

**Endure…. till the end**

**2 Timothy 2:1-26**

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* Read the passage silently on your own.
* Read the passage twice out loud.



**OBSERVATION** – Ask the question - What do you see or what does the passage say? (Don’t read into it.) What do you see in the passage that stands out to you? Look for key words, phrases, comparisons, contrasts. You are seeking to answer the questions – Who? What? Where? When? How? and Why?

*Observation teaches you to see exactly what the passage says. It is the basis for accurate interpretation and correct application.*



**Time Out!** What are some things you observe from this passage which stand out to you?



*“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 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.” 2:1-2*

**What process of discipleship is Paul advocating?**

**Addition? or Multiplication?**

*The strategy is not to disciple one, but to disciple as many as you can over the course of your lifetime. It’s not one and done, its one and then some.*

We could go out and win people to Jesus, then spend time with each one helping them grow. In our lifetime we could perhaps win a few hundred folks to Jesus. Or we could win a few people and help them grow; then teach those few to win others and help them grow; who then could win others and help them grow. Suddenly, the multiplication of disciple making kicks in and affects thousands not just hundreds.

DL Moody put it this way, “I would rather set ten men to work, than to do the work of ten men.” Ten people can accomplish far more than just one person. The word “disciple” means “learner” - and every Christian should be learning and growing in Christ.

* **The things you have heard from me among many witnesses.**
* **Commit these to faithful men.**
* **Who will be able to teach others also.**

**Paul compares the Christian life to three careers or occupations.**

1. **ENDURE AS A SOLDIER** vs.3-4 – Key word -Submission.



**Time Out!** What are some words that would best describe a soldier?

*Bravery, Loyalty, duty, respect, sacrifice, honor, integrity, courage*. But there is also another word that describes a good soldier and that is **submission**. Especially when it comes to rank and responsibility. In the United States, when a soldier is enlisted, they take an oath swearing allegiance in compliance with the order of the president of the USA and their commanding officers.

* **A soldier leads a streamlined life.**
* **An athlete leads a structured life.**
* **A farmer lives a sustained life.**

**When is a soldier needed?** When there is a threat or appearance of conflict or war. In other words, battle.

Warfare is a full-time, 24/7 preoccupation. When you’re fighting for survival and freedom you don’t have time to read a book or tend the flower beds. Your total attention is directed toward the battle. Spiritually we are involved in a battle. We can’t allow ourselves to get distracted by secular cares. Yes, we’ve got to go to work, and be good stewards of our things, but don’t take your eyes off the battle! All Christians need to develop a wartime-mentality. Life is short. The stakes are high. We need to streamline our lives, and make sure we’ve put first things first.

A good soldier does not get involved in civilian affairs. His life is dedicated to pleasing his commanding officer. He cannot afford to let his guard down. The enemy is all around. To let his guard down even for a moment is to perish. He needs to be disciplined, focused and alert at all times.

**How is the soldier analogy played out in our role as a believer in Christ?**

1. **ENDURE AS AN ATHLETE** vs.5 – Key word – Disciplined. “And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

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***Helpful Notes*** Rules are important. If you’re in an airplane you want the pilot to fly the plane according to the rules. We want our doctor or pharmacist to follow the rules. If you go to the ballpark and you got box seats right behind home plate and someone is sitting in your seat, you want someone who will enforce the rules don’t you?

Rules are essential for order and harmony. Every sporting event, every relationship, every traffic sign comes with rules which will maintain order and harmony.

**Illus.** Lance Armstrong, who was the world’s greatest cyclist, was completely stripped of his title of winning seven Tour de France championships because he lied about blood doping or taking illegal steroids. Lance Armstrong will forever bear a stigma of shame. It does not matter if he achieved a moment of glory, he did not compete according to the rules and for that, he was disqualified.

Or Rosie Ruiz who ran the Boston Marathon in 1980? First female to cross the line, got a medal for it, until they found out she took the subway for some of the race. Nothing good ever comes out of cutting corners.

And the same rings true spiritually. If we are going to walk with God, it involves following the rules God has laid down in His Word with strict obedience. The ends never justify the means. It’s a sad story when you hear of a Christian taking shortcuts, or finding a loophole, or manipulating others in order to achieve. ( Example - Ravi Zacharias)

Strict training, endurance and perseverance are achieved by playing by the rules like a good athlete. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

In order for an athlete’s efforts to be meaningful they must play by the rules - and likewise for a follower of Jesus. Our desire to accomplish great things for God should never be compromised. God’s work should always be done God’s way.

1. **ENDURE AS A FARMER** vs. 6 Key word -Patience. “The hard-working farmer must be first to share of the crops.” I am not a farmer or the son of a farmer, but I do have a farmer’s tan ☺ I will tell you I have deep respect for farmers, who work hard and for long hours. Unlike the soldier and athlete, there is nothing glamorous about the work a farmer does. It is often tedious, boring, and unexciting.

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**Time Out!** What are some words that best describe a farmer?

Farmers are known for their calloused hands, and hard work. They are up early in the morning and sometimes work until late at night. Sometimes he works even when he doesn’t feel well because he knows that a good harvest depends on his hard work.

**A farmer must be patient with his crop**. It does little good to become frustrated and yell and become unhinged with the crop. As he tills and plants, he will benefit from what he has done with the strength of his hands. The work is exhausting but the farmer also knows that there is a reward in the end. That hardworking farmer will be the first to receive a share of his crops. In other words, the day will come when he will be rewarded for his efforts by harvesting the crops he worked so hard to obtain. His efforts would not be in vain. The work was hard and there were many sacrifices, but God would bless the efforts of his hands.

Paul is telling Timothy that the work of ministry was a hard work. There were sacrifices to be made and long hours of painful toil, but the Lord would bring fruit from those efforts. Timothy was not to be afraid to work hard. He would not always be understood. He would face many disappointments in life and ministry. There would be long hours and many obstacles, but God would use his faithful efforts to expand His kingdom.

Each one of these careers or occupations involves endurance, discipline, hard work, and not quitting. If we give up too early, we will never see the end result of our endurance which we need to put in over a lifetime.

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**Time Out!** Which individual do you relate with and why? Soldier, Athlete or Farmer?

Paul wraps up these analogies, vs. 8-9 *“Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.”* *“Remember that Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering bound with chains as a criminal.”* But the Word of God is not bound!

**SUFFERING FOR THE GOSPEL vs.8-15**

* **You can chain the messenger, but not the message!** It’s been said of the Bible, *“It out-lives, out-lifts, out-loves, out-reaches, out-ranks, out-runs all other books.”* You can’t hold down the truth of God’s Word!

Verse 10, *“Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”* Paul could endure persecution knowing that through his suffering others would hear the Gospel and come to Christ.

Paul says numerous times throughout his letters, “This is a faithful saying,” or “this saying is trustworthy” 1 Timothy 1:15, 4:9, and Titus 3:8. These “faithful sayings” were liturgies used in the worship of the early church. The church recited these declarations of faith as reminders of vibrant truths they upheld. Here’s a taste of the earliest Christian worship. They spoke this in unison,

* **“For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”**

Verse 14, “**Remind them of these things**, charging them before the Lord not to quarrel about words which does no good (or is not profitable) but only ruins the hearers.” Pastors who don’t teach the Bible, but major on worldly wisdom are in essence dealing in “words which bring or have no profit. As a result, this brings about “the ruin of their hearers.”

In contrast Paul commands Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing (to cut straight- like a farmers field or a carpenter’s saw cut) the word of truth.” (This quote appears at Moody Bible Institute above the elevator in Crowell Hall.)

As pastors and church leaders we need to be diligent and deliberate in our interpreting of God’s Word. Exactness is required. Carpenters have a slogan, that should speak to how we interpret the Bible. “Measure twice, cut once.”

**WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A VESSEL OF HONOR vs.16-26**

* **Avoid godless chatter vs. 16-17**

**Paul points to two examples**. “Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth . . .” Recall in 1 Timothy 1:20 Hymenaeus was the person whose faith had been shipwrecked. He spoke in error. **What was it?** “Saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrew the faith of some.” Hymenaeus must’ve denied a literal resurrection of our physical bodies, concluding that people were free to indulge their fleshly appetites in immoral ways. Vessels of honor rightly divide the Word of God. But you’ll also encounter impure doctrine, from unreliable vessels. This speculation is dishonorable. Paul says in verse 21, “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” The Greek name “Timothy” meant “God-honoring.” Paul wants his young protégé to live up to his name in how he cares for and handles God’s Word. And we too, need to rightly divide God’s Word. Be a vessel of honor.

* **Flee youthful lust vs. 22**

Verse 22, “Flee also youthful lusts...” President Ronald Reagan once said, “Middle age is when you have two temptations - and you choose the one that will get you home by 9:00 p.m.”

Paul is reminding young Timothy to flee anything that might draw him away from Christ or ruin his effectiveness for Christ. Timothy should flee temptation, and in its place “pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

* **Avoid foolish arguments vs. 23-24**

Verse 23, “But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition.” A servant of the Lord corrects others while watching his own step. Nobody has perfect doctrine. We all have blind spots, areas where we can learn. We need humility. “If God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” Notice, when a person comes to his senses, and escapes the snare of Satan, it’s the result of God granting repentance. Only God’s Spirit can truly change a person’s heart.

* **Correcting those who oppose the truth with gentleness vs. 24-26**

Paul is telling us that we must teach the truth with gentleness. How easy it is for us to try to push our interpretation of the Word on others. We are not to take on the role of the Holy Spirit. It is His role to convince. Paul challenged Timothy to teach with gentleness. He was to stand for the truth, but he was also to treat everyone he preached to with love and respect.

**Time Out!** Can you think of a person whose life could be described as a vessel of honor? What are the qualities in this person’s life that sets them apart from the average person?

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**INTERPRETATION –**What does the passage mean?What’s the author’s main intent or purpose in sharing this truth?

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**APPLICATION –** Ask the question: How can I put this into practice? How can I apply this to my marriage, family, church, spiritual life, workplace, etc.