

SOUND WISDOM IN THE CHURCH

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have prayed and read the Bible for this lesson to learn what the Holy Spirit wants you to teach your students. Then let Him guide you in using these notes. When you follow this procedure you will be a better teacher of your students.

Lesson Aim: Learn to abide in Christ and let His words abide in you so you can ask Him for wisdom.

Suggestion: The teacher lesson will call attention to some important truths to teach. After the lesson, give your class next week's Student Lesson so they can share their answers in class next week.

Introduction: Paul gave Timothy sound wisdom to handle the challenges he would encounter in the churches wherever the Lord would send him, especially in Ephesus where he was presently serving the Lord. Where did Paul get this wisdom? Where would Timothy find this wisdom after Paul left him? Where can we find this wisdom? Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24). When we abide in Christ and His words abide in us, we can ask for wisdom and He will give it to us. "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

How does Paul's instruction to Timothy regarding slaves relate to believers today? 6:1-2

Believers that work for an employer should have the same attitude as Christian slaves were to have in Paul's day. They are to honor and respect their unsaved employer. They should be a financial benefit to him so that God's name and doctrine are not blasphemed by him. If they have a Christian employer, they should serve him with greater diligence because they share a common faith. The benefit from his labors will go to a brother in Christ.

How should believers see godliness as a means of personal gain? 6:5-8

False teachers looked at godliness as a means of getting rich. They say God blesses those who are godly with material gain and godly people will never be poor. Even the disciples believed the rich young ruler was close to God because of his wealth. When Jesus said, "A rich man shall hardly enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 19:23), the disciples were shocked. They thought that wealth was evidence of God's blessing for godliness and said, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus told them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt 19:25-26). So Jesus taught His disciples that wealth is not a sign of godliness, nor is poverty a sign of ungodliness. Many godly people have remained very poor all their lives. This is especially true of believers who live in lands where they are hated and are forced to live in poverty (Heb 11:37-39). So how is godliness connected with personal gain? Godliness with contentment is great gain (6:6). "Contentment" is being thankful with God's provisions of food, clothing and a place to live. "Gain" usually is spiritual gain, "love, joy, peace . . ." that money cannot buy.

How can riches be dangerous to a believer's spiritual life? 6:9-10

When a believer has a strong desire to be wealthy, covets riches, he or she has made money his or her master. Jesus said no one can serve two masters. That one will hate the one and love the other or else hold to one and despise the other. He or she cannot serve God and money (Mt 6:24). Paul told Timothy that a person that wants to be rich will fall into temptation and a snare. That person will be tempted to lie or cheat or hurt someone to get more money. He or she may be snared like an animal in a trap that cannot break his or her desire for money. It will destroy their love for God and they will come before Him empty handed. The love for money is the root of every kind of evil. It will cause a believer to err from the faith, be pierced with many sorrows. J. C. Ryle said the following in *Practical Religion*, p. 215:

"Money, in truth, is one of the most unsatisfying of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt, but it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away. There is trouble in the getting of it. There is anxiety in the keeping of it. There are temptations in the use of it. There is guilt in the abuse of it. There is sorrow in the losing of it. There is perplexity in the disposing of it. Two-thirds of all the strifes, quarrels, and lawsuits in the world arise from one simple cause -- *money*."