

1 Timothy 6 and some Change: Warnings Against Bad Fights

Reviewing the Territory

- Up to this point Paul has been concerned mainly with how the Church lives together, and his instructions have focused on his time's groups and categories of people.
- Paul's letter began with warnings against useless disputes, and he will end his letter with more of the same.
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Some Final Community Instructions: 1 Timothy 5:23-6:2

- 5:23 is pretty plainly a personal instruction to one person, but it does provide an occasion to think about how the same document can be personal and scriptural all at once.
- 5:24-25 are almost proverbial in their isolation.
- 6:1-2 either connects to the instructions about people-groups in chapter 5 or is another proverbial, isolated bit of instruction.

Word-Fighting: 1 Timothy 6:3-10

- Verse four has an interesting compound word in Greek: *logomachia* (word-fighting): check translations for how they render this.
- What concrete abuses does Paul seem to have in mind in verses 4 and 5?
- How does Paul counter those abuses in verses 6-8?
- Verse ten is likely one of the most famous verses in the book. What is its context?

The Good Fight: 1 Timothy 6:11-16

- In broad terms, what does it mean to be a “man of God” in verse 11?
- What is the “good confession” in verse 12? Is it the same as the one in verse 13?
- What would the claims in verse 15 mean in the Roman empire?
- What is the invisible “which” in question in verse 16?

Closing: 1 Timothy 6:17-21

- After addressing various groups throughout the letter, Paul finishes here with some advice for the wealthy in verses 17-19. He finishes with “the life that is really life,” mirroring “widows who are really widows” in 5:3 and bringing the rich, like the old, into the life of the community as a group.
- In his closing, Paul advises Timothy against *antitheses* which are falsely called knowledge.

Implications

- Whatever else we say, we should be mindful that the Bible treats people not only as individuals but as participating in groups based on age and gender.
- Whatever else we say, we should take a look at famous bits of the Bible in their literary contexts rather than as anchorless proverbs.
- Whatever else we say, we should continue to read the Bible carefully.