

Aim of lesson

To help the young people to be prepared for some of the situations that will rise in more or less any job, and to have at their disposal a methodical approach to dealing with them.

Bible background

Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:22-24.

Preparation required

Think through the issues and decide on your own position on each. However, be prepared to listen to the young people and guide them without being condemnatory.

Suggested outline of lesson

Begin by looking at Romans 14:21-22, and the context of meat being offered to idols. Explain that in many cases the important thing is not the decision we take, because there is no absolute right and wrong. What is important is that we consider the subject scripturally and prayerfully.

As to the topics for consideration, it is good to give the young people time to think about each situation for themselves before involving yourself in the discussion. If the class is large enough you could split them into two or more groups and let them work on their own.

To think about all five topics properly will almost certainly take at least two weeks, but it is worth spending the time to think about them fully.

When people depend on you

Scriptural Principles include:

- Working conscientiously, 'as unto the Lord' (Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-24)
- The Bible teaching on the Sabbath. However, note that Matthew 12:10-12 concludes 'therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath'.
- Haggai 1:5-9, many passages of Ecclesiastes, and John 21:1-8, emphasise that a little work guided by God is better than a great deal without, and this can be extended into a purely human argument, that there comes a point at which working harder and harder becomes simply counterproductive, both for oneself and for the job.

The office party

Scriptural Principles:

- Jesus did not exclude himself from those who were regarded as bad company; indeed, he was described as a 'glutton and a winebibber'. At the same time we are called upon to be different, and to be seen as such.
- There are some thoughts in 1 Peter 3:15-17 that you may find to be helpful.
- The discussion should include the point that by attending, and showing that it is possible to be pleasant and amiable without excess. can be a very positive influence on others; it is probable that not everyone enjoys the indulgence, and you may give others the courage to resist the pressure to join in.
- Having said all that, we need to be realistic about our own ability to resist temptation. Unless we are confident that we will be able to behave in a godly way we should stay away. 'He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm' (Proverbs 13:20).

The Sweepstake

The discussion will no doubt conclude that this is a matter of conscience. However, it should also include the need to be clear about one's motives to others as well as to God.

Scripture Union

There are several scriptural principles involved in this lesson, and the decision will be a matter of balance. The decision is not just whether to go or not but, if one is to go, how to behave when there.

It should be borne in mind that Paul was always willing to speak in the Jewish synagogue (even though their beliefs were 'not a gospel' (Galatians 1), and in the Greek meeting places.

2 Timothy 2:23-26 is relevant to the attitude of mind that one should have.

The Share Option Scheme

This is not easy. Some of the points about gambling apply, but this is not quite the same. Many people are self-employed, and in that sense own 100% of the 'stock' of their company. One significant factor about share-ownership in general is that it requires a considerable understanding of the workings of the stock market. The effort involved in obtaining this, and the time subsequently spent studying the market, can hardly be conducive to a life in Christ.

Relevance to our lives

The most important lesson to learn is that God will be there in our work place and the young people should be aware of this when faced with these and perhaps other issues.

Prayer

Encourage the young people to set a good pattern in their lives of praying about dilemmas like these both before they arise and when confronted with them.

Other suggestions for activities

The young people might like to ask members of their families or the ecclesia how they have coped with some or all of these issues and report back next week.