



**Sermon Based Small Group
Leader Discussion Guide**

Sermon Title: Robbed!

**Sermon by Pastor Fred Oaks
Week of September 26, 2010**

<p>Discussion Guide Contents</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Session Objectives 2) Study Introduction (for Group Leader) 3) Personal Connection (for Group Leader) 4) Ice Breaker 5) Big Idea 6) Sermon Text 7) Digging Deeper 8) Taking it Home 9) Prayer Focus
<p>Session Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to discern truth from “half truths” (false teachings) • Understand what contentment is and choose to live in this way • Examine what you are holding onto in this life
<p>Study Introduction (Group Leader)</p>	<p>The Apostle Paul is believed to have written letters to Timothy and Titus, newly appointed church leaders in Ephesus and Crete, respectively, to instruct both in pastoral care of their congregations. Paul’s first letter to Timothy was written between 63-65 AD during Paul’s fourth missionary journey.</p> <p>In addition to instruction on church administration, Paul emphasized the importance of not only teaching sound doctrine but also of recognizing and opposing false teachings that were creeping into the young church. He charged both men to uphold the undiluted message of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>In 1 Timothy, Paul warned against an increasingly destructive form of Judaism (see 1:3-7 for a description of such teachers and their teachings) and the emphasis on asceticism and elite knowledge that would later become associated with the heresy Gnosticism. The speculative and moralistic natures of these false teachings within the church naturally led new believers into wrong belief and wrong practice.</p>

<p>Personal Connection (Group Leader)</p>	<p>How does my story connect to the reading?</p> <p>This week's sermon and group study emphasize the need to know God's truth in a world vying for our allegiance to its half-truths and lies. As you prepare for time with your group, ask yourself a few questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I spending regular time in God's Word and in prayer so as to know His truth? • Can I recognize teaching that does not completely and accurately reflect the Gospel message? • Is there anything about my life that is recognizably different from that of secular culture? • Would my neighbors, coworkers, friends say that I am a content person? <p>Following your group's time together, you might want to ponder these questions, again.</p>
<p>Ice Breaker</p>	<p>Has anything ever been stolen from you? Or have you ever lost something that was of significance to you? What emotions surrounded these times of loss?</p>
<p>Big Idea</p>	<p>When Christians don't stay connected to Christ and the to church, it is easy to disregard, or be robbed of, God's truth. The result: wrong priorities and needless grief.</p>
<p>Sermon Text</p>	<p>1 Timothy 6:3-19</p>
<p>Digging Deeper</p>	<p>Read 1 Timothy 6:3-19</p> <p><i>3If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.</i></p> <p><i>6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people,</i></p>

eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

11But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12Fight 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. 17Command 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. 18Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19In 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.

Leader: Review the Study Introduction. Paul's message in this letter was aimed at concerns within the church. One of his main purposes of writing this letter was to charge Timothy to refute false teaching.

1. What are some of the characteristics, as seen in this passage, of a person who has "been robbed of the truth"? Put in modern language.
2. False teachers, or those who teach a version of the truth that diverges from God's revealed truth, have always existed within and outside church walls. By what means might a Christian discern whether someone's message is true or false?

Leader: Scripture reading, the witness of the broader church, church history, doctrinal statements/confessions of faith.

These verses refer to the truth of Jesus Christ, consistent with his teaching and example as recorded in the Bible. Many other sources of "truth" in our culture compete for our attention and allegiance.

3. Name some "truth" claims prevalent in our culture.

Leader: Providing your group with magazines or newspapers to stimulate responses.

4. Can you think of an incident when a preacher's love of money may

have corrupted his teaching?

In his sermon, Pastor Oaks focused on one of the results of being robbed of the truth. Instead of trusting God to provide for our needs, people often place their trust in wealth.

Contentment

Leader: Prior to group time, read the additional resource entitled, Contentment, written by T. Pierce Brown and published in the Old Paths Archive.

5. Read verse 6, again. What does the word contentment mean to you? What is it not? What characteristics does a content person possess?
6. What do the following verses, also written by Paul, teach us today about living a contented life?
 - a) Philippians 4:11 “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.”
 - b) 2 Corinthians 12:9 “But he said to me ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”

Contentment: “A perfect condition of life in which no aid or support is needed.” (Joseph Thayer, Greek scholar).

It is derived from the Greek word, *autarkeia*. The word translated “sufficient” in 2 Cor. 12:9 shares the same root word, *arkeo*.

7. In the following verses, Paul writes about the outcome of choosing to be content, of agreeing with God that he is sufficient to meet all our needs.
 - a) Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.
 - b) 2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

	<p>8. What is a recent situation that has helped you learn to be content?</p> <p>Leader: Verse 11’s “But you, man of God,” marks the turning point in Paul’s charge to Timothy and to all believers. In the following verses, Paul addresses all believers, regardless of economic standing, focusing on how not to be robbed of the Lord’s truth. His words ring as true today as they did two thousand years ago, since people have not changed in this: our affections direct us in our life’s pursuits.</p>
<p>Taking it Home</p>	<p>How will I live it? Apply it?</p> <p>-</p> <p><u>Suggestion to Leader:</u> provide sticky notes or index cards for people to record responses to the following questions. Encourage them to keep and review their responses.</p> <p>9. What would be the implications of living a life of “godliness with contentment” to you personally? What changes would it require?</p> <p>10. If more believers lived in this way, how would it affect your church?</p> <p>11. If the church worldwide were to live in this countercultural way, what impact would Christianity have around the globe?</p> <p>On Your Own:</p> <p><u>Leader:</u> If time allows or the group would like to go through these questions together, provide writing materials, as suggested, above. Otherwise, encourage group participants to reflect on these questions after group time.</p> <p>Going back to the truth claims mentioned in question 2, which of these are the most opposed to Christ’s message? Which are the most difficult for you to resist? What is one step you could take to put distance between that “truth” and your heart, mind, soul?</p>
<p>Prayer Focus</p>	<p>How can I connect with God and others through prayer?</p> <p><i>Facilitator Tip: Some people are comfortable praying out loud, while others prefer to pray silently. Either is okay. The point is to connect</i></p>

people to God and with each other in a loving, supportive environment. If the group is large, you might want to break into smaller groups for prayer time.

A group **Care Coordinator** is responsible for recording prayer requests and praises and emailing the list to the group during week.

During the study, allow the members to pray for each other as needs are voiced.

After the study, encourage group participants to share any prayer requests or praise reports.