

STUDY 8

CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONTENTMENT

OBJECTIVES

1. To describe how a believer's work contributes to the Christian witness of their local church.
2. To give the reasons why it is the Scriptures that informs the believer's moral code.
3. To be able to develop a God-honouring financial stewardship plan.
4. To demonstrate how your faithfulness to God is prioritised in the light of eternity.



BACKGROUND

In Paul's previous epistle to the Ephesians, he told Christian slave owners to treat their slaves fairly (Eph. 6:9). In writing to the Ephesians through Timothy this time, Paul apparently did not need to repeat this instruction to slave owners. But it appears that Christian slaves were taking liberties with their Christian masters which Paul needed to address as a matter of their Christian witness to their pagan community.

264. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:07:30 pm
1Tim. 6:1 ¶ Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

265. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:12:12 pm
1Cor. 7:21 Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)

266. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:12:38 pm
Philem. 10 I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.
Philem. 11 (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.)
Philem. 12 I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.
Philem. 13 I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel,
Philem. 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.
Philem. 15 For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever,
Philem. 16 no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
Philem. 17 ¶ So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.
Philem. 18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.
Philem. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.
Philem. 20 Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.
Philem. 21 ¶ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Dear Timothy, Small Group Bible Studies

Objective 1 - To describe how a believer's work contributes to the Christian witness of their local church.

264 1. Some people have misunderstood Paul's exhortation to slaves in **First Timothy 6:1** as an endorsement of slavery. But how do these other statements by Paul show that he did not endorse slavery?

265 **1Cor. 7:21** _____

266 **Phm. 10-21** _____

I have met several Christian businessmen who have said to me that they are now reluctant to employ Christians after finding that these employees had such a poor work-ethic. They would turn up for work late, take longer breaks than they were entitled to, and fail to fulfil their employment description.

267 2. How should Paul's words in **First Timothy 6:2** inform a Christian employee especially if their employer is also a Christian?

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3. What impact does a professing Christian employee, who does not fulfil their employment duties, have on the witness of their church they represent? Discuss.

Daniel was a part of the first wave of exiles to be sent to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. In many respects he is a model employee.

269 4. How did Daniel gain the respect of his captors which eventually led to the Emperor being converted? (Note **Dan. 5:11-12; 6:2-3**).

267. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:08:07 pm
1Tim. 6:2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.
¶ Teach and urge these things.

268. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:15:39 pm

A Christian employee has a greater responsibility to fulfil their work duties if their employer is a believer.

269. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:27:03 pm

Dan. 5:11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers,

Dan. 5:12 because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.”

270. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:27:25 pm

Dan. 6:2 and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.

Dan. 6:3 Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

271. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:36:07 pm
1Tim. 1:3 ¶ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine,

272. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:43:10 pm
1Tim. 6:3 If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness,

273. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:43:37 pm
The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the teaching, presumably from the Lord's apostles, that accords with godliness — that is, all the Scriptures (since it was the Lord who inspired all of them).

274. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:52:46 pm
godliness

275. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:51:33 pm
1Tim. 6:5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

276. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:51:47 pm
1Tim. 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain,

277. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:52:07 pm
1Tim. 6:11 ¶ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

278. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 8:18:01 pm
1Tim. 6:4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions,
1Tim. 6:5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

279. Dr. Andrew Corbett
12 June 2021 at 7:59:25 pm
2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
2Tim. 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Objective 2 - To give the reasons why it is the Scriptures that informs the believer's moral code.

Paul opened his epistle to Timothy by telling him that one of the pressing orders of business for his lieutenant was to correct false teaching that was not in accord with "sound doctrine" ('doctrine' is another word for 'teaching') (1Tim. 1:3). Paul now refers to this problem again as he closes his epistle.

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5. Note **First Timothy 6:3**. What are the two sources of "sound teaching" for the believer?

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It seems that the false teachers Paul had in mind who were infiltrating the church at Ephesus were twisting the Scriptures which led to them promoting ungodly behaviour. Notice how frequently Paul counters this in his closing chapter of his First Epistle to Timothy by referring to **g_____s (1Tim. 6:5, 6, 11)**. Perhaps these false teachers were suggesting things like "We should not worship the *Holy Bible*. Instead we should worship the *Holy Spirit* and be led by Him instead!" Paul's comments about them in **First Timothy 6:4-5** seem to suggest that these false teachers were attempting to undermine the believers' confidence in the Word of God.

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6. How would **Second Timothy 3:16-17** counter this idea?

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One young caller to a Christian podcast recently used this line of reasoning - "We should not follow the Holy Bible because following the Holy Spirit is more reliable!" - to justify Christians having pre-marital sex. He reasoned that since the Holy Spirit leads us into joy and that pre-marital sex brought him joy, it must be the leading of the Holy Spirit. It was pointed out to him that the Holy Spirit who inspired the *Holy Bible* called pre-marital sex "fornication" (Mk. 7:21, NKJV) and "sexual immorality" (Mtt. 15:19; Acts 15:20; Rom. 13:13; 1Cor. 5:11; 6:13; 10:8; 2Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; 1Thess. 4:3).

281

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280. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 7:59:30 pm
All of Scripture is “God-breathed” - that is, inspired by God. Since the Holy Spirit is God, He was the One who inspired the Bible!

281. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:08:36 pm
Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

282. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:14:30 pm
Matt. 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

283. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:14:13 pm
Acts 15:20 but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.

284. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:13:59 pm
Rom. 13:13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

285. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:13:43 pm
1Cor. 5:11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

286. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:13:28 pm
1Cor. 6:13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

287. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:13:11 pm
1Cor. 10:8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

288. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:12:55 pm
2Cor. 12:21 I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

289. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:12:23 pm

Gal. 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

290. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:12:08 pm

1Th. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

291. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:43:12 pm
1Tim. 6:5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

292. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:45:08 pm
1Tim. 6:17 ¶ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

293. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:45:17 pm
Do not let your wealth be a cause for arrogance. Do not make wealth your goal. Instead, make serving God your goal.

294. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:48:25 pm
1Tim. 6:18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

295. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:48:40 pm
1Tim. 6:19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

296. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 8:49:01 pm
Continue to do good with your wealth; be generous, share. And by so doing you will be rewarded in eternity!

297. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 9:01:27 pm
1Tim. 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.
1Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

298. Dr. Andrew Corbett

12 June 2021 at 9:00:21 pm
1Tim. 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain,
1Tim. 6:7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.
1Tim. 6:8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

Objective 3 - To be able to develop a God-honouring financial stewardship plan.

It seems that these false teachers viewed Christians as soft financial targets. That is, some of the Ephesian believers were so soft-hearted toward the many itinerant Christian teachers who came to Ephesus that they were always ready to support them financially. It seems that these false teachers were prepared to claim to be “Christian” in order to take advantage of this Christian generosity. Paul says of them that they imagined “that godliness [was] a means of gain” (1Tim 6:5).

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7. What word of caution does Paul have for the wealthy in **First Timothy 6:17**?

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8. Despite the risks of being taken advantage of by false teachers, what does Paul encourage the wealthy to do with their wealth in **First Timothy 6:18** and why vs. 19?

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The pursuit of wealth can be a trap for a believer. It can rob them of their desire to serve God and take their focus off Christ and His mission (note **1Tim. 6:9-10**). On the other hand, not being responsible financially can lead to being unable to provide either for your family or even for yourself in retirement. John Wesley often used to counsel believers to “*Earn as much as you can. Save as much as you can. Give as much as you can!*”

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9. Today, one of the biggest financial dangers that people face is *attractive debt*. This makes the wisdom of *delayed gratification* seem to belong to ‘days gone by’. If you met someone who was about to get deep into attractive debt, how might **First Timothy 6:6-8** give them pause for thought?

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299. Dr. Andrew Corbett

13 June 2021 at 7:05:00 am
Matt. 25:33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.
Matt. 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
Matt. 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
Matt. 25:36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'
Matt. 25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?
Matt. 25:38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?
Matt. 25:39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'
Matt. 25:40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

300. Dr. Andrew Corbett

13 June 2021 at 7:05:10 am
Taking care of the less fortunate, visiting those in prison, are activities that are highly commended by the Lord.

301. Dr. Andrew Corbett

13 June 2021 at 7:19:14 am
1Tim. 6:11 ¶ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
1Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

302. Dr. Andrew Corbett

13 June 2021 at 7:31:31 am
1Tim. 6:13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,
1Tim. 6:14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
1Tim. 6:15 which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
1Tim. 6:16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in

Objective 4 - To demonstrate how your faithfulness to God is prioritised in the light of eternity.

There are so many things that we can occupy our time with that may not be the best use of our time in the light of eternity. On the other hand, there are so many things that we could do that *seem* to be a waste of our time but are of great value in the light of eternity.

- 299 10. Read **Matthew 25:33-40** and note the activities that might *seem* like a waste of time to some, but are highly commended by the Lord-

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- 301 11. What activities does Paul commend to Timothy to devote his time to? (**1Tim 6:11-12**)

- 12. Does 'living in the light of eternity' mean that we should regard rest, recreation, hobbies, and sport, as poor uses of our time? Discuss.

302 ... Paul "charges" Timothy to fulfil his ministry and calling as he closes his epistle to him (**1Tim. 6:13-16**). We may never have an apostle spell out for us our "charge" but we can still be confident of God's will for our lives as also given to Timothy in **First Timothy 6:11-12**.

- 305 ... 13. Based on **Romans 12:1-3**, **First Timothy 6:11-12**, **Matthew 25:33-40**, what does living for Christ in the light of eternity look like for *you*?

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unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

303. Dr. Andrew Corbett

13 June 2021 at 7:31:50 am
1Tim. 6:13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,
1Tim. 6:14 to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
1Tim. 6:15 which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
1Tim. 6:16 who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

304. Dr. Andrew Corbett

13 June 2021 at 7:48:59 am
1Tim. 6:11 ¶ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
1Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

305. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 June 2021 at 7:21:24 pm
Rom. 12:1 ¶ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
Rom. 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
Rom. 12:3 ¶ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

306. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 June 2021 at 7:22:22 pm
1Tim. 6:11 ¶ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.
1Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were

called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

307. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 June 2021 at 7:23:40 pm

Matt. 25:33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Matt. 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matt. 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

Matt. 25:36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

Matt. 25:37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

Matt. 25:38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

Matt. 25:39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

Matt. 25:40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

308. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 June 2021 at 7:24:08 pm

Hopefully, it looks like caring for the poor and unfortunate in Jesus' Name.

APPLICATION

14. If you were the work colleague of another Christian who often arrived late for work and you heard the other staff complaining about his or her work performance, would you say anything to them as a fellow Christian? If so, what would you say?

15. You meet a new member at your club and discover that they are a believer. After chatting for a while they invite you to one of their church's Bible Studies in another church member's home. You agree to attend it that night and discover that the host and hostess are leaders in that church. But a couple of things trouble you that night. Firstly, it seems that although the Bible study is in the home of the of these leaders, they are not married. Secondly, during the Bible study one of the leaders stated that most of the Bible is now out-of-date. When you next see your friend at the club, they ask you how you enjoyed the Bible study. What would you say?

16. What are the three financial principles that every Christian should live by in your opinion?

17. What are two things you could do this coming week that may not win you public acclaim but will have eternal significance?
