

## QUIET TIME

### Theme: Life style

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understand.

- 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
- Think about Daniel 6:11b.  
“Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God.”
  - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

## STUDY

### Theme: The Christian life style

Read study 50 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

## BIBLE STUDY

### Theme: To be rich in God

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **1 Timothy 6:1-19**

## MEMORISATION

### 1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

### 2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

### LIFE STYLE Philippians 4:11b

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

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

### 3. Review and back-review

*Review* the last 5 memorised verses once every day and *back-review* all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

## 50. The Christian life style

### A. WORLDLY LIFE STYLES

#### 1. The worldly life style does not acknowledge God

There are many different life styles within the world. Whether you are rich or poor, everyone receives from God the freedom and responsibility to choose his own life style. But the life style you choose has consequences. Not every life style honours God. Read and discover which life styles dishonour God.

*Read* Ezekiel 34:17-19; Matthew 7:6; Luke 15:13.  
God disapproves of a squandering (throw away) and wasteful life style!

*Read* Proverbs 21:17; 23:20-21; 1 Peter 4:3-5.  
God disapproves of a worldly life style of unrestrained living. His against people who say: 'Just do it', or 'Everything should be possible'. This includes wild parties, drunken revelries and orgies!

*Read* Leviticus 19:11-13,35-36.  
God disapproves of dishonest (corrupt) life style: in business, banking, politics and religion!

*Read* Luke 12:15,19; James 5:1-6.  
God disapproves of the greedy, luxurious and dissolute life style of the rich!

#### 2. The Christian life style acknowledges God

*Read* Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:14-16; Mark 12:30-31;  
Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

The highest goal for every Christian is to love God, serve and glorify him. The Christian life style makes this its goal. What characterises the Christian life style?

### B. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE

#### 1. Be content with what you have and enjoy it

What is the required Christian attitude towards personal needs and personal possessions?

*Read* 1 Timothy 6:8; Philippians 4:11-12.  
Christians must be content when they have the basic necessities of life: food, clothes and shelter.

*Read* 1 Timothy 6:17-19.  
Christians may enjoy what God has entrusted to them.

#### 2. Manage your possessions with wisdom

What is the required Christian attitude towards how he uses his possessions?

*Read* 1 Timothy 6:17, Proverbs 19:17, 21:13.  
Christians are commanded to do good to the needy and to share their possessions generously. Hundreds of millions of people live in enormous poverty. Thousands die every

day due to hunger. Christians may not forget these people!  
*Read* 1 Corinthians 4:7, Luke 12:42-48.

Whatever a Christians possesses he has received from God, the Great Owner of everything (1 Corinthians 4:7). The Christian must regard his possessions as a trust from God in order to manage it as God's steward!

#### TIPS how to manage possessions

Principles that help you to manage your possessions as God wants you to:

*Do not follow the example of rich people.*

Do not compare your life style with that of wealthy people around you. Rather focus on the norms and values of the kingdom of God as the example for your life style.

*Draw up a budget and maintain a good bookkeeping.*

Determine how much of the money entrusted to you will you use on rent, food, clothing, gifts, etc. Keep an accurate account of your income and expenditure.

*Avoid buying unnecessary and extravagant things.*

Ask yourself the following questions before you buy something:

Do I really need this or is this a superfluous luxury?  
Would this contribute to my development or only to my image?

Would this keep me modest or make me vain?

Is this a festivity once in a while or do I party all the time?

Do I buy this because it serves God's goal or because I gain people's approval (following a modern trend)?

*Make optimal use of what you already possess.*

Care for your possessions, so that they last longer. Share possessions with others. Buy books for the church library instead of only for yourself. Pass on clothes to needy families. Buy food that has been produced honestly (fair food) and at cheaper markets. Make a donation to a needy organisation instead of giving expensive gifts to friends. Share a car between two or more families.

#### 3. Care for family members

For which family members should Christians take care?

*Read* Ephesians 5:28-29.

A man need to give a high priority to the care of his wife.

*Read* 2 Corinthians 12:14-15.

Parents need to give a high priority to the care of their children.

*Read* 1 Timothy 5:4,8.

Christians need to give priority to the care of their needy family members (e.g. parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters). But when parents have enough income, their children do not have the duty to give them money so that they live in greater luxury or tour the world.

*Read 1* John 3:17-18.

Christians need to care for the basic necessities of life (food, clothes and shelter) of their poor fellow Christians.

#### **4. Support good objectives**

Which people should Christians support with their financial gifts?

*Read 1* Corinthians 9:14.

Support people who proclaim the gospel.

*Read* Galatians 6:6.

Share all good things with the person who teaches you God's Word.

*Read 1* Timothy 5:17.

Support the elders who do their work well in the congregation.

*Read* James 2:15-17; 1 John 3:17-18.

Care for the basic necessities of life (food, clothes and shelter) of the needy (poor) brothers and sisters in your congregation.

*Read 2* Corinthians 8:13-15.

Support the needy (poor) congregations in your own country or in another country in the world.

*Read* Proverbs 19:17; 21:13.

Give to the poor in general in your society.

The Bible does not teach that you must give gifts to *all* the above people – you may make a choice. The Bible also does not teach that you must give them so much that they live in luxury. The Bible certainly teaches that you should not give to people who are too lazy to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10) or to people who reject the gospel (Matthew 7:6; Mark 6:11).

#### **5. Be willing to bring sacrifices**

Jesus called some of his followers to a life style of willing poverty. For example:

*Read* Mark 10:21.

Willing (chosen) poverty. Jesus called a rich man to sell everything he had, to give it to the poor and then to follow him. But he refused. This is not a command to every Christian, but only to those Christ calls to do so.

*Read* Matthew 8:20; 1 Corinthians 4:11.

Homeless. Jesus often had no place to sleep. His disciples were often homeless.

*Read* Philippians 4:11-12.

Lack of money, food, clothing, shelter. The apostle Paul learned to be content in times of plenty and in times of need.

*Read 2* Corinthians 8:1-12; 9:6-15.

Giving sacrificially. Jesus does not expect us to give more than we are able to give (verse 11-13). But Jesus himself (verse 9) and the Macedonian congregations (verse 3) were examples of giving sacrificially and doing this willingly. Although they were poor, they gave to people poorer than themselves! Paul urged the Corinthian congregation to give without reluctance or compulsion and encouraged them by pointing to God's blessings that follow generous giving.

*Read* Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 6:38; 14:12-14; Philippians 2:3-4.

Hospitality. Jesus Christ does not call all Christians to a life style of willing (chosen) poverty, but he does call all Christians to be inwardly free from the seductions of wealth. He calls all Christians to be generous in giving and to share their possessions with others. He calls them to be hospitable towards people who could not return the favour. He calls them to look to the interests of others.

#### **6. Be a good citizen of your society**

How should a Christian live in his own society? Build relationships with your neighbours and get involved in the events of your neighbourhood. However Christians should not become agitators in riotous social and political actions (Matthew 26:52), but rather influence their society by their good example, wise counsel and love for people.

#### **7. Have the right attitude towards wealth**

*What is the Christian attitude required towards wealth?*

*The wrong attitude: the desire to become rich.*

*Read 1* Timothy 6:17-19,9-10. It is not wrong for a Christian to be wealthy. But it is wrong to have an unhealthy desire to become rich, because he will fall into temptation and a trap and many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

*The wrong attitude: independence.*

When you are wealthy, ask God to keep you humble and dependent on him. Do not set your hope on wealth that is so uncertain, e.g.

on the house or car you bought (the economy may slump),  
on your savings, investments and insurance policies (the bank may crash),

on your job and salary (the company may go bankrupt)  
or on your health (you may get sick).

Set your hope on God, who has entrusted your wealth as a trust to you. God gives wealth so that you may enjoy it, do many good works, give generously and share with others. In this way you lay up a treasure in heaven where nothing can destroy it. And in this way you take hold of the life style that leads to true (eternal) life (Matthew 6:19-24)!

*The right attitude: be a co-worker in God's kingdom.*  
When God has entrusted wealth to you, he wants to use your wealth (actually: *his* wealth!) for his goals and his kingdom. Wealthy Christians have therefore received a special calling and task. They need to invest the money entrusted to them in the best way in God's kingdom. For example, they can support Christian workers in their ministry or poor Christians in their livelihood.

### C. THE INFLUENCE OF MONEY ON YOUR LIFE STYLE

Money has a great influence on your life-style.

#### 1. The influence of money on your life on earth

*The love of money and wealth cannot satisfy anyone.*  
Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 says, "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. As goods increase, so do those who consume them." Money in itself is not evil or good. But your attitude towards money determines whether money has a good or evil influence on you.

*Money can become the root of much unrighteousness and injustice.*

1 Timothy 6:10 says, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." The unhealthy desire for money leads to: gambling, lotteries, chance games, competitive careers, neglect of family and church, immoral business and gross corruption.

#### 2. The influence of money on your life with God

*The love of money can choke the Word of God in your life.*  
Read Mark 4:18. "The worries of life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the Word, making it unfruitful." When your heart is occupied with the love for money, you do not really want the Word of God to have any influence on you, because the Bible tells you how you could spend your money in a better way.

*The love of money and wealth can cause you to miss your highest goal in life – namely, to love and serve God.*  
Read Matthew 6:24; Luke 12:13-21. The rich man had a great harvest. He planned to build larger barns and then settle down to enjoy the good life. 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 your life will be demanded from you (i.e. 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 toward God."

No matter how long such people remain alive, there comes a day that they will suddenly and unexpectedly die. Who will then get everything they have toiled for? Their children might also live just for themselves? In this way money has no influence in God's kingdom for generations! Of course, everyone must work in order to earn money for their basic necessities. But a person who makes money for his own enjoyment instead of loving and serving God, has no lasting fruit (John 15:5) and certainly receives no reward (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)!

*The love of money and wealth can cause you to lose your soul.*

Read Mark 8:34-38; 10:21-27; Luke 9:24-25; 16:19-31; 22:4-6; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Timothy 6:10; James 5:1-6. The love of money can become the greatest danger in your life. Mark 10:21-27 relates how a wealthy young man turned away from Jesus Christ, because he loved money more than Jesus. Many people think that the most important things in life are: wealth, power and fame. But Jesus says that the only way to save your life and soul is to renounce selfishness and to give yourself every day to the coming of God's kingdom!

#### TIPS to manage money

How do you manage money in a wise way – i.e. in a way that you do not need to borrow from other people and thus become dependent on them? The following principles may help:

Do not be lazy, but be eager in your daily work (Proverbs 24:30-34).

When you lack food, clothing and shelter, trust in God, who cares for you (Matthew 6:25-34).

Do not put God to the test by managing your money in an irresponsible way (Luke 15:13).

Do not borrow money from people. Also do not lend money to people (Proverbs 22:7), except out of charity and without asking interest.

Avoid every form of debt, especially debt on goods that depreciate (lose their value) fast (Romans 13:8).

Close all accounts that allow you to exceed your income. Only use a credit card in an emergency.

Never put up security for another person – never agree to guarantee the payment of his debt (Proverbs 11:15).

Use your possessions as long as possible, until they are worn out.

Share your possessions with other Christians.

Buy second-hand goods that are often of very good quality and are much cheaper.

Never buy anything you just want to possess, but never really need or use.

#### D. THE LIFE STYLE OF DANIEL

*Read Daniel 6:2-5.* “Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (...) He was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.”

In the world today many politicians, police, judges and businessmen receive bribes. God’s Word says, “Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous” (Deuteronomy 16:19). People who give bribes and who receive bribes are utterly corrupt and unrighteous. They cause the innocent to suffer, promote the wicked to stay in power and enrich themselves.

Daniel lived in such a society, but he dared to be different! Even in the second highest position in the country, he distinguished himself from all the other leaders by being trustworthy, incorruptible and responsible. However the jealousy of his colleagues against his life style caused him the loss of his job, position of respect and almost his life! He was literally thrown to the lions! But God protected him throughout his trials and in the end honoured him above everyone else!

Therefore, be as Daniel! Distinguish yourself as a Christian in your life style, family life, work, ministry, personal development, etc. Distinguish yourself by being absolutely trustworthy, incorruptible and responsible (never negligent of what you must do).

**DARE TO BE DIFFERENT!**