**1 Timothy 6 – Pursuing Godly Gain Instead of Worldly Wealth**

**Conversation Starter:** Do you consider yourself to be content? What are your material necessities (the most basic things you need to be content)?

May be helpful to set a number (e.g. What are the 3 most essential material things needed for contentment?)

**Read 1 Timothy 6:3-21**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. In verses 4-5, what does Paul describe as the source of false teachings? What type of issues are these?

* Conceit, lack of understanding, unhealthy interests in controversies and verbal disputes.
* Envy, dissension, slanders, evil suspicions, constant bickering, corrupted thinking, and deprivation of the truth.
* These are heart issues. Paul is confirming that what comes out of the mouth betrays the heart and those who teach false things that cause dissention and division in the church have deeper heart problems that need to be addressed.

1. a. Why does Paul shift to the topics of contentment and the love of money (vv. 6-10)?

* vv. 6-10 are set in opposition to vv. 4-5. The source of many of these heart issues is a desiring of more than we need. As Christians, our desires should be for godliness and contentment. And, materially, we should find contentment in food and shelter, leaving only godliness to be consistently sought after. Paul suggests that a Christian cannot chase both material things and godliness (echoing what Jesus taught in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13).
* We can assume that many of those causing problems in this church were after material gain. Even if not intentionally, desiring more material things created heart issues that distracted them from pursuits of godliness and opened them up to all the things described in vv. 4-5.
* Very few people actually love dollar bills (although some do), but the love being described here is for the accumulation of material and worldly wealth and possessions that money buys. This often manifests as incessant money saving as well as reckless spending.

b. What are Paul’s basic requirements for contentment? How do these differ from your own? According to this passage, do you struggle with the “love of money”? If so, how would you overcome it?

* food and shelter

(see Philippians 4:11-13) New International Version 1984

**11**I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. **12**I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. **13**I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

* Godliness really can bring almost unbelievable contentment; but before it can, we must be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* (Romans 12:2)
* Open discussion/sharing

1. a. What does Paul encourage Timothy (and us today) to pursue instead of material wealth? How would an *eternal* perspective be helpful here?

* Righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness (spiritual gain)

### Colossians 3:1 New International Version 1984 3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

b. What are ways we typically pursue material or worldly wealth? How can we instead pursue what Paul commands?

* The generic answer is to give money away or tithe. This is true, we can approach material possessions more appropriately if we give money away rather than hording it or spending it on ourselves. And tithing is a command so that’s always a step in the right direction. But push your group to think more creatively. We often pursue material wealth by wielding all talents and resources God has given us toward worldly success. In school, in our extra-curricular activities, in how we plan for the future, we often think more about worldly success rather than spiritual gain. How can we think differently with respect to those things, pursuing righteousness and an eternal reward, rather than wealth in this passing world?

1. After dealing with those who long for money, Paul addresses those who’ve already acquired it. What are his instructions to them? What can we learn from what Paul is saying?

* Paul tells the rich to stay away from arrogance and finding one’s security in wealth as opposed to God. Riches are uncertain (here today and gone tomorrow), but God is constantly caring for us.

### Proverbs 27:1

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**27**Do not boast about tomorrow,  
    for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

### James 4:13- 17 (Boasting About Tomorrow)

**13**Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” **14**Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. **15**Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” **16**As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. **17**Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.

* He also reminds us that all we have is from God and that God gives us things to enjoy. Try to address this point because many people take an inappropriately legalistic attitude toward money and feel guilty when enjoying their wealth in any way, feeling that if they are not doing something super “holy” with their money, God isn’t happy. This is legalism, rooted in pride and a misunderstanding of the Gospel. Instead, God wants us to *enjoy* what he has given us (this, of course, is VERY different from indulging in or hording money, which the Bible condemns).
* Paul encourages the rich to use their resources to be “rich with good deeds” and to share with others, being generous givers. This is how we store up eternal riches and how we live what is truly life (life in Jesus Christ) as opposed to what the world says is life (financial security).

1. How can we live out what we’ve learned in 1 Timothy 6 this week? In what ways has 1 Timothy as a whole encouraged you to live out your faith over the past few weeks?

* Encourage people to share what has challenged them the most and state specific adjustments they’ll make. Allow maximum amount of time for sharing and praying together as we close the study of this book.