

## GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

### Help the group members:

1. to believe that Christ calls them to a Christian life-style
2. to dare to distinguish themselves from other people in the world

## I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

### 1. Prayer

*Pray* that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

### 2. Meditation

Worship is to submit to God's point of view.

**Theme:** To view the world from God's point of view

*Read* the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

### Psalm 73:1-28

<sup>1</sup> Surely God is good to Israel,  
to those who are pure in heart.

<sup>2</sup> But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;  
I had nearly lost my foothold.

<sup>3</sup> For I envied the arrogant  
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

<sup>4</sup> They have no struggles;  
their bodies are healthy and strong.

<sup>5</sup> They are free from common human burdens;  
they are not plagued by human ills.

<sup>6</sup> Therefore pride is their necklace;  
they clothe themselves with violence.

<sup>7</sup> From their callous hearts comes iniquity;  
their evil imaginations have no limits.

<sup>8</sup> They scoff, and speak with malice;  
with arrogance they threaten oppression.

<sup>9</sup> Their mouths lay claim to heaven,  
and their tongues take possession of the earth.

<sup>10</sup> Therefore their people turn to them  
and drink up waters in abundance.

<sup>11</sup> They say, "How would God know?  
Does the Most High know anything?"

<sup>12</sup> This is what the wicked are like—  
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

<sup>13</sup> Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure  
and have washed my hands in innocence.

<sup>14</sup> All Day long I have been afflicted,  
and every morning brings new punishments.

<sup>15</sup> If I had spoken out like that,  
I would have betrayed your children.

<sup>16</sup> When I tried to understand all this,  
it troubled me deeply

<sup>17</sup> till I entered the sanctuary of God;  
then I understood their final destiny.

<sup>18</sup> Surely you place them on slippery ground;  
you cast them down to ruin.

<sup>19</sup> How suddenly are they destroyed,  
completely swept away by terrors!

<sup>20</sup> They are like a dream when one awakes;  
when you arise, Lord,

you will despise them as fantasies.

<sup>21</sup> When my heart was grieved  
and my spirit embittered,

<sup>22</sup> I was senseless and ignorant;  
I was a brute beast before you.

<sup>23</sup> Yet I am always with you;  
you hold me by my right hand.

<sup>24</sup> You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will take me into glory.

<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

<sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion forever.

<sup>27</sup> Those who are far from you will perish;  
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

<sup>28</sup> But as for me, it is good to be near God.  
I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;  
I will tell of all your deeds.

- What is the life-style of the godless (the arrogant wicked) in contrast to that of the righteous?
- How can we get a good view of the life-style of the wicked?
- What is the great advantage of the life-style of the righteous?

### 3. Worship.

*Let* everyone in the small group take a turn to worship (in one or two sentences) God as the One who calls you to a life-style that is different than that of unbelievers (non-Christians).

## II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

### The theme for this meeting is: Life-style

*Read or explain in your own words.*

There are many different life-styles in the world. God does not approve of a wasteful life-style. He disapproves of a life-style of worldly pleasure. He disapproves of a life-style of greed and corruption. And he disapproves of a life style of injustice (Isaiah 5:7).

God calls Christians to a life-style in which the highest goal is to glorify God (Romans 11:36). We Christians have the responsibility not to allow the world to squeeze us into its contemporary mould or to drag us along in its different forms of life-style. We have the responsibility to allow God to transform us with his truth (Romans 12:2).

## III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

*Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.*

### Theme: Life-style

Day 1	Daniel 6:4-5 Dare to be different! (cf. Daniel 1)
Day 2	2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 Work to earn your own living
Day 3	Matthew 6:19-21 Do not be a materialist
Day 4 <sup>BS</sup>	1 Timothy 6:3-10,17-19. Be content to be rich in God and in good deeds
Day 5	James 5:1-6 Greed and living in luxury has consequences (cf. Luke 12:13-21)
Day 6	Mark 12:41-44 Give sacrificially (cf. Luke 6:38)
Day 7	Deuteronomy 16:18-20 God is for a life style of righteousness (cf. Deuteronomy 10:17-20)
Day 8	Leviticus 19:33-36 God is against a life style of oppression and corruption
Day 9	Proverbs 24:30-36 God is against a life style of laziness (cf. Proverbs 6:6-11)
Day 10	Ezekiel 34:17-23 God is against a life style of waste

## IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.  
If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

## 1. Discussing the study

*Discuss* the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

### Theme: The Christian life-style

- What kind of influence does money have on people?
- What are good principles in spending money?
- How do you remain free from financial bondage to other people?
- What are the Christian's responsibilities with respect to his needy family members?
- To whom should Christians give their gifts?
- To which sacrifices does Christ call some Christians?
- What is the great example of Daniel?

## 2. Commitment

*Let the group members* consider the following questions and record their answers:

- "Which influence can money have on your temporary life on earth?"
- "Which influence can money have on your eternal life in heaven?"
- "What is the highest goal for a Christian? Is this the central goal in your life?"
- "What attitude do you have with respect to money meeting your genuine needs? Should you change your attitude?"
- "How do you go about all the possessions which God has entrusted to you? Should you make some significant changes?"

## 3. Personal sharing

*Discuss* personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

## V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

### 1. Review of previous Bible verses

*Let* pairs of group members review each other's previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

### 2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

*Explain* the meaning of the new Bible verse.

#### LIFE STYLE Philippians 4:11b

I have learned to be content  
whatever the circumstances.

**Philippians 4:11b** (NIV)

## VI. BIBLE STUDY (45 min.)

**Theme: To be rich in God**

### 1. Bible Study

*Make use of the 5 step method and study:*

#### 1 Timothy 6:1-19

<sup>1</sup> All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. <sup>2</sup> Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves.

These are the things you are to teach and insist on.

<sup>3</sup> If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, <sup>4</sup> they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions <sup>5</sup> and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

<sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain. <sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

<sup>9</sup> Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you <sup>14</sup> to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, <sup>16</sup> who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.

<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. <sup>19</sup> 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.

### 2. Emphasis

You can be rich in God for ever by investing in God's kingdom

### 3. Explanation for the group leader

#### 6:1-2. Employers and employees

The unwilling, dishonest and lazy attitude of certain employees (slaves in the first century A.D.) must make way for a willing, sincere and eager attitude. Also the brutal and authoritarian attitude of some employers (slave owners in that period) must be exchanged for a merciful and friendly humility that regards the employees as their equals. The grace and love of Jesus Christ works equally in employees and employers from the inside to the outside. Just as the kingdom (kingship) of God works as leaven from inside the heart (Luke 13:20-21) to the relationships and activities on the outside and thus transforms everything (Luke 17:21).

#### 6:3-5. False doctrines

Timothy had to command the false prophets and false teachers to stop. They were teaching false doctrines from other religions and philosophies, fables, visions, dreams, etc. and they were conducting hair-splitting arguments about everything, as for example about the genealogies of the Jews, which ostensibly proved who were genuine Jews (1 Timothy 1:3-4). They only contributed to fruitless arguments (1 Timothy 6:4-5) and are only motivated by self-interest (making money, gaining fame, honour and power).

#### Religion as a means to financial gain

“Who think that godliness is a means to financial gain” (1 Timothy 6:5).

One particular odious practice is denominations from rich countries buying (bribing with large salaries) Christians from local churches in poor countries to serve their particular denomination in the poor country. Thus often the best workers are drawn away from the local churches in the poor countries in order to serve the foreign churches.

There is evidence of several religions in the world conducting the following kind of practices:

- bribing poor and ignorant people to join their religion by giving away free television sets
- buying up whole streets of shops in small and poor towns in order to rent them out only to shopkeepers that join their religion
- investing large sums of money to bribe greedy government officials to make political, economic and cultural (e.g. educational and religious) decisions that would promote this particular religion in that country
- manipulating (even threatening) the mass media to promote the image of this religion to the general public

### 6:6-8. Genuine godliness

Godliness means 'the proper way to worship God'. It refers to the responsibility towards God: awe, faith and faithfulness. Godliness comes into being by knowing God himself and his promises in the Bible. Through these Christians may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (2 Peter 1:3-4). Godliness is the result of goodness, knowledge, self-control and perseverance. And godliness leads to brotherly love and Christian love for all people (2 Peter 1:5-7).

The Christian life-style is not merely being tolerant towards other people, but means that you actively accept the sound teachings of the Bible and act according to it. Godliness is not possible without the sound Christian teaching! A healthy Christian life-style is based on healthy Christian teaching! Therefore it is very important that your convictions are very well grounded in the Bible as a whole. A sound Christian teaching cannot rest on a Bible text or two, but must be based on the correct explanation of everything the Bible teaches on that particular subject! People, who refuse to do this, become argumentative and false teachers.

Genuine godliness has value for all things (1 Timothy 4:8). It does not consist of gathering material wealth, but in being content with what God has entrusted to you. The Christian is content whatever the circumstances – whether in plenty or in want (Philippians 4:11-12). The Christian is content when he has his daily bread and covering (clothing and a roof) (1 Timoteüs 6:8). A Christian need not worry about what food he will eat or what clothes he will wear (Matthew 6:25-34). When the Christian puts God's kingdom and interests on the first place, God will care for his basic needs. The highest priority for the Christian is God himself, God's sovereign reign (kingdom) in all circumstances and what God regards as right (righteousness) (Matthew 6:33). But non-Christians strive after material gain (Matthew 6:32).

Therefore, every Christian must consciously choose his direction in life and his life-style. Jesus Christ wants Christians to be 'rich in God' (Luke 12:16-21) and to be smart in making friends for eternity by means of his earthly possessions (Luke 16:9) and opportunities (Matthew 25:14-16).

### 6:9-10. The root of all kinds of evil

The Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil, but that the love (or desire) for money is the root of many kinds of evil. There are other roots of evil: for example: bitterness (Hebrews 12:15). Money in itself is not evil; it is even necessary. It is the desire for money that is evil; expressed in the following: working like a slave in order to get rich; working overtime in order to acquire luxury goods; hoping to win a lottery ticket or making a profit by gambling; giving and receiving bribes; evading paying taxes; avoiding having children and raising them in order to live a yuppie-life-style. In short: to store up treasures for yourself on earth.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”  
(Matthew 6:19-24; James 5:1-6).

The Christian, who desires to be rich, will fall into temptation and the trap of the devil. It is even possible that he will wander away from the Christian Faith. In all this he will pierce himself with many griefs.

### 6:11-16. Flee from all this and pursue righteousness

The Christian must flee from certain harmful human practices. Being a Christian is not a passive business. A Christian strives towards everything that is important in God's eyes: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. God rewards those who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11:6). Without love nothing is complete or perfect (1 Corinthians 13:1-4). Without perseverance one cannot receive what God has promised (Hebrews 6:35-36). The Christian perseveres until he has reached God's goal with his life (Philippians 4:14). And without the Holy Spirit one cannot be gentle (Galatians 6:23). Gentleness is that inward power and control that expresses itself outwardly in friendliness and sensitivity.

The gentle Christian does not get involved in an argument about words, but does get involved in the good fight, the *spiritual* race (a wrestling match or fistfight) (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 12:1) which he wants to win! By doing these things he gets a good grip on eternal life.

The Christian carries out his God-given task in a way no one can criticise. He perseveres until the appearance of Christ.

Only the God of the Bible is immortal from all eternity. Nevertheless, he gives immortality to people who believe in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 1:10). 'Immortality' means eternal life in your spirit as well as in your physical body.

#### **6:17-19. God's command to wealthy Christians**

God gives wealth to some Christians on earth. However, rich Christians may never look down upon those who are poor. To be rich on earth is not wrong, but remains a very uncertain reality. A rich Christian may enjoy his riches, but he must also use his riches to do good works and extend God's kingdom. A wealthy Christian must be characterised by his generosity and willingness to share. Only in this way can a rich Christian be sure of his salvation.

#### **Take hold of eternal life**

In 1 Timothy 6:12 and 19 Paul teaches the same as Jesus in Matthew 6:19-34 and Matthew 25:34-40,46b: eternal life (salvation) is completely by God's grace and is received only through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

But this true life is taken hold of, that is, is truly experienced only when the Christian does good works. Faith without deeds remains theoretical and without results, but actions work together with faith and completes faith (James 2:21-24; cf. Philippians 3:12). Our actions will be judged and either approved or condemned at the second coming of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12).

#### **VII. PRAYER (8 min.)**

*Pray* with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught him during this meeting.

*Pray* with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

#### **VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)**

*Hand out* the preparation for the next gathering.