



## WEEK 6

### Ready for Relational Warfare

Sometimes the hardest battles happen within our own ranks. Paul teaches Timothy how to handle conflicts and problems between church members without destroying relationships. The key principle is remembering that we fight FOR people, not AGAINST them. When dealing with older members, younger members, widows, and leaders, Timothy needs to approach each person like family – with respect, care, and wisdom. Paul gives specific advice about caring for those in need, handling accusations against leaders, and making decisions about church discipline. The goal isn't to win arguments or prove points, but to restore people and protect the church community. Being "fight ready" means knowing how to fight problems and sin while still loving and protecting the people involved.

### THE SCRIPTURE: 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-25

<sup>1</sup> Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, <sup>2</sup> older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. <sup>3</sup> Honor widows who are truly widows. <sup>4</sup> But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup> She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, <sup>6</sup> but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. <sup>7</sup> Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. <sup>8</sup> But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. <sup>9</sup> Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, <sup>10</sup> and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. <sup>11</sup> But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry <sup>12</sup> and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. <sup>13</sup> Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. <sup>14</sup> So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. <sup>15</sup> For some have already strayed after Satan.



# BANNOCKBURN

## LIFEGROUP CURRICULUM

<sup>16</sup> If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows. <sup>17</sup> Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup> For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." <sup>19</sup> Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup> As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. <sup>21</sup> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. <sup>22</sup> Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. <sup>23</sup> (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.) <sup>24</sup> The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. <sup>25</sup> So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

## LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 6

### OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when someone confronted you about something in a way that was helpful rather than hurtful. What made the difference?
2. What's the most challenging relationship you're navigating right now? What makes it difficult?

### DIVING DEEPER

3. Circle all the categories of people mentioned in this passage.
4. Verses 1-2 give instructions for relating to different age groups and genders. Why does Paul use family terms (father, mother, brothers, sisters)? How does this approach prepare us for "relational warfare" and fighting for and not against one another?
5. Paul gives detailed instructions about caring for widows (v3-16). What principles about caring for those in need generally can we extract from this passage? Are there any responsibilities that are asked of the widow?
6. Why do you think it is that widows receive special attention from Paul? What is it about their place in society that makes them especially vulnerable?

7. Verses 17–21 address how to handle accusations against church leaders. What process does Paul outline? Compare this with Matthew 18:15–20. Why is the instruction to not accept accusations against an elder unless collaborated by others important—particularly in today’s electronic age?
8. In verse 20, Paul says to rebuke those who sin “in the presence of all.” Referring again to Jesus’ words in Matthew 18, under what circumstances would public rebuke be deployed in the church? How does public accountability serve as a weapon against spiritual compromise?
9. Verse 22 warns about laying hands on someone too hastily. What does this mean? At what age or stage should we consider laying on of hands?
10. If you were going to play devil’s advocate, how would you defend your tendency to fight against difficult people rather than fight for them?
11. Paul’s instructions seem to balance love with firmness. How can we maintain this balance when dealing with difficult people? When is confrontation actually an act of love?
12. Think of someone you’re tempted to fight against rather than fight for. How might you change your approach based on this passage?