

Qualities of a Faithful Christian Worker

2 TIMOTHY 2 v1-7

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The Disciplines of a Strong Minister (2 Timothy 2:1-7)

Outline for 2 Timothy 2:1-7 :

I. Be strong (1-2)

II. Be diligent (3-7)

- **2 Timothy Chapter 2 focuses on the ideal character of the person who serves Christ. To achieve this, Paul uses several word-pictures to illustrate various facets of the Christian life**
- **These include the example of**
- **Paul and other teachers (2 Timothy 2:1–2),**
- **a soldier (2 Timothy 2:3–4),**
- **an athlete (2 Timothy 2:5),**
- **a farmer (2 Timothy 2:6–7),**
- **Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:8–13),**
- **a worker (2 Timothy 2:14–19),**
- **a vessel (2 Timothy 2:20–23), and**
- **a bond servant (2 Timothy 2:24–26).**
- **This chapter gives solid advice for those who seek to work hard for a faithful God.**

- In an ungodly and antagonistic world, believers must be strong servants or ministers who faithfully serve God and others.
- What are the disciplines of a strong servant or minister of Christ, that can be discerned from 2 Timothy 2:1-7?..... and how can we become one?
- **A Strong Minister Relies on God's Grace v1**
- **A Strong Minister Faithfully Teaches God's Word v2**
- **A Strong Minister Demonstrates the Attitude of a Good Soldier v3-4**
- **A Strong Minister Competes Like an Athlete, According to God's Rules v5**
- **A Strong Minister Is Like a Hardworking Farmer v6**
- **A Strong Minister Is a Faithful Bible Student v7**

1

- **Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**

- **The main issues in this verse is**
- **1- PAUL'S MENTORING of TIMOTHY.....and us.**
- **2- PAUL'S REMINDER TO “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”**
- **Note the words BE STRONG & GODS GRACE**
- **Note also....**
- **The need for this advice**
- **The nature of this advice**

- The need for this advice
- Let us first note that Paul calls Timothy his “child”, being aware of the troubles and the difficulties of the ministry, and also aware of the task before Timothy.
- When we meditate on 2 Timothy 1:2 we observe that Paul lovingly refers to Timothy as “my dearly beloved son”.
- It is noteworthy that in 1 Thessalonians 2:11, Paul points out that when he “exhorted and comforted and charged” every one of the Thessalonians, that he did so “as a father doth his children.”
- It seems that Paul was as a church leader, who expressed the father/son paradigm as his constant approach and practice in ministering to, and with others, as a mentor.
- 2 Timothy 2 clearly describes spiritual mentoring.
- The word mentor means "a wise and responsible tutor" —an experienced person who advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges, corrects, and serves as a model.
- The Bible gives us many examples of such mentorship. Timothy had Paul; Mark had Barnabas; Joshua had Moses; Elisha had Elijah.

- Let us remember that when 2 Timothy was written, that Timothy was a young disciple of Paul, ordained as the bishop of Ephesus.
- At the time, Paul, himself, was in prison, and the church was undergoing widespread persecution under emperor Nero, so for Timothy, facing this incredible hardship in the absence of Paul was difficult.
- Because of the persecution, nearly everyone in Asia had deserted Paul (1:15)—some had, no doubt, even deserted Christ.
- Timothy had every reason to be scared of preaching the word of God at this time: he could very well end up like his teacher Paul, and looking around the tumultuous opposition in Ephesus, he surely had some doubt.
- When reading first and second Timothy, we see Paul's continual encouragement to Timothy.
- In view of the surrounding persecution, Paul had previously called Timothy as recorded in 2 Tim 1:6, 8, 13-14 to use his spiritual gift, to be unashamed of Christ and the gospel, and to guard the apostolic deposit.
- Be strong was an important encouragement for Timothy, because Paul knew that Timothy would need strength and endurance to fulfill the calling God gave him.

- It was important for Timothy to hear this exhortation because it seems according to 2 Tim 1:7, that his natural disposition was the tendency to be timid , and to be easily discouraged, and so he needed to be often told to "Be strong."
- This is one of the twenty-five times Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong and endure in his work in Ephesus.
- Just as Timothy needed to hear this exhortation, so do we.
- So with this background we can see why in Second Timothy 2:1 that Paul urged Timothy, to be "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," in contrast to those who had defected.
- When many were falling away or compromising the faith, Paul wanted Timothy to stand strong.
- Paul's advice to Timothy here then, as his mentor was...**You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**
- "Strong" means to be "inwardly strengthened,' suggesting strength in soul and purpose."

- **If we are going to be faithful servants ministers of Christ, we must be strong.**
- **Because we are constantly under spiritual attack from demons, principalities, and rulers of the darkness.**
- **Because we are in a world that is antagonistic toward Christ, his teachings, and his people.**
- **And also, because of our tendency to sin, get discouraged, and wander away from Christ.**
- **In the midst of all this, we must be strong to complete what God has called us to do.**
- **THERE IS THUS A DEFINITE NEED FOR THIS ADVICE**

- Timothy was told to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2:1).
- There is a certain amount of hardship involved in being a worker in the Lord’s vineyard. Often there are irregular hours, sensitive problems, difficult personalities, and satanic deceptions. It is not easy to deal with some of the situations that arise in church.
- It takes special strength many times to helpfully visit someone who is sick, to write a letter to someone who is discouraged, or to teach a Sunday School lesson to a class of squirming children.
- The message of verse 1 is the resounding “Be strong.”
- We don’t have, in ourselves, all that it takes to do our spiritual duties. We must depend on the special strength that only God can give. [Ephesians 4:7](#) is a wonderful promise: “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”
- God promises to enable us for the task to which He has called us, and he requires that we be strong.
- We are not merely to set our jaws, and grit our teeth, and determine to muster up all the human strength we can develop to do our work.
- Instead, we are to be inwardly strengthened by finding our resources in the grace of God.

- The nature of this advice
- “Be strong” is the main admonition in the first part of the letter. Paul is calling for Timothy to overcome his apparent drift toward weakness and renew his commitment to his ministry.
- Ephesians 6:10 gives the same advice and encouragement, just worded a little differently.
- Ephesians 6:10 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”
- It is not in our strength that we do anything; it is in the strength of the Lord. In our weakness, He is strong. Paul’s advice to Timothy here, as his mentor was.... You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
- “Strong” means to be “inwardly strengthened,” suggesting strength in soul and purpose.”

- How can we become strong ministers/servants of Christ—ones who faithfully complete our God-given work, instead of quitting or falling away?
- When talking about spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6, Paul tells us that God makes the resource of His strength available to us, and enjoins us to be “strengthened in the Lord” ([Ephesians 6:10-11](#)).
- But it does not come as we sit back passively and suppose that God will simply pour it into us. He brings His strength to us as we seek Him and rely on Him instead of our own strength.
- Similarly, when God called Joshua to lead Israel, he said, “Be strong and brave.” He repeats this twice in Joshua 1:7 and 1:9.
- We learn from Isaiah 40:29-30, that God is always there to give us strength
- He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength ... those that wait on the LORD shall renew their strength.
- However, we must *receive* this strength, therefore Paul had to encourage Timothy to be strong.

- If you have already read the whole of 2 Timothy, you would really not have missed the picture a composite portrait of the ideal Christian worker that the Spirit has painted through Paul in this chapter.
- The servant of Christ is to be:
 - 1) Utterly dedicated to his work
 - 2) Accurate and clear in his teaching
 - 3) Upright in his character and conduct
 - 4) Courteous and gentle in his manner
- These are the responsibilities of those who labor and suffer for the sake of the Gospel.
- Paul is certainly very practical in 2 Timothy 2:1-7, as he points to a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer to help us grasp how we should live the Christian life.
- But here in verse 1, he prefaces all this advice by telling us very clearly, that it can't be done without God's grace.
- He tells us to Stand Strong in Grace.
- He tells us that we need to be strong in grace in order to fulfill our mission.

- Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus:
- Paul next told Timothy a specific way to be strong - that is, to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
- This strength in grace is essential for a strong Christian life.
- "*Grace* here has its simplest theological meaning, as the divine help, the unmerited gift of assistance that comes from God." (White)
- Resting in the grace - i.e the *unmerited favor of God towards us that is in Christ Jesus* - gives a confidence and boldness we could never have when thinking we are on probation or thinking God hasn't made up His mind about us yet.
- There is nothing that can makes us as strong as saying, "I am a child of God in Jesus Christ" and "I have the love and favor of God even though I don't deserve it." That is the strength that comes by grace.
- Paul knew what it was like to receive the strength of God's grace, as he explained in [2 Corinthians 12:9-10](#): And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- As a result, He could encourage Timothy like this from his own life experience.

- **As we study Scripture, it is very clear that in our salvation Christ gave us abundant grace—grace to believe, grace to serve, grace to stand, grace to overcome our weaknesses, etc.**
- **Consider the following verses:** John 1:16 says this in the ESV, “For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.”
- Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.”
- First Peter 4:10 says, “Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God.”
- Ephesians 6:10–11 says, “Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- In addition, 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, “But he said to me, ‘My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ So then, I will boast most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me.”
- **So we see then, that a Strong Minister or Servant of Christ Relies on God’s Grace. Hence Paul’s advice in 2 Timothy 2:1.. my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**

- **Since grace has been abundantly given to believers, we must stand and not quit.**
- **Kent Hughes comments on this passage nicely sum up Paul's words to Timothy:**
- **Nothing would come Timothy's way as he guarded the gospel that he would not have the graced strength to handle—no person, no pain, no problem, no responsibility, no tragedy. There would be no time when he could not stand tall. And that is true for all who are in Christ and thus under his grace.**
- **If he calls you to do something, he will supply sufficient strength through his grace. If he calls you to step forward, he will give you the power. If he calls you to step up, he will give you the fortitude. If he calls you to endure, the strength you need will be found in “the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”**
- **So how can we rely on God's grace in our ministry?**

- **1. To rely on God's grace, we must not put our trust in our own abilities.**
- **Philippians 3:3 says, "For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials."**
- **We put no confidence in our abilities. It is when we feel confident in our counseling, serving, or teaching that we lose God's power. God's power is made perfect in our weakness—not our strength.**
- **If we are confident, we must repent. If we feel weak, we must thank God as Paul did. He said that he boasted in his weakness so that Christ's power could rest on him (2 Cor 12:9-10).**
- **Are we recognizing your weakness before God? It is the secret to experiencing his grace.**

- **2. To rely on God's grace, we must abide in Christ.**
- **In John 15:5, Christ said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, because apart from me you can accomplish nothing."**
- **We must daily abide in God's Word, prayer, and worship in order to be strengthened by God's grace. If not, all our work and ministry will be done in the flesh and only produce fleshly results.**
- **Are we abiding in Christ?**

- **3. To rely on God's grace, we must ask for more of it.**
- **God has given us much grace in our salvation. However, there is more that he would like to give.**
- **James 4:6 says he gives more grace.**
- **In James 4:2, the author says we have not because we ask not.**
- **Are we asking for more grace over our parenting, our work, our service, our relationships, etc.?**
- **Are we asking?**

- 4. To rely on God's grace, we must work.
- "Be strong" is passive "indicating that the source of Timothy's strength was not in himself but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."
- The NEB translates this "Take strength from the grace of God which is ours in Christ Jesus."
- Though the phrase "be strong" is passive, it does not suggest passivity.
- Relying on God is more a matter of the heart than an action. However, to rely on his grace, we must, in fact, work.
- As we pray and trust God, we must work in accordance with his grace. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been in vain. In fact, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God with me."
- Some trust in God but don't work. Others work but don't trust. Neither is a proper balance. To not work and simply claim it by faith is to have no faith at all.
- Because God gave grace, Paul worked harder than everyone else, and therefore, God's grace was not without effect.
- We ought to emulate him

- We are not just to be strong, but to be strong by his connection to Christ, by *living* in God's grace. Paul calls Timothy to a new level of spiritual strength.
- We are continually empowered by the grace of God, which he sent forth through his Holy Spirit.
- In Acts 1:8, Christ promised the apostles power, fitting with the mission of the church at its origin at Pentecost: **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.**
- God knew that the service is hard, and he encouraged the disciples to wait until they were **clothed with power from on high** (see Luke 24:49).
- So Paul was not calling Timothy, or us, to get a rush of adrenaline and do it on his/our own, he is calling us to realize the power within Christ.
- It is this power that transformed Peter from denying Christ three times, to preaching until death.
- And every time a new spiritual leader arises in the bible, we find a beckoning call to spiritual strength. Joshua, following the death of Moses, was tasked with leading the people into the promise land. God knowing how arduous the future seemed to Joshua, advised him to be strong and of good courage three times within chapter 1.
- Since our service has been commanded by Christ himself, there is nothing to be ashamed or afraid of because God is with us wherever we go.

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VERSE 2

Like a Teacher

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

- **2 Timothy 2:2** "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
- **"Heard of me"** (see notes on 1:13; 3:14). During Timothy's many years of close association with Paul, he had heard divine truth which God had revealed through the apostle.
- **"Among many witnesses"**: Such as Silas, Barnabas, Luke, and many others in the churches who could attest to the divine authenticity of Paul's teaching, a needed reminder to Timothy in light of the many defections at Ephesus (1:15).

- **the same commit**
- The word **“commit”** means to **“commission”** or to **“ordain.”**
- In order to really make the **“be strong”** calling of verse 1 practical, Paul then provided Timothy with further instructions and advice, starting with four analogies of what a good servant of God should be.
- Paul’s first instruction to Timothy was that **“Faithful Able Teachable men ” (F.A.T MEN)** were to be selected and trained to be leaders and teachers. They were to be **“commissioned”** or **“ordained.”**
- Timothy was told to ordain men to communicate the Word of God (i.e the message he had heard from the Apostle Paul , a.ka the Apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42).
- **“Faithful men, who shall be able to teach others”:**
- Timothy was to take the divine revelation he had learned from Paul and teach it to other faithful men, men with proven spiritual character and giftedness, who would in turn pass on those truths to another generation
- Timothy was to ordain only those who are faithful and utterly dedicated to the work of imparting the gospel message, to others, who would in turn, teach it to still others.
- This has always been the primary means of spreading the gospel: discipleship by the process of multiplication .
- While the written word is important, Christianity has always been meant to be spread through relationship and person-to-person teaching.

- Thus, personal discipleship was to be a vital part of Timothy's leadership, as well as in all church leaders who would become parts of an unbroken chain of spiritual mentoring
- From Paul to Timothy to faithful men to others encompasses four generations of godly leaders. That process of spiritual reproduction, which began in the early church, is to continue, as it has until the Lord returns.
- It seems to me, that Paul is more concerned about the work being carried on after his death, than he is of dying. He is also, very concerned that they do not teach another gospel, than the gospel that he had taught. Paul knows that Timothy will bring what he has taught him.
- He is telling Timothy to seek out later ministers that had begun under his ministry, and encourage them to teach the pure gospel that he had brought.
- Paul was afraid that many of the doctrines would be affected too badly by the customs of the people who they were ministering to. Paul felt that his converts would follow his teachings better, when they were teaching others.
- Note also, that every father and mother should be discipling (teaching, nurturing) their sons and daughters in the things of God. Every grandparent should work at developing spiritual nurture in the hearts of their grandchildren, as they have opportunity.

- **2 Timothy 2 v 2** thus describes the unbroken chain of spiritual mentoring
- **As pointed out previously in this study, the word mentor means "a wise and responsible tutor"—an experienced person who advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges, corrects, and serves as a model.**
- **Someone has rightly observed that the body of Christ grows through "an unbroken chain of teachers."**
- **In 2 Timothy 1, we learn that Timothy became a believer through the influence of his grandmother Lois, his mother Eunice, and the teaching of Paul ([2 Timothy 1:5](#); [2:2](#)).**
- **In 2 Timothy 2:2, the apostle told Timothy to become part of the unbroken chain that commits precious Bible truths to faithful men who will be able to teach others also about the good news of the Gospel which is meant to be shared.**
- **The "faithful men" Paul had in mind were probably church elders, yet he was expressing a principle that applies to every believer. We had to receive the truth from someone; now it is our gracious privilege and solemn duty to transmit that truth to others.**
- **God teaches us so that we can teach others, and a good way to learn God's truth is to teach it to others, because learning is enhanced when we share our knowledge with others.**

- It is very important for us to see a very important principle about discipleship in 2Timothy 2v2- the principle of multiplication.
- Jesus entrusted a huge mission to the church, to reach the world for Christ. Jesus in His great wisdom knew that the twelve disciples could not possibly hope to accomplish this by themselves. He knew also that the most powerful way to spread the gospel is through multiplication, and that accomplishing this by addition is too slow.
- Jesus knew also that it was far more effective to make two disciples who make two more who continue that process than to simply reach one hundred people for Christ who never reproduce.
- And so He devised the most ingenious plan set out in 2Timothy 2v2, that his followers should spread the word of God by faithful men.
- **And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**
- Its an amazing thing that God should be sovereign and allow us to partake in preserving, guarding and passing on the faith. Paul tells Timothy in verse 2 that it really is up to you.
- In Acts 1:1 Luke writes that Jesus *began* to teach and to do, indicating that Jesus' ministry is just the start.
- **Jesus is the ultimate example of this pattern : he taught the 12 who then taught others, who then taught others, until it reached us.**

- The key of this verse is teaching from generation to generation.
- Notice that there are four generations of teachers in this verse : Paul, Timothy, faithful people, and those the faithful people teach.
- Paul taught Timothy, who was then to entrust this knowledge to faithful people, who would be able to in turn teach others also.
- Each teacher thus becomes a link in the living chain which stretches unbroken from this present moment back to Jesus Christ.
- The joy of Bible teaching is knowing that it links the present with the earthly life of Jesus Christ.
- The apostles, including Paul, received the faith (pistis) from Christ and taught the message to faithful men (pistos)like Timothy
- Paul called Timothy to faithfully teach others what he originally learned from Paul.
- In this way Timothy became part of a long train of people who had been entrusted with God's Word with the purpose of them teaching it to others, who have now eventually passed it on to us through this long line of faithful teachers.
- The word "entrust" "carries the idea of depositing something valuable for safekeeping."

- **The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses**
- **Paul was here reminding Timothy of the body of truth that he had heard from the Apostle in the presence of many others.**
- **Paul was here referring to the doctrines delivered to him, ie the proper form of sound words which he was to teach..i.e the apostolic doctrine (c.f Acts :42)**
- **Certainly, Timothy heard many Bible studies from Paul, and shared much time with the Apostle in personal discipleship.**
- **It may be that Paul was reminding Timothy of a special message he presented at Timothy's ordination service when, in the *presence of many witnesses*, he laid his hands upon him (c.f 1Timothy 6:12).**

- **commit these to faithful men**
- **Now Paul tells Timothy to commit or entrust those truths to faithful men in the same way that they were committed to him by Paul.**
- **God did not give ministry to Timothy through Paul, for him to *keep*, but for him to pass on to others. An essential part of his work as a pastor/teacher was to pour into others what God had committed to him.**
- **Timothy was not to teach others his own particular ideas or theories, but only the simple Apostolic doctrine and example, i.e the things that he had heard from Paul.**
- **Whatever that was poured *into* him by Paul, Timothy was responsible to pour into others.**

- **Commit these to faithful men:**
- **The job of training leaders is part of a pastor/teacher's job description. He should always seek to spread ministry about to others, and to train others to do the work of the ministry.**
- **He should not only train leaders when the need for a leader is obvious; nor should he only train leaders for the needs of his congregation alone.**
- **He should train leaders for the Kingdom of God in general, whether they are used in ministry at the particular pastor's congregation or not.**
- **One may say that everything that a pastor does in his ministry he should train others to do. There are no duties of a pastor so holy or so secret that he should keep them all to himself.**

- **Who are those that he should invest the most energy in?**
- **Those people who faithfully attend church and small group meetings.**
- **Those people who use their spiritual gifts to serve others.**
- **Those people who faithfully study the Word individually and corporately.**
- **Those people who are disciplined with their spiritual life, work, ministry, and family.**
- **Those people who do not let entertainment and activities drown out their spiritual life.**
- **When the pastor/teacher invests in these types of people, he multiplies his ministry because these are the types of people who are going to share ministry with others.**
- **It is with faithful that he expands their stewardship of both the Word and service to souls.**
- **This is the goal of discipleship.**

- **Who will be able to teach others also:**
- **The job of training leaders was so important that it could not be restricted to Timothy alone. Those whom he had trained must also be given the job to teach others also.**
- **This is what Christ did with his ministry: Although He ministered to the multitudes and ate with tax collectors and sinners, He had the seventy-two who he sent out to minister and preach the gospel, He had the twelve apostles, and even within the twelve, he had the three—his inner circle of Peter, James, and John.**
- **Though he ministered to everybody, he especially invested in the faithful. We must do the same.**
- **When we are looking for people to disciple, we must look for and find faithful men and women.**
- **Whereas we must most certainly reach out to unbelievers, go after the lost sheep, encourage the nominal, we must invest the majority of your time in the faithful, and entrust the Word to them, and encourage them to obey it and to pass it on to others.**
- **We again say that finding faithful men and women who will in turn train others, is the goal of discipleship, so that the propagation of the gospel keeps going and going, and spreading throughout the world.**
- **This is what really accomplishes generational discipleship.**
- **Will be able** "Expresses capability as proved by experience." (White)
- **In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul uses the phrase "faithful people" or it can be translated "reliable people."**

- **Who will be able to teach others also.**
- Through the history of Christianity, some have held to the idea of *apostolic succession*. This is the idea that you can know who a true minister of the gospel is because Peter ordained someone to succeed him, and that one ordained someone to succeed him, and the next one ordained someone to succeed him, so forth and so on down the line.
- "Where is the *uninterrupted* apostolic succession? Who can tell? Probably it does not exist on the face of the world. All the pretensions to it by certain Churches are as stupid as they are idle and futile." (Clarke)
- **However, this verse reveals the real apostolic succession - the succession of faithful men, who take the teachings of the apostles and pass them on.**
- **Without faithfulness to the teaching and example of the apostles, the idea of apostolic succession is nothing more than the laying of empty hands upon empty heads.**
- **When Timothy looked for those whom he could pour Apostolic doctrine and practice into, he was to look for the quality of *faithfulness*.**
- **He didn't need to find smart men, popular men, strong men, easy men, perfect men, or good-looking men; Paul told him to look for faithful men **Who will be able to teach others also.****
- **Finding faithful men and women who will in turn train others, is the goal of discipleship, so that the propagation of the gospel keeps going and going, and spreading throughout the world.**
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- **It is like a relay race where individuals keep passing the baton from one person to another.**
- **Sadly, in this race, there are people who for some reason feel tired or distracted and therefore drop the baton or quit the race all together. Maybe they say, “I don’t feel like reading the Bible!” “I don’t feel like going to church!” or “I don’t feel like sharing God’s Word with others!”, and therefore, they break the link. There is nothing more selfish than this.**
- **They feel to see that we are living links in a chain, and therefore, we must each be a faithful teacher of God’s Word, and pass it on to others.**
- **They feel to see that passing this is baton saves and changes lives.**
- **They feel to see that when we drop it, that we neglect the work of Christ, the apostles, pastors, teachers, small group leaders, youth leaders, and parents who faithfully passed it on to us.**
- **They feel to see that we must thus each be faithful students and teachers of God’s Word, and a reliable, faithful link in the chain of passing the Gospel along, and to not neglect the stewardship passed on to us.**
- **First Corinthians 4:1-2 says, “This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”**
- **Have you been neglecting the stewardship passed on to you, or are you sharing the Gospel with others.**

- In verse 2 Paul is saying to Timothy, and us “you are a link in a chain and you need to both guard the purity of the treasure, and then *pass it on*.
- You are a link in a relay race and someone is waiting for you to give them the baton.
- *You can't just sit down. It's not up to you!*
- The treasure has been invested in you and you have to keep the truth going!

- **In 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 15, Paul describes unfaithful servants who stopped running. Who stopped teaching. And he includes these names to say, look Timothy? Do you want to be like them? or do you want to be on the Bible team and keep running in the continual cycle of being filled by the power of God, protecting and contending for “the faith”, and then teaching it to others also?**
- **Every faithful servant of God needs to remember that they are a link in something far bigger, and it is their duty to learn as much as they can about the faith, and to guard it, and then teach it.**

- **VERSE 3**
- Paul uses the word picture of a Courageous Soldier in 2 Timothy 2:3–4 when he says to the young Christian worker, Timothy, **“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2:3-4).**
- 2 Timothy 2:3-4 requires believers to persevere for God with a soldier's attitude.
- The word translated “soldier” means “a soldier in battle, one serving on active duty.”
- 2 Timothy 2:3 points out that believers are to **“endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2:3)**, and thereby demonstrate the rigid discipline and courage needed to stand firmly against the enemy.

- **2 Timothy 2:3** points out also that “We are to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2:3). The soldier illustrates rigid discipline and courage to stand firmly against the enemy.
- **You therefore must:** This was not a suggestion from Paul to Timothy; **must** carries the sense of a requirement or a command. There was something that Timothy had to do, and Paul told him to do it.
- **Endure hardship as a good soldier:** Timothy must take the attitude of soldier who *expects* to endure hardship for their cause. Believers must be willing to face any hardship in the name of Jesus, our Commander and Chief.
- **We march at His orders.** Paul speaks with full knowledge of this war that rages. He faced many hardships in his ministry, and is warning Timothy to be prepared.
- **No real soldier - or at least no good soldier - ever gave up simply because some hardship came to them.**
- **In the same way, if a believer is not willing to endure hardship, they will never accomplish much for Jesus Christ. They will give up as soon as something hard is required of them; they cannot fulfill Jesus' call: *If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* ([Matthew 16:24](#))**
- **"Never dream of delicacy; think not to find God in the gardens of Egypt, whom Moses found not but in the burning-bush." (Trapp)**
- **Christians are to share in suffering—hardship for the sake of Christ—like a soldier. Soldiers are characterized by their discipline: they are not distracted by "civilian pursuits," they work together as a team, and their primary focus is on following the instructions of their leader.**
- **So too are Christians to be concerned, first and foremost, with the work of God and His will.**

- **“A good soldier”**
- Note that Paul does not exhort Timothy to be just a common, or ordinary soldier, but to be a 'good soldier of Jesus Christ;' for all soldiers, and all true soldiers, may not be good soldiers.
- There are men who are but just soldiers and nothing more; they only need sufficient temptation and they readily become cowardly, idle, useless and worthless; but he is the good soldier who is bravest of the brave, courageous at all times, who is zealous, does his duty with heart and earnestness." (Spurgeon)
- **“A good soldier”** is the metaphor of the Christian life as warfare, against the evil world system, the believer's sinful human nature, and Satan, is a familiar one in the New Testament (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20; 1 Thess. 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:7; 6:12).
- Here Paul is dealing with the conflict against the hostile world and the persecution (verses 9; 1:8; 3:11-12; 4:7).
- There is a battle going on between the flesh and the Spirit, and it has been going on ever since Paul spoke this and before. Every person who ministers in any capacity is a soldier in God's army. We are in this war to the death. Paul knew this, as he faced death.
- Since Paul was martyred, there have been many believers who have given their lives for the gospel's sake. This war is real. We are told, in the 6th chapter of Ephesians, to put on the whole armor of God in this battle.

4

- **⁴ No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier**

- **A Strong Minister Demonstrates the Attitude of a Good Soldier**
- **2 Timothy 2:4 "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of [this] life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."**
- **"Entangleth himself": Just as a soldier called to duty is completely severed from the normal affairs of civilian life, so also must the good soldier of Jesus Christ refuse to allow the things of the world to distract him (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17).**
- **As Paul in this verse pointed to the focus required to be a soldier, he explained to Timothy the necessity of having nothing else on his mind while he is a soldier of the gospel.**
- **He points out that, no one in military service gets entangled in matters of everyday life; otherwise he will not please the one who recruited him.**
- **Soldiers must concentrate on one thing, and that is winning the war. They cannot divide their attention with other things of the world and expect to win the battle.**
- **This means that their thoughts cannot be divided with a job, or any other affair at hand.**

- **No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life: Timothy must take the attitude of a soldier, who willingly detaches himself from the things of civilian life.**
- **A soldier has to give up many things. Some of them are bad things (pride, independence, self-will), and some of them are good things (his home, his family). Nevertheless, if a soldier is not willing to give up these things, he is not a soldier at all.**
- **The things that might *entangle* a soldier might be good or bad for a civilian. The soldier can't ask if something is good or bad for those who are not soldiers; he must give up anything that gets in the way of being a good soldier or serving his commanding officer. A faithful soldier does not have the right to do anything that will entangle them and make them less effective as a soldier.**
- "It is well remarked by *Grotius*, on this passage, that **the legionary soldiers among the Romans were not permitted to engage in husbandry, merchandise, mechanical employments, or any thing that might be inconsistent with their calling.**" (Clarke)

- Now when every believer was born again, they became a soldier of Christ Jesus, and they were enlisted in a war. They are in a war with their flesh, as they fight against sin (1 Pet 2:11).
- They are in a war with the devil, as they fight against powers and principalities and rulers of the darkness (Eph 6:10-13).
- And they are in a war against the world, as they fight against being conformed to its pattern (Rom 12:2).
- We are all soldiers in a war whether we recognize it or not. The question is, “Are we good soldiers?” Charles Spurgeon said it this way:
 - Paul does not exhort Timothy to be a common, or ordinary soldier, but to be a ‘good soldier of Jesus Christ;’ for all soldiers, and all true soldiers, may not be good soldiers.
 - There are men who are but just soldiers and nothing more; they only need sufficient temptation and they readily become cowardly, idle, useless and worthless; but he is the good soldier who is bravest of the brave, courageous at all times, who is zealous, does his duty with heart and earnestness.

- That he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier:
- If Timothy did not endure hardship and if he did not put away the things that entangled him in the affairs of this life, he would not be pleasing to his Commanding Officer.
- Jesus Christ is the commander of all heaven's armies.
- In [Joshua 5](#), Jesus appeared to Joshua as *Commander of the army of the LORD* ([Joshua 5:14](#)). He is our Commanding Officer, and we owe total obedience to Him as such.
- ii. It is likely that Paul was chained to a soldier even as he wrote this. He saw how these soldiers acted, and how they obeyed their commanding officers. Paul knew that this is how a Christian must act towards their Lord.
- We learn what pleases God by knowing his Word, discerning his will through prayer, his work in our hearts, the counsel of godly saints, and his sovereignty over the events of life. Our ultimate desire must be to please God, our Commanding Officer.

- **1. Good soldiers are willing to suffer for Christ.**
- Again, **Paul says,**
“Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (v. 3).
- **As Christians were being persecuted throughout the Roman Empire, many deserted Paul, and probably Christ. Paul calls Timothy to be a good soldier who does not shrink from suffering. People enlist in the military knowing that they may have to suffer and even give their life for their country. This should be true of Christians as well.**
- Christ said this **in Matthew 16:24–25, “If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”**
- To take up our cross refers to the daily battle with our flesh. We must die daily to our affections for sin. But it also means being willing to suffer for Christ in a world that hates him and his Word. Timothy needed this attitude and so does every Christian.
- Are you willing to suffer for Christ?

- **2. Good soldiers stand with other soldiers.**
- **When Paul said, “take your share of suffering,” it not only was a call to suffer but to stand with fellow suffering soldiers—for Timothy to take his share of the whole. One of the goals of the military is to take individuals and form them into a community willing to suffer for both their country and one another.**
- I remember when I enlisted and went through basic training in the Air Force. After eight weeks of following our training instructor, I felt a supreme amount of trust and affection for him and that I could even die for him, as well as for others in my unit. It should be the same for believers with the church.
- **Though we are individuals, one of the aims of the New Testament is to teach us that we are a body and that we are dependent upon one another (cf. 1 Cor 12). We may not feel this instinctively, but we must learn it and live it out. In the same way that the eyes need the hands and the feet, we need one another. When one part of the body suffers, we suffer. And when another part of the body excels, we excel.**
- **We must learn this as members of one body, but also as soldiers in Gods army. We do this, in part, by sharing our problems and joys with one another, carrying one another’s burdens, and protecting one another. Many never experience this reality because they never share their burdens, never carry others’ burdens, and never seek to protect their brothers and sisters. Therefore, they know nothing of the ‘experience’ of being part of the army of Christ and part of his body.**
- Are you committed to the body of Christ—the army of God? Or are you a lone-ranger?

- **3. Good soldiers focus on their job by avoiding distractions.**
- **Paul says, “No one in military service gets entangled in matters of everyday life” (v. 4).** What does he mean by this? **When a person enlists, he often leaves friends, family, and other career ambitions to focus on serving his country. It is not that he never talks to his friends and family, it’s just that in certain seasons of military service, like a deployment, they cannot be his primary focus.**
- Macdonald said this about verse 4:
- **The emphasis is on the word entangles. The soldier must not allow ordinary affairs of life to become the main object of existence. For instance, he must not make acquiring food and clothing the main aim of life. Rather, the service of Christ must always occupy the prominent place, while the things of this life are kept in the background.⁷**
- John MacArthur adds,
- I recall a story about a Civil War soldier who happened to be a watchmaker. One day the bugle sounded and the men were told to break camp. “But I can’t go now!” the soldier complained. “I have a dozen watches to repair!”⁸
- **Sadly, many Christians are like this: career, family, friends, entertainment, and many other things come before God and his mission. They may be soldiers; however, they are not good ones. They are distracted and entangled in affairs that often keep them out of church, God’s Word, and prayer, and therefore, they can’t faithfully serve in God’s army.**
- What is entangling and distracting you from faithfully serving in God’s army?

- **4. Good soldiers aim to please their Commanding Officer, Christ.**
- Sadly, many are more focused on pleasing friends, family, professors, or bosses. Proverbs 29:25 says, “the fear of people becomes a snare.” Many, including those serving in pastoral ministry, are ensnared by the expectations of others which keeps them from fully committing to Christ and doing his will. They become people pleasers instead of God pleasers. **In Galatians 1:10, Paul said, “Am I now trying to gain the approval of people, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ!”**
- Are you a slave of Christ or a people pleaser? You can’t have two masters; you will always hate one and love the other.
- **Timothy was timid and not naturally disposed to the attitudes of a soldier. However, Scripture seems to indicate that by God’s grace he in fact developed these attitudes and faithfully discharged his duties.**
- **Hebrews 13:23 says, “You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon, he will be with me when I see you.”**
- At some point, he was imprisoned for his faith and eventually released. By God’s grace, Timothy was a good soldier of Christ, and by God’s grace, we can be as well.
- We can be soldiers that are willing to suffer, partner with other soldiers, avoid distractions, and please our Commanding Officer—Christ.

3-4 summary

- A soldier – Paul uses three examples which Timothy would have been very familiar with to illustrate the type of Christian life Timothy should pursue.
- **A soldier should be willing to face hardship.** Good Christian soldiers are willing to suffer for Christ
- **A soldier has a master. Ours is Jesus.**
- **A soldier is not attached to the world.** Good Christian soldiers stand with other soldiers.
- **A soldier does not allow entanglements to distract him from his mission.** Good Christian soldiers focus on their job by avoiding distractions
- **A soldier's job is to obey and please his master.** Good Christian soldiers aim to please their Commanding Officer, Christ.
- Look after wounded feed each other
- We are in a spiritual battle. We have enemies much worse than the worst terrorists in the world. Our enemy wants to destroy our lives and pollute our souls. He will not be satisfied unless we are in hell.
- **Are you a good soldier of Christ or just a soldier? Christ has given grace to be faithful, even amidst hardships and temptations.**
- *Application Question:* What are some other important qualities of a good soldier that are necessary in the **Christian** life?

5

- **And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.**
- **A Strong Minister Competes Like A Law-Abiding Athlete, According to God's Rules**
- Paul often drew upon the world of athletics for illustrations of the Christian life in his letters. He mentions track and field (1 Cor 9:12, 24), boxing (1 Cor 9:26), and wrestling (Eph 6:12).
- Here in 2 Timothy 2:5, he refers generally to sports and particularly to the Greek games, and uses the word picture of an athlete.
- 2 Timothy 2:5, says that **if a man strives for masteries, "yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully."** The text is speaking of athletic events, and more literally says, **"If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules"** (NIV). **OR If a man strives for masteries, "he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully."**
- **"Strive for masteries"**: The Greek verb *athleo* expresses the effort and determination needed to compete successfully in an athletic event (1 Cor. 9:24). This is a useful picture of spiritual effort and untiring pursuit of the victory to those familiar with events such as the Olympic Games and the Isthmian Games (held in Corinth).
- **"Crowned ... lawfully"**: All an athlete's hard work and discipline will be wasted if he or she fails to compete according to the rules. This is a call to obey the Word of God in the pursuit of spiritual victory.
- Paul is saying, whatever you do, do it within the law. Do not take shortcuts. Fight the good fight within the law. Then when you win, you have done it honestly.

- **The Olympic games and other similar athletic competitions had already been established at this time in history. So Timothy would have been quite familiar with the life of an athlete and their single-minded focus on winning the prize.**
- **In the Greek games at the time, there were three rules that each athlete had to keep:**
 - **(1) he had to be a true born Greek,**
 - **(2) he had to prepare at least ten months for the games and swear to that before a statue of Zeus, and**
 - **(3) he had to compete within the specific rules for any given event- he had to obey the rules of his game.**
- **Paul emphasized the keeping of the rules. In our mind, most of us would think about keeping the rules during the contest itself. The rules of the event were certainly part of it, but in the ancient games, one was required to participate in the training regiment if he was to compete. There were no last minute entries (at least not without a bribe). All participants were required to practice with the other contestants in the weeks leading up to the event and were expected to arrive at that practice in physical shape.**
- **They had to look the part of an athlete as well as perform. For the ancient athlete, preparing was everything.**

- **Every athlete, often from a young age, spends time learning the rules of a sport. A basketball player knows that he can't carry the basketball while running—that's a travel. He can't slap somebody on the wrist while playing—that's a foul.**
- **To fail to abide by any of those requirements meant automatic disqualification. An athlete does not win unless he or she competes according to the rules of the game. Breaking the rules in an effort to "win" meant disqualification.**
- **The point is clear. An athlete can't make up the rules as he pleases; he must compete according to the rules if he wants to receive the crown.**
- **In the same way, Christians must strive to know the entire revelation of Scripture so that we may be approved by God (2 Tim 2:15) and not disqualified for the prize—eternal reward.**
- **The strong believer also has very specific rules that he must follow... these rules being: (1) baptized as a true Christian, (2) disciplined in studying scripture and (3) law abiding. If we are going to be rewarded, we must, like athletes, compete according to God's rules.**
- **Just as an athlete will not be crowned as the winner unless he competes according to the rules. Believers will not be rewarded, unless we compete according to God's rules.**

- **We have already said that every game has its rules, and that regardless of how competent athletes may be, unless they adhere to the rules of the game, they will be disqualified.**
- **Spiritual warfare has rules too! Our heavenly Coach expects us to keep the great spiritual laws laid down in the Bible.**
- ***One basic law of Christian warfare is love.*** This law should keep church members from clobbering each other with ugly criticism and hateful words, and with **suspicious about the motives of others.** A baseball player in athletic contests would soon be eliminated if he used his bat on fellow players instead of on the ball.
- ***Another basic law in the Christian warfare is persistence.*** This law should keep **Christian servants from giving up when things don't go the way we think they should go.** In Old Testament times, when Daniel first requested a diet of vegetables (instead of the king's rich foods), his request was not granted. But he didn't give up, and when he suggested a 10-day trial period, the officer agreed to give it a try.
- **God's servants should be like an athlete. They must observe the rules of the game, and they must be willing to train rigorously to excel.**
- Players on high school football fields, in the fall of the year, put all that they have into rigorous training. Sports enthusiasts work hard to develop skills in various areas—throwing a ball into a basket, sliding down a snow-covered slope on two sticks of wood, and chasing a little white ball all over a big green field.
- **Just so, the life of every Christian worker should be one strenuous endeavor to live out the Christian faith during each moment of every day.**
- **We believers must persevere for God with an athlete's attitude**

- **Just as athletes are in a competition, a race. We believers are also in a race (c.f Hebrews 12:1)**
- **Just as athletes must be self-disciplined. We believers must say “no” to our flesh.**
- **Just as athletes seek a temporary crown/prize/medal. We believers seek an eternal crown, eternal rewards that will not fade.**
- **Just as athletes will be disqualified and thrown out of the competition if they break the rules. So will we.**
- **God is the one who sets the rules. We cannot pick and choose which ones to follow. We cannot make up our own rules as we go. We must commit ourselves to following God’s standard, not our own.**
- **Just as athletes train hard, avoid distractions., are goal focused, aren’t complacent, and always try to improve. We believers can do the same and learn these and much more from athletes.**
- **We believers must persevere for God with an athlete's attitude**

- **Sadly, many Christians don't know the rules, or they simply try to make up their own. Some even talk as though they have some special relationship with God which allows them to break the rules. It is possible to fall into the mistake of thinking that we can make up our own rules for our Christian life.**
- **I've met Christians who say things like, " "I know this is sin, but God understands where I'm at right now, and I feel like I'm OK with him. so I'll just keep going in this sin."**
- **" Then they go on to describe why it's OK for them to date an unbeliever, to live with their boyfriend, to not go to church, or to participate in some other form of rebellion. This goes against the attitude of an athlete who must compete according to the rules.**

- **Though the Christian life is often compared with an athletic competition, we are not competing against each other, but to complete the race God has given us and be rewarded (cf. 1 Cor 9:24-26, Heb 12:1). For this reason, we must keep the rules, lest we become disqualified (v. 27).**
- **How can Christians follow God's rules like an athlete?**
- **Ephesians 5:8b-10 says, "Walk as children of the light—for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."**
- Are you competing like an athlete—according to God's revealed will?
- *Application Question:* How can we discern God's will concerning things not clearly taught in Scripture like what job to take, who to marry, etc.? What other disciplines of an athlete are important in our

- In 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 we see Paul use the analogy of an athlete: **Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly.**
- First of all, we need to have a goal!
- No one wants to watch a soccer game with no nets... the players run around and tackle each other until they get tired. There must be a prize! A goal! LeBron doesn't play basketball to be in a Sprite commercial! He plays to win an NBA title!
- Secondly, an athlete must have self discipline in what they eat and how they exercise every day. Paul uses this analogy again with Timothy:
- Just as “in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules,” similarly in the Christian life, there are boundaries which cannot be crossed.

6

- **6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.**
- **Verses 6–7 focus on the role of a farmer.**
- **The image of a farmer also invokes the ideas of patience and hard work.**
- **Believers ought to persevere for God with the attitude of a farmer.**
- **CHRISTIANS MUST BE HARD WORKING LIKE FAITHFUL FARMERS**
- **CHRISTIANS MUST BE PATIENT LIKE FAITHFUL FARMERS**
- **CHRISTIANS MUST HOPE IN A FUTURE HARVEST LIKE FAITHFUL FARMERS**

- In 2 Timothy 2:6, we read about the “husbandman” (Old English for “farmer”).
- Paul switches metaphors here, from sports to agriculture, and he exhorts Timothy to be a strong minister by modeling a hardworking farmer who works hard to raise a crop.
- Timothy would have been very familiar with farmers as most of the world at that time was dominated by agriculture.
- One would likely pass many fields and crops as part of daily life.
- “Hard-working”, is from a Greek verb meaning “to toil intensely, to sweat and strain and labor to the point of exhaustion if necessary.”
- In calling Timothy to have the attitude of a farmer, Paul emphasized the fact that farmers are hard-working. In the same way, all who serve the Lord should be hard-working.
- In the same way that farmers work long hours of backbreaking labor under all kinds of conditions, with the hope that their physical effort would be rewarded by a good harvest....so too, Paul is urging Timothy not to be lazy or indolent, but to labor intensely (Col. 1:28-29), with a view to the harvest (1 Cor. 3:5-8).

- **The farmer toils for many hours. Sometimes he is confronted with poor soil, with bad weather, and with uncertain markets. The life of a farmer is not generally an easy life.**
- **The farmer must plow his fields and sow the seed and cultivate the ground.**
- **Often, he must work, not by the clock, but when the job needs to be done. Sometimes he gets up before sunrise, and works long after dark in order to get the job done before a change in the weather.**
- **Christian farmers must be faithful in the mundane like farmers are.**
- **The teacher often finds exhilaration in the aspiring minds of his students, the soldier often has the excitement of battle, and the athlete the thrill of competing. But most of a farmer's working hours are tedious, humdrum, and unexciting...**
- **Unlike the soldier and the athlete, there is nothing glamorous about the work a farmer does. It is often tedious, boring, and unexciting. The nation's best farmer really isn't a celebrity. But he must work hard just the same.**
- **Many Christians' lives are like the farmer's. Although there may be occasional times of excitement and special satisfaction, the daily routine is often, in itself, unattractive and unrewarding.**
- **Most of the Christian life is being faithful in the mundane—the everyday, ordinary tasks. We don't always experience harvest seasons or times of revival. Most times life includes hard labor with little fruit and little encouragement. However, it is probably in those seasons where our true faith shows.**
- **It's easy to have faith on the mountain top, but what about while in the valley or climbing the mountain? If we're going to be hardworking farmers, we have to be faithful in the mundane seasons of breaking up hard ground, sowing seed, and waiting.**

- **Hard-working:** Paul knew the value of hard work. He could say, comparing himself with the other apostles, *I labored more abundantly than they all* ([1 Corinthians 15:10](#)).
- Paul wasn't just called, he wasn't just blessed, he wasn't just anointed; Paul also worked hard. And his ministry would have been far less than it was if he had *not* worked hard.
- i. Some people expect something for nothing. But wise people know that you often get out of things according to the measure you put into them. If you are putting forth little effort in your Christian walk, you should expect little result.
- Yet at the same time, Paul knew that all the work he did was the gift of God's grace in him: *I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me* ([1 Corinthians 15:10](#)). Paul knew the balance of working hard, yet always knowing it is all of grace.

- **A Strong Minister Is Like a Hardworking Farmer**
- If we are going to be strong ministers, we must be willing to work hard.
- Our emotions can't control us, our faith in God must. Just as farmers get up early to work the field and, at times, go to bed late after working all day, we must demonstrate that same faithfulness in our labor. If we're going to be strong and not weak, we must work hard.
- With that said, more characteristics are implied by Paul's illustration of a hardworking farmer that partakes in the harvest.

- Sadly, many Christians think they don't have to work hard—they just need to wait and trust God. Maybe, they're in a spiritual rut—they don't enjoy their spiritual disciplines and are struggling with some sin. But instead of disciplining themselves to get out of it, they are apathetic and lazy.
- They think it's God responsibility to change them with no effort on their own. Therefore, they fold their hands, and their hearts, and get mad at God.
- Essentially, they say, "Why won't God change me? Why won't he give me a heart for his Word or to serve? Why won't he set me free from this sin?"
- **However, Scripture says, "continue working out your salvation with awe and reverence, for the one bringing forth in you both the desire and the effort—for the sake of his good pleasure—is God" (Phil 2:12-13).**
- We should work because God is working in us. We need to faithfully do our part.
- **God has no place for lazy ministers. If you will not work hard, get out of the ministry. If you will only work hard if you are in the limelight, then let God change your heart.**
- **"Idle drones disgrace every department of the Christian Church. They cannot teach because they will not learn." (Clarke)**
- **You cannot be a teacher of the Word of God, until you know the Word of God yourself. You cannot win people to Christ, until you are a Christian yourself. You must know how to work, before your work is productive.**

- **Christians must be patient like farmers.**
- **Just as farmers are patient, and may work for a long time without any visible results while they hope for the harvest, believers must also be patient as they wait and hope for a future harvest.**
- **Farmers often face setbacks and challenges. Sometimes they reap a large crop. Sometimes they reap a very small crop. But they faithfully keep sowing the seed, hoping and believing that they will reap. Making disciples and sowing the seed of the Word is often like this as well**
- **Christian farmers must be patient, and faithful in the mundane, just like the farmer.**
- **Just as the farmer works hard but waits on God to make the fruit grow; ministers must do the same. If we are not patient, we will become frustrated with the spiritual growth of others or even ourselves. We must remember that Paul said in Philippians 1:6, “For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”**

- **The Christian worker and servant of Christ, must like the farmer, sow the seed of the Word of God. must establish friendships, plant the seed of God's Word, and cultivate the soil of hearts, and then he must wait patiently.**
- **Just like when the farmer has done his part, he must sit back and wait for the rains, and let the powers of nature produce fruit, the Christian worker and servant of Christ must do the same.**
- **In the same way that the farmer, more than any other workman, soon learns that there are no quick results and that he must not keep digging up the seed to see if it has sprouted, so must the Christian worker and servant of Christ patiently do the same.**
- **We never see a farmer yelling at the field. He simply works, while patiently trusting in God.**
- **The Christian worker and servant of Christ must do the same, and be confident in the working of God, and not become frustrated at oneself or others.**

- Just as farmers don't work in vain and expect a harvest, believers also farmers hope for a future harvest. Paul's point is that serving God comes with a reward. We don't serve God in vain, because God rewards those who are faithful to Him.
- First Corinthians 15: 58 says, "...Always be outstanding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."
- Like a good farmer, any godly pastor will work hard and he will patiently await the harvest - which really comes at the end of the age, not at the end of the meeting
- What type of harvest is Paul referring to?
- Two types of harvest most naturally come to mind: Obviously, we should work for the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc. (Gal 5:22-23)—to be born in our lives and others. These fruits should motivate us as we labor. Initially, all we may see is the opposite of these fruits—anger, unforgiveness, lack of discipline, etc., but as we sow the truth with love into hearts, fruit may in fact grow.
- Secondly, harvest also refers to the salvation of souls. Christ said the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few (Matt 9:37). We should labor in prayer, share the gospel, and live holy lives with the hope of seeing the fruit of salvation.
- If we are going to be strong ministers who last and don't give up, we must be hardworking farmers. We must demonstrate patience, faithfulness in the mundane, and also hope in a harvest.
- The harvest of souls might include members of your own family, or perhaps a neighbor—or maybe a friend you met along the way.
- **The hard-working farmer deserves a share of the crops as part of his reward (2:6). When the believer like the weeping sower ([Psalm 126:6](#)) continues to keep on patiently sowing the precious seed of the word , he shall someday bring a harvest of souls, with rejoicing.**
- The Apostle Paul says that we are to seriously meditate on these things (2:7).

- **2 Timothy 2:6 says, “The farmer who works hard ought to have the first share of the crops.” The farmer who works hard ought to have the first share of the crops**
- **Before they sell the crops, farmers keep some for themselves and their family.**
- **Similarly when Timothy had spiritual food to give to the congregation, he must eat of it first. If he isn't being fed from the Word of God, he can't really feed others.**
- **An effective pastor or teacher should get more out of the message than the audience does, and his time of preparation to teach God's should also be a time of warm fellowship with God.**
- **Like a good farmer, any godly pastor will work hard and he will patiently await the harvest - which really comes at the end of the age, not at the end of the meeting.**
- **Paul's point is that serving God comes with a reward. We don't serve God in vain. God rewards those who are faithful to Him.**
- **First Corinthians 15: 58 says, “...Always be outstanding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”**

- **MacDonald suggests a different translation, as originally shared by Darby. He says,**
- **While Darby agrees that the above is a possible rendering, he suggests that the sense of the passage is that the farmer must work in order to enjoy a share of the harvest. Therefore, he translates, “The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits.”**
- **This preserves the thought of necessity: The soldier must endure; the athlete must keep the rules; the farmer must work hard.**
- **Either way, it is clear that Christians, as do farmers, must work hard to receive a harvest.**
- **It is hope in seeing the harvest that inspires both the hardworking farmer and the hardworking Christian. Without hope, we’ll get discouraged and give up.**

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- If we are going to be strong ministers who last and don't give up, we must be hardworking farmers. We must demonstrate patience, faithfulness in the mundane, and also hope in a harvest.
- *Application Question:* Which characteristic of a hardworking farmer do you feel most challenged to grow in and why?

Verse7

2 Timothy 2:7 "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

**Looking to the Lord
for understanding.**

- **“Consider” or “think**
- The Greek word translated consider denotes clear perception, full understanding, and careful consideration.
- Paul tells Timothy to “think about” what he said and the Lord would give “understanding.”
- The word “think” means “to consider carefully,” “to ponder,” or “to mull over.”
- The form of the verb used is “an imperative indicating that Paul was not only giving mere advice , but that he was giving a strong admonition, to give deep thought to what he was writing.
- Paul’s instructions in verse 7 has applications for understanding not just 2 Timothy 2:1-6 but all of Scripture.
- Therefore, to be a strong minister, Timothy would need to be a faithful Bible student, and this is true for us as well.
- Timothy was here instructed to see the importance of perseverance, and to receive understanding from the Lord in all these things.
- In this verse we see both God’s work and our responsibility. God is the one who grants understanding. He is the one who enlightens our hearts. He is the one who opens our spiritual eyes.
- God is faithful and will give us understanding in all these things, and He will be faithful to give us the grace to *be strong* and to holding steadfastly to the truth.
- God gives this and we must receive it.

- Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.
- Paul wants Timothy to read between the lines and understand what he is really saying to him.
- Jesus spoke in parables and then told His disciples the meaning of the parables.
- Paul is saying, let the Holy Spirit within you open your understanding to what I have said.
- You have ears to hear. Understand in your inner man.
- In verse 7 Paul is asking us to truly reflect, and ponder and ask “When I review my life, do I conclude that I am a STRONG Christian? Being a faithful disciple requires diligence. Am I diligent?”
- Paul is saying to Timothy, and to us “ it’s up to you and the Lord now.”
- As a servant of Christ , who is struggling and overwhelmed, take these four pictures and keep going.
- Give away your life to pass the baton. Don’t break the rules. Don’t be entangled with the world. And keep working hard because it’s up to you.
- For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. – Hebrews 6:10

- **Consider what I say:**
- **Paul has just explained three illustrations of the Christian life - a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer.**
- **Each of these three occupations need great *perseverance* to succeed.**
- **- The soldier who stops fighting before the battle is finished, will never see victory.**
- **- The athlete who stops running before the race is over will never win the race.**
- **- The farmer who stops working before the harvest is complete will never see the fruit of his crops.**
- **Just as athletes, farmers, and soldiers are hard-working, believers we must be hard-working spiritually.**
- **Prayer is hard work. Teaching the Bible is hard work. Loving our family is hard work. Studying the Word is hard work.**
- **But if we want to grow, we must be willing to do the hard work because there are no shortcuts.**

- **May the Lord give you understanding in all things:**
- **We must meditate carefully on the God's Word to increase our understanding of it.**
- **Many things in the Bible are simple, but not everything.**
- **Sometimes when we read it, we don't understand the logic, the culture, the principle, or the doctrine.**
- **What should we do you when we don't understand the Bible?**
- **1. To understand Scripture, we must study it.**
- **As mentioned above, to "think" means to "consider carefully."**
- **One of the reasons many aren't growing in knowledge of Scripture is because they never carefully consider it. They quickly look over a few verses in the morning or at night, if they do it at all, then wonder why they don't get anything from it and are not growing.**
- **They passively listen to a sermon on Sunday, and expect the Holy Spirit to saturate them with understanding and fruit. However, he doesn't. And the reason is because they are not "carefully considering" it. They are not studying.**
- **Psalm 1 talks about the blessing on the man that "meditates" day and night on God's law. The word "meditates" is used of a cow chewing his cud. He chews, swallows, regurgitates, and then chews, swallows, and regurgitates again, and so on.**
- **God blesses those who study Scripture like that. He gives them more understanding and blesses them in many other ways. He makes them like trees that bear fruit in season (1:3).**
- **One application of the tree metaphor is the strength of a tree. Because of their root system, they can stand amidst great storms. That's what Paul wanted of Timothy. He wanted him to grow strong in God's grace through meditating on God's Word.**

- **2. To understand Scripture, we must rely on God.**
- **Studying, by itself, will not unlock the truths of Scripture or produce fruit. God must give us understanding.**
- **Therefore, like David, we must always pray, “Open my eyes so I can truly see the marvelous things in your law... Teach me, O LORD, the lifestyle prescribed by your statutes, so that I might observe it continually” (Ps 119:18, 33).**
- **Whereas some rely on God but don’t carefully consider, others carefully consider but don’t rely on God.**
- **They pull out their commentaries, biblical encyclopedias, and Greek and Hebrew lexicons and yet still don’t gain understanding or fruit.**
- **We must do both. We must study, and we must rely. We must do our part, and God will do his part—he will give us both understanding and fruit.**
- **Are you a faithful Bible student? If not, you won’t be a strong minister of Christ.**

- ***Verse 7 –Application Questions:***
- **How does Paul’s instruction apply to understanding Scripture?**
- **Do you faithfully study God’s Word?**
- **You should meditate on it. You should study it more. Don’t just forget it and move on to something easier.**
- **In the book of Hebrews (5:14), the author says that their minds had become dull.**
- **They kept drinking milk and would not move on to solid food. Their minds were not sharpened by practice. Instead they were lazy spiritually.**
- **Instead of diligently pursuing answers, they lazily just said, “never mind.”**
- **When we listen to sermons, we should meditate. When we read the Bible in our quiet times, we should meditate.**
- **When we join Bible study, we should meditate. What practices can help you to do this?**
- **What disciplines have you found helpful in studying Scripture? Do you tend to rely on God and not study or to study and not rely on God?**
- **How should we maintain this delicate balance?**