

1 Timothy 6:3-8 Sermon-Based Discussion Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To help us see why we as followers of Christ should be the least offensive and the least easily offended as we engage with those we disagree with.

Sermon Refresher: Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6 about the futile, fruitless path forged by those who have a craving for controversy and quarrels. This craving and its subsequent bad fruit can occur between Christians who judge each other based on petty and non-essential things like preferred worship style, minor doctrinal differences, cultural differences, and the like (this is sermon point #1 – “us against us”). Christians can also put themselves at odds with those who don’t believe as they do, and this too is unfruitful and unchristian (this is point #2 – “us against them”). What changes our hearts and makes us charitable toward those we disagree with is the charitable heart of God who died for us, his enemies (this is point #3 – “God against God”).

Icebreaker: When was a time when you got angry/upset/offended by something or someone and then later realized that you had overreacted?

Transition: Scott Sauls mentioned today that a host of articles have been written that identify 2014 as ‘The Year of Outrage.’ As columnist Tim Kreider says, we love feeling both right and wronged, and we love expressing both. Christians are especially susceptible to this dynamic—as indicated in a recent article in *The Atlantic* whose title says it all: ‘Taming Christian Rage.’

Discussion

1. How have you seen the love of feeling 1) right and 2) wronged play out in our culture?

Read 1 Timothy 6:3-8 out loud together.

2. Look back at 1 Timothy 6:4. Here the apostle Paul says that we as followers of Christ can be especially susceptible to an “unhealthy craving for controversy and

1 Timothy 6:3-8 Sermon-Based Discussion

for quarrels.” How have you been susceptible to this “unhealthy craving” (the love of feeling right and wronged)? Can you think of examples in your conversations and life?

3. From the sermon or 1 Timothy 6:3-8, share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you.
4. Lack of a charitable spirit toward other believers (“us versus us”) is a big problem. Take turns reading the follow scriptures out loud. After each scripture is read, stop to ask and discuss: what do we learn here about how we should relate to Christians we disagree with?
 - 1 Corinthians 13:5-7
 - Romans 12:4-6
 - James 1:19
 - John 13:35
5. “The more conservative we are with our Bibles, the more liberal we will be with our love.” If we take the gospel seriously, we cannot have an “us versus them” mentality. After each scripture is read, ask: what do we learn here about how we should relate to non-Christians we disagree with?
 - Colossians 4:5-6
 - 1 Peter 3:15-16
 - 2 Samuel 16:5-13
 - Matthew 22:34-40
6. Read out loud this idea from Scott Sauls’ sermon:

In Joshua, Israel’s spies came alongside Rahab, a prostitute, to advance God’s kingdom. In Genesis, Joseph worked alongside Pharaoh for the good of Egypt (resulting in the saving of many lives!). During the exile, Nehemiah worked alongside the Persian ruler Artaxerxes to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. During that same period, Daniel served the pagan Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar for the good of Babylon.

How do these examples inform the way we as Christians should live and work alongside those “outside the lines” of our faith?

1 Timothy 6:3-8 Sermon-Based Discussion

Digging deeper (optional group activity): take one issue from question #2 that you or several of your group mentioned loving being right about (and wronged about!). Keeping in mind what you have learned from the scripture and the sermon today, talk about how we as followers of Christ can specifically show charity while still holding to truth on that issue.

7. Read out loud the following idea from Scott Sauls' sermon:

Isn't this how Jesus initiated relationship with us? By demonstrating his love for us while we were still opposed to him (Romans 5:8)? Jesus absorbed all of God's justifiable outrage toward our rebellion and wandering. Shouldn't we, then, be the least offended—and the least offensive—people in the world?

How does thinking deeply about God's charitable heart toward you motivate you to be charitable toward those you disagree with?

- Optional follow-up question: How might God want to help you direct your 'outrage' in a way that is constructive versus destructive?

Sharing and Prayer Time idea:

Consider having a time of open prayer where any one who wants to can pray a simple prayer of confession for the ways we have exhibited charity.

Another idea would be to read Jeremiah 29:7 and then pray for the various city organizations The Crossing partners for the good of Columbia. Pray that we would work alongside them well for the common good. Pray for God's blessing on Columbia and these specific organizations and opportunities:

- True/False Film Festival
- For: Columbia (April 22-23 where we partner with many other churches and organizations from all around town for the good of Columbia. We encourage you to sign up and participate as a small group!)
- Ragtag Theater
- University of Missouri
- Lange Middle School

Passage for next Sunday: John 10:1-21