancient Medo-Persian Empire. Corruption is still widespread in every country today, especially among businessmen and rulers of governments. These corrupters are bringing untold suffering to many people, while they themselves become rich. On the other hand, many of them are caught and fall into disgrace. Daniel lived in such a world and *he dared to be different!* Daniel distinguished himself as a government official by being absolutely free from corruption. This brought great difficulties to himself personally as well as to his job and position in the government. However, in spite of everything he suffered, in the end, God honoured Daniel! Therefore, be like Daniel! Distinguish yourself as a Christian businessman, as a Christian government official, as a Christian in any task in this world! Distinguish yourself as being incorruptible, absolute trustworthy and never negligent of your task! Dare to be different than all the corrupters of this world!

(S) **STEP 4. APPLY**

After brainstorming with one another and recording a list of *possible applications*, consider which possible application does God want you to turn into a *personal application*.

I want to be a good steward of all the possessions that God has entrusted into my care. I want to especially be content with my food, clothes and shelter. And then I want to invest my extra money into God's kingdom. I want to help support a poor Christian family in my neighbourhood and also help support people who preach the gospel and build up the Church.

(T) I want to distinguish myself as a Christian in my society. I want to be incorruptible with regard to money and never negligent in the doing of my duties. I will refuse to give bribes and to receive bribes under all circumstances. I will earn my money only in an absolute honest way. I want to be rich in doing good deeds and willing to share with needy people. I want to be different than the evil people of this world and bring glory to God in the way I live.

(S) **STEP 5. PRAY**

Don't forget to pray as a response to God.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. How do you live in the world with your money? Do you participate in corruption or do you distinguish yourself as being incorruptible?

Second. Prepare next week's Bible study. The Bible study topic is "Justice in the world". And the Bible passage is Leviticus 19:11-18,35-36. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www. Etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".