

Life Group Lesson for 6/6/10 - Are Our Desires Too Small?

Introduction

Many years ago, C.S. Lewis wrote these words.

If you asked twenty good men today what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive, and this is of more than philological importance. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if *our abstinence* and not *their happiness* was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly *every* description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire.

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

What are the different reasons that people desire money? Could you divide those reasons into healthy and unhealthy? Make those two lists in your group. See if the lists create any discussions.

Text – I Timothy 6:3-12

1. When you see someone who appears to have more than you, do you struggle with any of the qualities that Paul lists in verse 4? How? Why?
2. Forget being rich – what are the struggles that we create simply by wanting more stuff?
3. As we accumulate things, what do we lose?
4. What do you think would happen to our desire for more if we were pursuing the things Paul lists in verse 11?
 - Righteousness – outward evidence of God’s work on you internally?
 - Godliness – placing value where it belongs?
 - Faith – believing God’s promise, especially His promise to meet our needs?
 - Love – having God’s attitude toward others, regardless of their status?
 - Endurance – how well do we bear up under pressure?

- Gentleness – treating others with grace and mercy?

5. How will your pursuit of these things impact your relationships?

6. What do you think would happen to our impact on the people around us if we were pursuing those things?