

1 Timothy 3: The Back End of the Minefield

Remembering that we're in a Minefield

- Remember that all congregations, with differing responsibilities for women, all have 1 Timothy in their Bibles
- Remember that the *Christian Standard* ran a pretty good series on these questions on August 17 and 24
- Remember that whatever we have to say about these questions, we should always keep in sight the Greek texts and the Roman contexts and our own pretexts

Some Minefield Greek Words and Phrases

- *ἐπισκοπῆς (episkopes)* (verses 1, 2): Has a range of connotations from the action of overseeing to an office that oversees (for the noun, from overseer to bishop (but *not* elder)
- *μίας γυναικος ανδρα (mias gunaikos andra)* (verse 2 and 12): Has a range of connotations from man of only one wife to faithful to one woman
- *προστηναι (prostenai)* (verse 5) Has a range of connotations from “to rule his own house” to “to manage his own family”
- *Διακονους (diakonous)* (verse 8) Has a range of connotations from “male minister” to “male servant” to “deacon”
- *γυναικας (gynaikas)* (verse 11) Has a range of connotations from “deacons' wives” to “women”

The Minefield

- Verses 1-7: The aspiration to oversight
 - Overseers and bishops: what's the difference? Do we have bishops? What's an elder?
 - What counts for “love of money”?
 - Is “the household” the Roman-style extended family (including slaves) or the modern nuclear family? What constitutes rulership/management?
 - When does somebody stop being a neophyte?
 - What's the devil's trap?
- Verses 8-13: Deacons/servants/ministers
 - See Minefield Greek above
 - How does one test a potential deacon/servant/minister?
 - Which women is he talking about in verse 11?

Out of the Minefield

- Verses 14-16: Why this matters
- To what extent is this teaching ethical and to what extent formal?
- Why is it so important, according to verse 15?
- How does the doctrine of Christ in verse 16 relate to all this?

Implications

- Whatever else we say, we should consider both the etymology of and the historical changes around Paul's Greek words.
- Whatever else we say, we should avoid reductionist oppositions of “Bible” and “culture”
- Whatever else we say, we should think seriously about those who serve and oversee our congregations and meditate on the entire section