

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

“THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH”

STUDY #4: 2 Timothy 2:1-7

“Legacy: What Am I Passing On?”

Key verse 2:15 — *“Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”*

TEXT:

Key verse 2:2

v. 1 You therefore, my son, be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

v. 2 ***And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.***

v. 3 Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

v. 4 No one engaging in military service is allowing himself to become entangled in civilian pursuits in order that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

v. 5 And if a person is competing in the athletic games, he is not being crowned as the winner unless he competed according to the rules.

v. 6 The hard-working farmer must be the first to receive his share of the crops.

v. 7 Think over what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

INTRODUCTION:

Twas the Day After Christmas

Twas the day after Christmas, and all through the house,
Every creature was hurtin' even the mouse.

The toys were all broken, their batteries dead;
Santa passed out, with some ice on his head.

Wrapping and ribbons just covered the floor, while
Upstairs the family continued to snore.

And I in my T-shirt, new Reeboks and jeans,
I went into the kitchen and started to clean.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the sink to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the curtains, and threw up the sash.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a little white truck, with an oversized mirror.

The driver was smiling, so lively and grand;
The patch on his jacket said "U.S. POSTMAN."

With a handful of bills, he grinned like a fox
Then quickly he stuffed them into our mailbox.

Bill after bill, after bill, they still came.
Whistling and shouting he called them by name:

"Now Dillard's, now Broadway's, now Penny's and Sears.
Here's Robinson's, Levitz's and Target's and Mervyn's.

To the tip of your limit, every store, every mall,
Now chargeaway—chargeaway—chargeaway all!"

He whooped and he whistled as he finished his work.
He filled up the box, and then turned with a jerk.

He sprang to his truck and he drove down the road,
Driving much faster with just half a load.

Then I heard him exclaim with great holiday cheer,
“ENJOY WHAT YOU GOT . . . YOU’LL BE PAYING ALL YEAR!”

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, December 28, 2000)

(Lighten Up! by Ken Davis)

We always tried to camp near a crystal-clear stream for drinking water. Bathing in it took hours—a few seconds for the actual bath, a few hours to work up the courage to touch that frigid, icy washcloth to the skin. That process would trigger a ritualistic dance that must have fascinated the animals.

But the hardest part loomed ahead: the rinse. The rinse involved pouring a pan of the ice-cold stream water over my body until all the biodegradable soap was gone. This act would make even a Southern Baptist dance.

p. 107

(Cowboy Poetry by Larry McWhorter)

The Unrepentant

The unrepentant horses
Are the ones who won't give in.
They'd likely be in prison
Had they been conceived of men.

Their background doesn't matter,
Be they started foul or fair,
The men who have to ride them now
Don't have the time to care.

It takes a special puncher
Just to walk inside the gate
With these equine, zealot reels
Who are filled with scorn or hate.

For while he didn't do a thing
To make the horse this way
He has to try and find the key
To make the horse obey.

So thus begins the battle
And it's often all our war,
Each tries to best the other one
With neither keeping score.

There's lots of ways of dealing
With these horses who won't mind.
Sometimes you need a footrope
Or a jacket for a blind.

There's lots of tricks and there'll be more
As long as horsemen strive
To train the unrepentant ones
While trying to stay alive.

Pollyanish critics say
The harsh ways make no sense.
But those who live protected
Just don't savvy self defense.

They like to say we're brutal.
 That no chance the horse has had.
 But never will they e'er admit
 Some horses are just bad.

That some don't want to get along.
 They live to be embattled.
 Fighting from the moment caught
 Until they're last unsaddled.

But sometimes, good or lucky,
 Horse and man will strike a deal
 Where they can work together
 Until each attains a feel

For what the other's thinking
 While respect is shown to rights
 They have to give each other
 So's to stay away from fights.

While God gave man dominion
 O'er the creatures of the earth,
 These horses don't believe Him
 And they haven't since their birth.

They're unrepentant pagans
 Without kindness or regret,
 They won't accept your carrots
 And they'll never be your pet.

But they'll show you what you're made of
 And they'll sure teach you respect.
 They'll hurt you if you falter
 With some trick you don't expect.

They've sent a lot of "wouldbe's"
 Back to town and back to farm
 Who didn't like the pressure
 Or the constant fear of harm.

But there's redemption in the trials
 They put us cowboys through.
 They hold a soft spot in the hearts
 Of guys like me and you.

The good they've done outweighs the bad
 From being just damned hateful.
 They took a boy and made a man
 For that I'll e'er be grateful.

pp. 111-13

(All Hat & No Cattle: A Guide for New Texans and All the West of Us
 by Anne Dingus)

BIG, FAT

Heavy as a bucket of hog livers.

Fat as a sausage salesman.

Not enough dirt in Dallas to shovel him over.

Just a big ol' jelly bean.

She's sleeps with her head in the kitchen and her feet in the hall.

CHEAP

He's so cheap, he gets out of bed to turn over so he won't wear out the sheets.

She's so cheap, she breathes through her nose to keep from wearing out her
 false teeth.

She's so cheap, her pancakes have only one side.

pp. 49-63

(Bubba Speak: Texas Folk Sayings by W. C. Jameson)

MAD

He's startin' to bellow and paw dust
 She's all horns and rattles
 Mad as a rooster in an empty hen house

p. 98

(Never Ask A Man the Size of His Spread by Gladiola Montana)

A lot of families headed
west with no more
than bedding, buckets,
Bibles, and high hopes.
That's a pretty good start.

p. 46

(Don't Squat With Yer Spurs On! II by Texas Bix Bender)

Building and fixing fences wouldn't be so bad if you didn't
have to get off your horse to do 'em.

p. 37

(Savvy Sayin's: Lean & Meaty One-Liners by Ken Alstad)

If you follow a new track,
there ain't no way of knowin'
if the man that made it
knew where he was goin'.

p. 87

Never spur a horse when he's swimmin'.

p. 90

You can't beat experience for sweatin' the fat off'n the brain.

p. 94

The man who can't take a word of criticism hears it the most.

p. 94

You May Be a Redneck When . . .

You think a woman who is “out of your league” bowls on a different night.

Anyone in your family ever died right after saying, “Hey watch this.”

Your wife’s hairdo was once ruined by a ceiling fan.

You think the last words of the Star Spangled Banner are, “Gentlemen start your engines.”

The bluebook value of your truck goes up and down, depending on how much gas is in it.

You have to go outside to get something from the fridge.

You think loading a dishwasher means getting your wife drunk.

Your toilet paper has page numbers on it.

Your front porch collapses and kills more than five dogs.

(Received via e-mail from Nesom & Beth Burt, August 22, 2000)

Barbara Walters did a story on gender roles in Kuwait several years before the Gulf War.

She noted then that women customarily walked about 10 feet behind their husbands. She returned to Kuwait recently and observed that the men now walked several yards behind their wives.

Ms. Walters approached one of the women and said, “This is marvelous. Can you tell the free world just what enabled women here to achieve this reversal of roles?”

“Land mines,” said the Kuwaiti woman.

(Received via e-mail from Mark Skorheim, July 9, 2000)

(Over The Hill & On A Roll: Laugh Lines for the Better Half of Life
by Bob Phillips)

Many people are like the famous Liberty Bell—old, heavy, and slightly cracked.

p. 80

He's so old that when he orders a three-minute egg, they ask for the money up front.

—*Milton Berle*

p. 86

Old age? That's the period of life when you buy a see-through nightgown and then remember you don't know anybody who can still see through one.

—*Bette Davis*

p. 87

My husband is so old that he remembers Eve when she was just a rib.

p. 90

As we are continuing to pursue our study of 2 Timothy under the title THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH, we have thus far considered:

Step #1: INTEGRITY: Getting It All Together (2 Tim. 1:1-7)

Step #2: CONVICTION: Here I Stand, God Help Me (2 Tim. 1:8-12)

Step #3: COURAGE: I Am Willing To Pay The Price (2 Tim. 1:13-18)

Now we come to:

Step #4: LEGACY: What Am I Passing On? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)

We are raising QUESTIONS about:

1. What are you passing on?
2. What is the benefit of your being here for three score and ten?
3. What story is your sequel going to tell?
4. What is going to be the after-math, the after-glow, the after-taste, the fall-out from your journey through life?

(The Legacy: What Every Father Wants to Leave His Child
by Steven J. Lawson)

A few years ago, a team of New York state sociologists attempted to calculate the influence of a father's life on his children and the following generations. In this study, they researched two men who lived at the same time in the 18th century. One was Max Jukes, the other Jonathan Edwards. The legacy that each of these men left their descendants stands as a study in contrasts; they are as different as night and day.

Max Jukes was an unbeliever, a man of no principles. His wife also lived and died in unbelief. What kind of lasting influence did he leave his family? Among the 1,200 known descendants of Max Jukes were:

- 440 lives of outright debauchery
- 310 paupers and vagrants
- 190 public prostitutes
- 130 convicted criminals
- 100 alcoholics
- 60 habitual thieves
- 55 victims of impurity
- 7 murderers

Research shows that not a one of Jukes' descendants made a significant contribution to society—not one! To the contrary, this notorious family collectively cost the state of New York \$1,200,000.

Not much of a legacy.

What about the family of Jonathan Edwards? Regarded as the most brilliant mind America ever produced, Edwards was a noted pastor and astute theologian. This renowned scholar was the instrument of God used to bring about the Great Awakening in colonial America. Later, he served as the president of Princeton College.

Jonathan Edwards came from a godly heritage and married Sarah, a woman of great faith. Together, they sought to leave an entirely different kind of legacy. Among his male descendants were:

- 300 clergymen, missionaries, or theological professors
- 120 college professors
- 110 lawyers
- over 60 physicians
- over 60 authors of good books
- 30 judges
- 14 presidents of universities
- numerous giants in American industry
- 3 U. S. congressmen
- 1 vice-president of the United States

There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of Jonathan Edwards descendants as its chief promoter.¹ Such is the lasting influence of one godly man.

Now, *that's* a legacy!

1. Howard G. Hendricks, Christian Home 726: Unpublished class notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX, 1979. pp. 13-14

We all make choices and those choices impact the generations that follow us.

In our last study we say Phygellus and Hermogenes make a choice to desert the apostle along with many from Asia. I am sure that those decisions impacted their families and others that they influenced.

On the other hand, we see Onesiphorus and certainly the impact of his faithfulness would be felt in his family in the future.

If we are going to MAKE A FANTASTIC FINISH, we really need to ascertain what impact our lives are going to make on the next generation. We are asking the question:

“What Am I Passing On?”

The passage of Scripture is very special to me. In fact, I have written a book on these seven verses called Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger. I would suggest that you should get a copy of it and read it as a follow-up to this study.

When something is really worthwhile and valuable to us we naturally have the desire to share it with others, no matter what the cost might be.

If our faith is meaningful and God is working in our lives, we want to share it. If not we are uncertain.

We have just been reminded in the previous study that Phygellus and Hermogenes had failed in this mission, along with all those in Asia who turned away from the apostle. It is Paul's prayer that this will not happen to Timothy.

You will note in these **FIRST THREE VERSES** that Paul gives a series of **THREE COMMANDS**.

COMMAND #1 (verse 1)

“be strengthened by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

COMMAND #2 (verse 2)

“these things commit to faithful men.”

COMMAND #3 (verse 3)

“Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

His COMMANDS have to do with:

STRENGTH,
SHARING, and
SUFFERING.

He follows this with THREE ILLUSTRATIONS:

1. A good SOLDIER,
2. A RUNNER competing in the games, and
3. A hard-working FARMER.

I have called this passage: “My Texas Aggies passage” because you have:

SOLDIERS,
ATHLETES, and
FARMERS involved.

Lock paraphrases our passage in this way:

So then, as others have failed me, I turn to you to whom I have a right to appeal, such as I had not to Onesiphorus, as you are my own child in the faith—and I bid you to realize constantly the strength which is yours in virtue of the grace given you through your union with Christ Jesus. In that strength, Come to me and, before you come, hand over the truths which you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, to men on whom you can rely as being of ability enough to train others in their turn. Then come and take your share of suffering as a true soldier in the army of Christ Jesus: now every soldier hopes to please his general and, therefore, while on active service does not tie himself up with business affairs: so, too, an athlete hopes to win the prize, but he cannot win it unless he observes to the end the rules of the contest: in the same way a husbandman hopes to take his share first of the fruits of the ground, but he must work hard for it. Think over the way in which this applies to you: for the Lord is ready to give you discernment in all things.
p. 92

Lea & Griffin say:

After appealing for qualities such as courage, willingness to suffer, and faithfulness in the life of a minister, Paul borrowed images from daily life to illustrate the traits necessary for effective service. He pictures the effective minister in terms of a teacher (2:1-2), a soldier (2:3-4), an athlete (2:5), and a farmer (2:6). He concluded with an appeal for Timothy to consider carefully the application of these images (2:7).
p. 200

Fee helps to bring the passage into focus when he says:

After a brief “digression” in 1:15-18 that reminded Timothy of the disloyalty of “everyone in Asia,” with the noteworthy exception of Onesiphorus. Paul resumes the appeal to Timothy. With an emphatic, **you then**, in contrast to those in verse 15, Paul repeats the urgencies of 1:6-14: that he fulfill his trust and ministry . . . in this instance by entrusting it to others (v. 2), and that he be ready to **endure hardship** (v. 3, reflecting the main concern of 1:8-12).

A series of three analogies (military, athletics, farming) reinforce the appeal to suffering and emphasize the need for wholehearted devotion to service (vv. 4-5) and the expectation of reward beyond the hardship (vv. 5-6). These emphases will be repeated in a different way in 2:8-13.
p. 239

King titles this section:

SOME THINGS EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD
UNDERSTAND

II TIMOTHY II. 1-7

p. 38

Baxter says:

If as we have seen, the first epistle to Timothy is a “*charge*,” this second one develops it into a *challenge*. It is a challenge to fortitude and faithfulness in face of *present* testings and of *further* testings which were yet to come.

p. 234

MacArthur titles this section:

The Elements of a Strong Spiritual Life

p. 35

Lenski says:

In v. 1-7 we have what Paul asks his *child* to be and to do . . .
p. 777

Lange says:

After the statement (chap. [1] i. 15-18) of the unfaithfulness of many, and the fidelity of one, he addresses himself to Timothy with new exhortations.
p. 92

(Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger by Don Anderson)

In modern lingo we might say it's late in the game, one second left on the clock; and Paul is six points behind. The T-shirt he wears amazingly announces: NO FEAR!

Have you ever wondered how you will handle your final days? What will truly be important as you reach the threshold of eternity? Will you have any regrets?
p. 10

How can you accomplish this goal? Paul burned the midnight oil writing passionately to his younger pastor friend, Timothy, urging him to be strengthened by the grace of Christ Jesus and to be a good steward of the gospel. The seasoned saint knew the spiritual map well and he carefully pointed out the way to Timothy and to us.

In his writing, Paul includes three illustrations—the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer—to help us understand what is involved in completing the journey of the Christian life and in delighting the heart of God in the process.
p. 11

(Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger by Don Anderson)

Paul stands as a role model for Timothy and for us. He paved the way. He paid the price. Let's examine the footprints of the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer to see how to fight and win the war, go for the gold, bear fruit, and reap an abundant harvest.

p. 11

v. 1 You therefore, my son, be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

“In view of all I have had to say in chapter 1 about the faith of ‘your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice,’ my personal example, and the danger of turning away from the truth as Phygellus and Hermogenes have done, be one like Onesiphorus and be faithful in your service.”

The word “YOU” is in the EMPHATIC POSITION in the Greek sentence, which means it is the very first word and that which is most emphasized. What Paul is say is, we have been talking about all in Asia, Phygellus and Hermogenes, Onesiphorus, and now “YOU,” Timothy.

“YOU” be like Onesiphorus!

“YOU THEREFORE, MY SON.”

PAUL was the FATHER Timothy never had.

TIMOTHY was the SON Paul never had.

Fee says:

You, therefore (having already been urged to suffer and keep the trust, and now in the light of the Asians and Onesiphorus), **be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**
p. 239

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

1. Thou therefore—following my example (ch. 1:8, 12), and that of ONESIPHORUS (ch. 1:16-18), and shunning that of those who forsook me (ch. 1:15). **my son**—*Children* ought to imitate their father.
p. 1376

Matthew Henry says:

Paul encourages Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his work, *v. 1*.
p. 1895

Demarest says:

The opening "*therefore*" seems to point back to the positive example of Onesiphorus. Not only was Onesiphorus profitable to Paul, but he becomes profitable to Timothy as well. The influence of a person like Onesiphorus goes out with strength to others like ripples on a pond.
p. 252

Knight says:

This section begins with "therefore" . . . gathers up the preceding concerns, commands, and examples, and turns to a renewed direct address to Timothy
...
p. 388

He says further:

. . . "you," is an emphatic personal address to Timothy. With [therefore], it contrasts him with those in Asia who turned away from Paul (1:15) and compares him with Paul and Onesiphorus (1:16-18). . . . "therefore," an inferential particle introducing the following exhortation (cf. 1:8), denotes that the exhortation is required because of what can be inferred from what precedes it.
p. 389

Wilson says:

This emphatic appeal is based on Timothy's filial relation to Paul. As a son bears the likeness of his father, so Timothy is to exhibit his spiritual kinship with the apostle by his continued fidelity to the gospel. He cannot do this in his own strength, but only as he is inwardly strengthened by means of the grace that is in Christ Jesus [*Eph* 6.10].
pp. 137-8

Barnes says:

Thou therefore. In view of the fact stated in the previous chapter, that many had turned away from the apostle, and had forsaken the paths of truth. *Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.* . . . The meaning is, Be strong, relying on the grace which the Lord Jesus only can impart.
p. 220

Stott says:

Now Paul urges Timothy that he too, in the midst of the general landslide, must stand his ground. It is the first of several similar exhortations in the letter, beginning . . . meaning 'you therefore' or 'but you', which summon Timothy to resist the prevailing mood.
p. 49

Griffiths titles the first couple of verses and then says:

Teaching gifts are to be shared

Timothy is to be strong in the grace-gift of teaching, passing on what he has heard to others, both men and women, who can teach others in turn.
p. 178

“YOU THEREFORE, MY SON, BE STRONG BY MEANS OF THE GRACE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.”

The COMMAND:

“BE STRONG” is PRESENT PASSIVE IMPERATIVE.

1 Timothy 1:12

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service;

A. T. Robertson says:

Be strengthened . . . [is the] Present passive imperative . . .
p. 616

He then says it could be translated:

. . . “Keep on being empowered,” “keep in touch with the power.” *In the grace that is in Christ Jesus* . . . Where the power is located. Christ is the dynamo for power only when and while we keep in touch with him.
p. 616

IT IS HE WHO CAN GET YOU THROUGH ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING!

Stott says:

. . . ‘Take strength from the grace of God which is ours in Christ Jesus.’ Timothy is to find his resources for ministry not in his own nature but in Christ’s grace. It is not only for salvation that we are dependent on grace (1:9), but for service also.
p. 50

Kelly says:

Timothy is to show manly resolution, but the real strength of his efforts will come from the grace Christ freely gives.
p. 172

Guthrie points out:

The phrase *in Christ Jesus* qualifying *grace* shows not only that the grace comes from Christ alone, but also that all Christians possess it and may rely on its enabling power.
p. 137

Calvin says:

As Paul has told Timothy previously to guard what was committed to him by the Spirit, so now he tells him to become **strong in grace**. By this he means that he should be shake off laziness, as the flesh is so sluggish that even those who are endowed with excellent gifts grow slack in the middle of what they are doing, if they are not frequently urged on to complete the task.
p. 130

Knight says:

The present tense indicates Timothy's need for continual dependence on God, i.e., "keep on being strengthened."
p. 389

He says further:

χαρις [or grace] is that which strengthens one to live the Christian life and to accomplish what God asks, whether it be in doing some activity or in bearing suffering. χαρις [or grace] is God's gracious enabling power . . .
p. 389

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates:

be strong (lit. “be empowered”; [then makes reference to] Eph. 6:10.
p. 752

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Psalms 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.
My heart leaps for joy
and I will give thanks to him in song.

Psalms 54:4

Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . strength . . . was a divine “gift” (**grace** . . . found only **in Christ** . . .
p. 752

Colossians 1:11

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for
the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously

Milne says:

The source of this strength is not to be looked for in Timothy himself, but in Jesus Christ who strengthens all his servants for all their tasks (Phil. 4:13). An honest acceptance of our own weakness is the way to experience Christ's enabling power (2 Cor. 12:9f.).

p. 144

Hughes points out:

The sense is continuous: "Keep on being strong"—"understand that you are to do this through God who is actively strengthening you." How was he to keep on being "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"? By constantly calling to mind that he had this grace, Christ's grace—"grace upon grace." By humbly realizing that there is always more grace. The promise in James reads in its entirety, "But he gives us more grace." That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble' (James 4:6). We remain strong by prayerfully asking for the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

p. 193

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul used a vigorous word to express his command. To "be strong," a present passive imperative, implies that Timothy was to keep on being empowered by God . . . The command demanded Timothy's continuous active cooperation with God.

p. 201

He says further:

The quarry from which Timothy was to mine such strength was God's grace made available in Christ Jesus. The term "grace" refers to the unmerited gift of help God gives to the needy.

p. 201

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The “grace” of God is imparted to believers primarily in the context of the ministry of the various members of the body of Christ to one another. The Holy Spirit works through the individual parts of the body for the building up of the whole . . . There is a strong emphasis in Paul’s thought on divine empowerment taking place chiefly in the context of Christian community.
p. 724

Lenski says:

The main chord is struck at once: “Be made strong!” durative: Let the Lord ever fill thee with δύναμις, power! It seems best to keep the passive “be made strong” instead of reducing it to an intransitive “be strong.” The source of strength lies in God’s grace.
p. 777

Parker says:

What more is Timothy to be or to do?—“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” A wonderful, double expression: “strong in the grace”—mighty in the beauty—valiant in the gentleness: grow flowers on the rock. And not only so thyself, Timothy, but keep up a good succession of men:—“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,”—a very delicate business; quite a refined profession.
p. 155

What Paul is telling Timothy in this first verse is that he can not do it by himself.

He must CLING and COMMIT.

To be SUCCESSFUL, he must be DEPENDENT.

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

QUESTION: Why does Timothy need to be strengthened “BY MEANS OF GRACE”?

ANSWER: In order to resist the SLIDE that naturally comes in our lives as we drift away in our relationship and let other priorities take first place.

It is strength to resist the CULTURE which is totally contrary to the calling we have in “CHRIST JESUS.”

We need strengthening “GRACE” to face the THREE T’s:

1. TEMPTATIONS,
2. TRIALS, and
3. TESTS.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

The fact that the Lord supplies DAILY “GRACE” for DAILY NEEDS keeps us in a position of being:

1. constantly TRUSTING Him and
2. DEPENDENT upon Him for that provision.

My good friend Don Barker who is a retired A & M Professor wrote a letter that came today:

December 30, 2000

Dear Coach Don—

After many years of daily shaving, an old gentleman tired of the chore and decided to get it done by a barber. He went to the local barbershop owned by the Baptist minister and asked for a shave. The preacher's wife Grace was on duty, so she did the job; and the customer was pleased with the clean, close shave she gave him. The next day when he looked in the mirror he saw no stubble on his chin or elsewhere on his face. The next day it was the same thing. Two weeks later the man's whiskers had still not come back out. He called the barbershop owner and told him how delighted he was with the work done at the shop and asked how such results were possible. The preacher told him, "Sir, you've been shaved by Grace, and when you've been shaved by grace, you're shaved forevermore."

Best wishes,
Don Barker

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by
Charles R. Swindoll)

IF I HAD MY ENTIRE LIFE to live over again, I don't think I'd have the strength.

—Flip Wilson, quoted in James Dobson,
What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women

p. 224

(The Church: What We Are Meant To Be by Ken Hutcherson)

And when God's work is done by God's people in God's way, empowered by God's mighty, indwelling Spirit, look out, Jack!

We will be a force to be reckoned with!

p. 232

(Secret Strength: For Those Who Search by Joni Eareckson Tada)

Someone once said that a tool unto itself is of little importance. But placed in the proper hands it can create a masterpiece.
p. 45

(1001 Great Stories & “Quotes” by R. Kent Hughes)

George Mueller’s Secret

A story is told of George Mueller, a man who exercised a wide influence for God. When someone came to him and asked, “What has been the secret of your life?” Mueller hung his head and said, “There was a day when I died.” Then he bent lower and said, “Died to George Mueller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of brethren or friends. . . .”
p. 44

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal
edited by Edward K. Rowell)

Do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger people! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle, but you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God.
—Phillips Brooks

When the rock is hard, we get harder than the rock. When the job is tough, we get tougher than the job.
—George Cullum, Sr.
p. 20

(Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way compiled by Gordon S. Jackson)

God never gives strength for tomorrow, or for the next hour, but only for the strain of the minute.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS

p. 72

Our PRAYER at this time ought to be the prayer of the Psalmist in:

Psalm 90:17

May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

Isaiah 26:12

Lord, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you
have done for us.

v. 2 And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.

This is our KEY VERSE for Study #4:

Legacy: What Am I Passing On?

Whereas, we talked about:

MAINTENANCE in verse 1, we are talking about

MISSION, now, in verse 2.

The MAINTENANCE for our ministry is the strength which is provided:

“by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.”

Our MISSION, our duty, our obligation is now given to us in verse 2.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Now, with the apostle nearing the end of his own ministry, what Timothy had heard from Paul he was in turn **to entrust** . . .
p. 752

The STRENGTHENING of verse 1 will issue in the SERVICE of verse 2.

Once a man has experienced the STRENGTHENING “of the grace which is in Christ Jesus” he is then in the position to SERVE. The FRUIT of his service will not be a product of his hand but will be the result of the STRENGTHENING “which is in Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 1:13, 14

Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

Milne says:

Before everything else Timothy has the responsibility of transmitting the apostle's message to a new generation of Christian teachers. This is Paul's over-riding concern in writing this farewell letter.

p. 144

Guthrie says:

The transmission of Christian truth must never be left to chance, and is clearly not committed fortuitously to every Christian, but only to *faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*.

p. 138

Stott says:

He is to do more than preserve the truth, however; he is also to pass it on. If the disloyalty of the Asian church made it imperative that Timothy should guard the truth with loyalty, the approaching death of the apostle made it equally imperative that Timothy should make arrangements for the handing down of the truth intact to the next generation.

p. 50

Stott says further:

Here, then, are the four stages in the handing on of the truth, which Paul envisages: from Christ to Paul, from Paul to Timothy, from Timothy to 'faithful men', and from 'faithful men' to 'others also'. This is the true 'apostolic succession'.

p. 51

Demarest says:

Ministry always involves transmission. It was transmitted from Jesus to Paul and from Paul to Timothy. Now Timothy is given the responsibility to transmit it to others who in turn will be faithful in continuing the process.
p. 252

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

faithful—the quality most needed by those having a trust committed to them.
p. 1376

Wilson says:

Those same gospel truths which Timothy had heard Paul proclaim among many witnesses over the years, he must now entrust to faithful men who will be competent to teach others also.
p. 138

Fee says:

The first task he is to be strengthened for is tied closely to the imperatives of 1:13-14. Just as Timothy must "keep safe what has been entrusted to him," so also he is now to **entrust . . . them to reliable men who**, in turn, **will also be qualified to teach others**.
p. 240

Lange says:

The more deeply Paul feels that the moment is drawing near when he shall quit the scene of his activity, so much the more, naturally, must it be in his mind to leave behind, in his friend and pupil, a courageous and bold witness of Jesus Christ.
p. 92

Lange says further:

It is not enough for him that Timothy himself preach the truth purely and plainly; he must also have a care that it be transmitted and preserved in its purity and plainness.

p. 93

MacArthur says:

In every generation, God has raised up new links in this living chain of **faithful men** to pass on the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of their day.

p. 39

He says further:

In a state invitational track meet during my college years, I represented my team as the second man in the mile relay. The first man ran a fast first leg, and I did well on the second. But soon after I passed off the baton to the third man, one of our best runners, he stopped, walked onto the infield, and sat down. Our first horrified thought was that he had pulled a hamstring or twisted an ankle. I ran across the field and asked, "What happened?" "I don't know," he replied, "I just didn't feel like running anymore." Understandably, his teammates, the coach, and everyone else from our college were sickened and disgusted. "How could you do that?" we asked. "Don't you know you're not just representing yourself, but your team and your school? Have you forgotten all the time the coach has invested in you and that your teammates have invested to get where we are? How could you, in one brief, selfish second, destroy all of that?"

p. 40

What is Timothy's MISSION, his DUTY, and his OBLIGATION?

"AND THE THINGS YOU HEARD FROM ME, IN THE PRESENCE OF MANY WITNESSES, THESE THINGS ENTRUST TO FAITHFUL MEN, WHO WILL BE QUALIFIED TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO."

The word “ENTRUST” is the word for COMMIT, for safe-keeping, or for transmission.

The word “FAITHFUL” has to do with TRUSTWORTHY, RELIABLE, or DEPENDABLE.

Paul is saying:

“When you are picking men to carry on the message, focus on the faithful.”

These men who are “FAITHFUL” in:

CONDUCT and

COMMITMENT.

1 Corinthians 4:17

For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Ephesians 6:21

But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

Colossians 4:7

As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.

King says:

You know the old legend of the arch-angel's talk with the Master after His ascension back to Glory. Michael, or Gabriel, had heard from His lips the story of what had happened down here—how He lived, and died, and rose. “And how are the people of the world to get to know about it?”, came the question; and the reply, “Well, I have a little company of friends there whom I have asked to publish it.” “But what if, for any reason, they let you down, and fail to do it?” To which the Master answered, “I have no other plan.”
p. 40

Barclay says:

Every Christian must look on himself as a link between two generations. Not only has he received the faith; he must also pass it on. E. K. Simpson writes on this passage: “The torch of heavenly light must be transmitted unquenched from one generation to another, and Timothy must count himself an intermediary between apostolic and later ages.”
p. 181

He says further:

These teachers are to be *faithful* men. The Greek word for faithful . . . is a word with a rich variety of closely connected meanings. A man who is a . . . [faithful man] is a man who is *believing*, a man who is *loyal*, a man who is *reliable* and *to be depended on*. All these meanings are there.
p. 182

J. Vernon McGee says:

Paul was greatly concerned about the future. He wondered, just as we do when we approach the end of our ministry, if other men will come along who will preach and teach the Word of God. Sometimes we develop an Elijah complex. At times when I was a pastor in Los Angeles, I cried like Elijah, "Oh, Lord, I'm the only one left!" But I found out that was not true. All over the country I've seen the Lord raise up fine young preachers who are standing for the things of God. It is a real concern to us older men that there be young men who will be faithful in teaching God's Word. So Paul was admonishing Timothy to pass along the things he had been teaching him to "faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

p. 464

Towner says:

But "faithful" is what all believers should strive to be, in order that in small or large ways they can take their place in the chain of redemption.

p. 171

Gaebelein says:

No new revelation is promised through Timothy, but he is charged to communicate the revealed truth to others, who would be chosen by the Lord, as His gifts to the church, to propagate His truth.

p. 187

Hendriksen says:

Now, *one* sure way of being strengthened in grace is to transmit to others the truths which have embedded themselves in one's heart and have become enshrined in the memory. Accordingly, let Timothy be a teacher. Even more, let him produce teachers! Timothy needs this experience, and what is far more important, the church needs the teachers! Paul is about to depart from this life. He has carried the gospel-torch long enough. Hence, he hands it to Timothy, who, in turn, must pass it on to others.

p. 246

Patrick & Lowth say:

“That [deposit] . . . which committed to thee, in the public assembly, at thine ordination, do thou also, in like manner, deposit with other faithful men, that the truth may be continued in an uninterrupted succession of such persons:” . . .
pp. 859-60

Timothy, your DUTY, your MISSION, your RESPONSIBILITY is to:

“THESE THINGS ENTRUST TO FAITHFUL MEN, WHO WILL BE QUALIFIED [competent] TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO.”

(Christians: Commit Yourself! by Paul S. Rees)

[As we look at the Christian world, we see them divided into two classifications. They are illustrated by the train station.]

Some trains come in on tracks that end *within* the station. For them it is [a] full stop. Other trains, however, come in on tracks that run *through* the station and on for many another mile . . . Trains that use these tracks arrive only to depart. . . . Some of us say we have found the Saviour of mankind, Jesus Christ, but, having found Him, there we stand. . . .

But there are others who, having experienced Christ . . . have arrived only to depart. They become carriers—to others—of all that precious cargo that Christ alone produces [in a life.] . . .

Christians were never meant to be *terminals*; they were meant to be *junctions*. God’s new life within them looks not for a “dead end” but for a “clear track.”

p. 134

What a grave responsibility it is when you think of it. To be good transmitters, ones through whom the message of the Gospel, first of all, can go to a lost and dying world. Then, also, the truth of this Gospel passed on to those who already know Him, who can effectively teach others also.

Guy King summarizes this verse:

“Listen to Him, and then get up, get out and get on.”
(source unknown)

This is the KEY VERSE in our study:

Legacy: What Am I Passing On?

It is obvious that our FIRST RESPONSIBILITY is to:

GOD and to

HIS MESSAGE of the Gospel.

We are so careful as we get older to be sure that our wills are written and that our wishes, with regard to material things, are taken care of for those we leave behind. What are we doing with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and our responsibility in passing this message on to the next generation?

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

Death and Dying

When you have told anyone you have left him a legacy the only decent thing to do is to die at once.

Samuel Butler (1835-1902), British writer, painter, and musician.
Quoted in: *Samuel Butler: A Memoir* (vol. 2) (H. Festing Jones ed.; 1920).

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Philosophy

Time is like a river made up of the events which happen, and its current is strong; no sooner does anything appear than it is swept away, and another comes in its place, and will be swept away too.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121-180), Roman emperor.
Meditations (170-180).

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When we start talking about LEGACY we are also talking about a companion word, SEQUEL.

sequel

se•quel *noun*

1. **continuation of a story:** a movie, novel, or play that continues a story begun in a previous movie, novel, or play
2. **something following something else:** something that happens after something else, especially as a consequence of it.

[15th century. Directly or via Old French from Latin *sequel(l)a*, from *sequi* “to follow.”]

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A PASSION FOR SOULS

The world is in crying need of Christians who have a burden for souls. Yet many of Christ's followers are complacent about the fate of the lost and the need of pointing them to the Savior. As David Augsburger expressed it in the book *Witness Is Withness*, we must have a "passion born of compassion." Augsburger went on to cite some worthy examples: "It is the cry of John Knox, 'Give me Scotland or I die' . . .; or George Whitefield, 'Give me souls or take my soul'; of David Brainerd, 'I care not where I go or how I live or what I endure so that I may save souls. When I sleep, I dream of them; when I awake, they are first in my thoughts.' Brainerd continued, 'No amount of scholastic attainment, of able and profound exposition, of brilliant and stirring eloquence can atone for the absence of a deep, impassioned, sympathetic love of human souls.'"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY

One day a rancher in West Texas, all excited about everything he had been learning in his discipleship training class, prayed for someone he could tell about Christ. Soon out of the wide Texas sky a helicopter appeared and landed in his pasture. The pilot announced he was out of fuel. The rancher drove him 30 miles to the nearest gas station. "I had a captive audience," he later told his friends.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

SURROUNDED!

Chuck Colson tells the story of a Marine Corps commander in Korea named Chesty Puller. Puller's unit was frontally engaged in a fierce fire fight with a North Korean unit when word came that some of the enemy had slipped around onto his right flank. Then, a few minutes later, another scout radioed in that enemy troops had now moved onto Puller's left flank as well. Finally, the news came that North Korean troops had established a position behind Puller's unit: he was completely surrounded.

Puller said, "By God, they won't get away from me this time!"

John Blattner says, "We are in a similar situation when it comes to evangelism. Find someone to evangelize? Find someone who needs to hear and respond to the gospel? The real trick would be to avoid them! They're everywhere! We're surrounded by them on all sides!

"By God, they won't get away from us this time! Or will they?"

[Faith & Renewal, Nov/Dec 1992. Page 4.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

"I CAN DO BETTER"

"Charles Spurgeon said, 'My main business is the saving of souls. This one thing I do.' And he didn't just say it, he lived it! A few years before his death an American lecture bureau tried to hire Spurgeon to 'come to America to deliver 50 lectures, speaking in all the large cities of America. As compensation, the bureau offered to pay all the expenses for Spurgeon, his wife, and private secretary, and to pay \$1,000 for each of the 50 lectures. But Spurgeon promptly declined to make \$50,000 in 50 days, saying, 'I can do better. I will stay in London and try to win 50 souls.'"

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Dr. James Stewart, professor of New Testament at the University of Edinburgh, described what he thought is the greatest threat to the church. He said, "It is not communism, atheism, or materialism; the greatest threat is Christians trying to sneak into heaven incognito without ever sharing their faith.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Action

Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

James Shirley (1596-1666), English playwright.
The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses (1659).

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Action

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time
Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), U.S. poet.
"A Psalm of Life" (1838).

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A man leaves all kinds of footprints when he walks through life. Some you can see, like his children and his house. Others are invisible, like the prints he leaves across other people's lives: the help he gives them and what he has said—his jokes, gossip that has hurt others, encouragement. A man doesn't think about it, but everywhere he passes, he leaves some kind of mark.

—MARGARET LEE RUNBECK

A river touches places of which its source knows nothing, and Jesus says if we have received of his fullness, however small the visible measure of our lives, out of us will flow the rivers that will bless to the uttermost parts of the earth. We have nothing to do with the outflow.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

God rarely allows a soul to see how great a blessing he is.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

I am a part of all that I have met.

—ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

It is the most natural thing to be like the person you live with most, therefore live most with Jesus Christ.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

Our lives are shaped by those who love us—and by those who refuse to love us.

—JOHN POWELL

So live that your principles might safely be made the law for the whole world.

—IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804)

The entire ocean is affected by a pebble.

—BLAISE PASCAL (1623-1662)

The people who influence us are those who have stood unconsciously for the right thing; they are like the stars and the lilies; and the joy of God flows through them.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

The people who influence you are people who believe in you.

—HENRY DRUMMOND (1851-1897)

The radiating influence from one person rightly related to God is incalculable; he may not say much, but you feel different.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

This learned I from the shadow of a tree,
that to and fro did sway against a wall,
our shadow selves, our influence, may fall
where we can never be.

We are all of us more or less echoes, repeating involuntary the virtues, the defects, the movements and the character of those among whom we live.

—JOSEPH JOUBERT (1754-1824)

We reform others unconsciously when we walk uprightly.

—MADAME ANNE SOPHIE SOYMANOV SWETCHINE (1782-1857)

When I think of those who have influenced my life the most, I think not of the great but of the good.

—JOHN KNOX (C. 1514-1572)

Whom you would change, you must first love.

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929-1968)

Why does one man's yawning make another yawn?

—ROBERT BURTON (1577-1640)

Your influence is negative or positive, never neutral.

—HENRIETTA CORNELIA MEARS (1890-1963)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Christianity is something which is meant to be seen. As someone has well said, "There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy destroys the discipleship, or the discipleship destroys the secrecy." A man's Christianity should be perfectly visible to all men.

—William Barclay

(From *Parson's Technology*)

The late Roland Q. Leavell in his book, *Evangelism: Christ's Imperative Commission*, stated that of all the reported Church members:

5 per cent do not exist,
 10 per cent cannot be found,
 20 per cent never pray,
 25 per cent never read the Bible,
 30 per cent never attend Church services,
 40 per cent never give money to the church,
 50 per cent never go to Sunday School,
 60 per cent never go to Church Sunday night,
 70 per cent never give to missions,
 80 per cent never go to prayer meeting,
 90 per cent never have family worship, and
 95 per cent never win a soul to Christ.

If these statistics are correct, they simply mean that as far as evangelism is concerned only 5 per cent of the Church members are obedient to Christ. In my experience I would judge that this figure is actually high.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

ARCHIE & EDITH BUNKER

There was a funny scene in the series *All in the Family* a few years ago when Edith was still part of Archie's household. Edith, in her own way, was kind of a saintly person. Archie is complaining, as Archie commonly did. He says to her, "That's you all right. Edith, the Good. You'll stoop to anything to be good. You never make nobody mad. You think it's easy living with a saint? Even when you cheat you don't cheat to win. You cheat to lose. Edith you ain't human." Edith says, "That's a terrible thing to say, Archie Bunker. I am just as human as you are." Archie retorts, "Oh, yeah? Then prove you're just as human as me. Do something rotten."

(From *Parson's Technology*)

If you wish to enrich days, plant flowers;
If you wish to enrich years, plant trees;
If you wish to enrich Eternity, plant ideals in the lives of others.

—S. Truett Cathay

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Paul Harvey said, "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium."

(From *Parson's Technology*)

MELT DOWN

During the reign of Oliver Cromwell, the British government began to run low on silver for coins. Lord Cromwell sent his men on an investigation of the local cathedral to see if they could find any precious metal there.

After investigating, they reported, "The only silver we could find is in the statues of the saints standing in the corners."

To which the radical soldier and statesman of England replied, "Good! We'll melt down the saints and put them into circulation!"

(From *Parson's Technology*)

THE VALUE OF ONE

When Harvey Penick died at the age of 90, the world of golf lost one of its greatest teachers. Although his books have sold millions of copies, he was remembered most for his direct impact on people.

An *Associated Press* story stated, “Penick refused to teach methods or group lessons, instead applying his wisdom to the talents of individual players.” Tom Kite, the leading money winner in PGA Tour history, was 13 when he began working with Penick. Ben Crenshaw began learning the game from Penick at the age of 6.

Penick, who could have spent his life speaking to crowds, chose to invest himself in people—many of them children—one at a time.

The apostle Paul modeled this kind of unselfish mentoring relationship with a young man named Timothy. Then he urged Timothy to do the same with others. He wrote, “The things that you have heard from me . . . commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:2).

Face to face—person to person—one to one. This is the most effective way of teaching. It goes beyond the telling of facts to communicating genuine interest and love.

Why not begin today to invest yourself in someone who needs a spiritual teacher, mentor, and friend? —DCM

*To help another person grow,
You have to pay a price;
It takes the giving of yourself—
And that means sacrifice. —DJD*

ONE WHO FOLLOWS CHRIST IS TO LEAD THE WAY FOR ANOTHER.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Tuesday, September 24, 1996)

(On Being a Servant of God by Warren W. Wiersbe)

. . . Paul had four generations of Christians in mind when he wrote that, pretty good vision for a senior saint!

Once we've handed the torch to the next generation, we must avoid committing two blunders. The first is "hovering and meddling" and robbing our successor of the freedom to do what needs to be done. The second blunder is imitating Pontius Pilate and washing our hands of everything, thereby abandoning our years of experience instead of investing them when they are needed. Somewhere in between is the right posture, and the Lord can help us find it.

One of the joys of senior saints is to keep our eyes open to find new recruits for the kingdom of God. We can challenge them, help to train them, and then encourage them to do the job, making ourselves available when they need our help. As I get older, I find great joy in seeing the way God is blessing some of the young men and women He helped me influence in past years, as students in the classroom, as staff members, as members of the church, or simply as friends.

The younger generation isn't just the future *of* the church. It's the future *in* the church *right now*, and we dare not ignore it. Read again the Scriptures I quoted earlier. Then ask God to help you put them to work right where you are today.

p. 83

I have had to learn a PAINFUL LESSON over the years. My legacy is NOT going to be:

in BIBLE STUDIES,

in TAPE RECORDINGS, or

in FACILITIES.

The greatest legacy is going to be in:

PEOPLE whose lives have been touched by the Spirit of God and the Word of God and are never the same as a result of it.

What is YOUR LEGACY?

(Truth for Each Day: Meditations for Every Day of the Year
by Vance Havner)

Churchill said of England's airmen in World War II, "Never did so many owe so much to so few." Of God's remnant of witnesses today we may say, "Never did so few owe so much to so many!"
p. 22

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer,
compiled by Gerald B. Smith)

Everything that men do in their own abilities is done for time alone:
only what is done through the Eternal Spirit will abide eternally!
(May 29)

(Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott
by Beth Nimmo, Darrell Scott, and Steve Rabey)

Her sister Bethanee fondly remembers even her tendency to be dramatic:

God shared a piece of heaven with me for seventeen years, and I will treasure my memories with Rachel in a special place in my heart reserved only for her.

Rachel,

I miss you with all my heart. More than I can express. I miss your smile and laughter. I miss playing the piano with you. I miss hearing your voice, especially when you were being dramatic. All I want is to have you back with us again. Everyone around you was affected by your joy and energy. Your hopes and ambitions were so contagious. Just to see you again for an instant would be worth all I have.

Sometimes my heart feels non-existent, except for the pain it holds that lets me know my heart is still there. My mind races constantly to keep all our memories fresh and unfading. Each one is golden and priceless.

Now when I close my eyes, I am with you. I can see your face, and you smile with me again. Your smile brightened mine. Tears flow down my face as I picture you in your bridesmaid dress as I see you perform your mime in the high school talent show, as I see you in the living room watching a movie. In all those places, I am with you longing to hold you, in all of them. Your touch will always be a treasure.

Even from heaven you have continued to give yourself to us thru all your writings and journals. You could not have left us anything more precious.

Thank you, Rachel! And thank you, God.

Love Bethanee

pp. 58-59

(Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way compiled by Gordon S. Jackson)

You are a Christian today because somebody cared. Now it's your turn.
—WARREN W. WIERSBE
p. 49

(God's Little Treasury of Virtues by Honor Books)

The Right Call

God has not called me to be successful;
he has called me to be faithful.
—*Mother Teresa*

Encyclopedia of Famous Quotes
p. 125

legacy

legacy *noun*

1. **bequest made in will:** money or property that is left to somebody in a will
2. **something from past:** something that is handed down or remains from a previous generation or time

adjective

outdated or discontinued: *associated with something that is outdated or discontinued*

[14th century. Via Old French *legacie* “office of a delegate” from medieval Latin *legatia*, from Latin *legatus* (see legate).]

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v. 3 Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

In verse 1 we have considered the KEY TO MAINTENANCE IN MINISTRY and that is to be:

“[strengthened] by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.”

In verse 2 we have been talking about the MISSION, what is our duty and obligation. It is to be those who pass on:

“to faithful men” the things which we have heard so that they “will be qualified to teach others also.”

Now we answer the QUESTION:

What is the MANNER OF OUR MINISTRY in these closing illustrations in the passage?

We are going to notice there are THREE ILLUSTRATIONS given for us:

1. SOLDIER (verses 3 & 4),
2. ATHLETE (verse 5), and
3. FARMER (verse 6).

When we talk about the SOLDIER, we are going to discuss the fact that:

MINISTRY IS A WARFARE.

There are THREE THINGS that will help us in our warfare:

1. The greater the KNOWLEDGE of the enemy, the better chance for victory.
2. We have WAR ON THREE FRONTS: against the WORLD, the FLESH, and the DEVIL.
3. SATAN has the home field advantage.

When we talk about the ATHLETE, we will discuss:

1. TRAINING,
2. DISCIPLINE,
3. PERSEVERANCE, and
4. OBEDIENCE.

When we talk about the FARMER, we will discuss the PATIENCE involved in:

1. TILLING the soil,
2. SOWING the seed, and
3. WAITING for the harvest.

The MAJOR CONCERNS we have when talking about the:

SOLIDER is PROTECTION,

ATHLETE is PERFORMANCE, and

FARMER is PATIENCE with the process.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Such faithfulness to God's truth would inevitably involve Timothy in suffering, even as it had Paul.
p. 752

Chrysostom has said:

"It behooves thee not to complain if thou endurest hardness, but to complain if thou doest not endure hardness."
(source unknown)

When I read a verse like this I have to ask the QUESTION:

Where does HEALTH, WEALTH, and PROSPERITY
(God's intention for every believer) fit in to this program of suffering?

The Word of God makes it very clear that:

SUFFERING IS A VITAL PART OF GOD'S PROGRAM IN MAKING
US MORE LIKE HIS SON.

2 Timothy 1:8

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God;

Philippians 1:29 (KJV)

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

1 Thessalonians 3:3, 4

so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

1 Peter 4:12, 13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

1 Peter 2:21

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

2 Timothy 3:12

And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

“SUFFER HARDSHIPS WITH ME AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS.”

Jeremiah 46:3, 4

“Prepare your shields, both large and small, and march out for battle!
Harness the horses, mount the steeds! Take your positions with
helmets on! Polish your spears, put on your armor!

Hendriksen says:

The business of entrusting the gospel to reliable men (and, in fact, the gospel-ministry in general) entails *hardship* (verse 3). Yet, when a man fights wholeheartedly for the good cause, competes according to the rules, and works energetically, he will receive a glorious reward . . .
p. 247

Gaebelein says:

Here the qualities that Timothy ought to possess in order to carry on the work are given by the Apostle.
p. 187

He says further:

As a good soldier of Jesus Christ, warring a spiritual warfare, he must suffer hardships and many privations. He must beware not to be entangled with the affairs of this life. The soldier's calling is to please him who has called him, and all else, comforts and self-indulgence must be sacrificed.
p. 187

Towner says:

But to serve Christ with this degree of commitment requires more than a one-time decision. It requires single-minded devotion and discipline. To illustrate this, Paul introduces the image of soldiering.
p. 171

J. Vernon McGee says:

The child of God is to recognize that he is a soldier. And we are to recognize that the Christian life is not a playground; it is a battlefield. It is a battlefield where battles are being won, and where battles are being lost also. There is a real spiritual battle going on.
p. 465

Barclay says:

(i) The soldier's service must be a *concentrated service*. Once a man has enlisted on a campaign he can no longer entangle and involve himself in the ordinary daily business of life and living. He must concentrate on his service as a soldier. The Roman code of Theodosius said: "We forbid men engaged on military service to engage in civilian occupations." A soldier is a soldier and nothing else.
p. 183

King says:

It is perfectly obvious, from a study of the New Testament, that Christianity was never intended to be an easy-going, sit-at-home, arm-chair religion, but a thoroughly vigorous affair.
p. 41

King says further:

Remember that for Paul's soldier it is not peacetime; there is a war on. He will have to bear the hardness of rough fare, and battle conditions, and perhaps cruel wounds.

p. 43

Demarest says:

Ministry is difficult. It always involves hardship. And that's a reality we keep resisting. In a day when we are being offered all kinds of secrets for everything ranging from easy success to effortless weight loss, I find psychiatrist M. Scott Peck's book, *The Road Less Traveled*, a delightful change from the usual self-help book. His opening sentence: "Life is difficult." Rather than approaching a strategy for self-fulfillment from the assumption that life will be smooth and manageable if we can just learn the right techniques, Peck insists that we do best by beginning with the premise that life really consists of solving problems of varying degrees of difficulty.

pp. 253-4

Demarest says further:

Paul now uses three dramatic metaphors, portraying the qualities required in those called to endure hardness. The soldier portrays a sense of *priority*. The athlete models *discipline*. The farmer is the pattern of *perseverance*.

p. 255

Stott says:

As Tertullian put it in his *Address to Martyrs*: 'No soldier comes to the war surrounded by luxuries, nor goes into action from a comfortable bedroom, but from the makeshift and narrow tent, where every kind of hardness and severity and unpleasantness is to be found.'¹

¹ *Address to Martyrs*, chapter 2, para. 3. Alfred Plummer's translation, p. 346.

p. 53

Guthrie says:

In verses 3-6 three suggestive illustrations are used to encourage Timothy in various aspects of his work. All three, the soldier, the athlete and the labourer, are taken from common life and are frequently literary metaphors, applied here in a specifically spiritual sense. From the soldier Timothy must learn endurance, from the athlete discipline and from the labourer perseverance.
p. 139

Milne says:

The first is taken from military service and illustrates the principle of unqualified commitment. Paul reminds Timothy that the ministry, like soldiering, unavoidably involves hardship and sufferings. The character of the Christian teacher demands military (not militant) qualities such as endurance, loyalty and submission to authority.
p. 145

Lea & Griffin say:

Because of the soldierlike hardship of his life, Timothy desperately needed an abundant supply of the grace Paul had described. He also needed a singleness of purpose that could provide a detachment from the ordinary cares of life.
p. 202

Hughes says:

Now he charges Timothy to guard it by suffering for Christ: "Endure hardship" (v. 3). The translation "endure hardship" does not really convey the sense of the original. The correct sense is, "Join with us in suffering," because the same word is used in 1:8 ("join with me in suffering") where it is correctly translated. *Suffer together with us!*
p. 194

Hughes says further:

The image of soldiering suggested awesome qualities—for example, proverbial obedience or deep loyalty. Marshall Foch, a French general in Word War I, commanded an officer, “You must not retire, you must hold at all costs.” “Then,” said the officer, “that means we must die.” Foch answered “Precisely!” Warfare means courage, commitment, sacrifice. “Timothy, join in suffering with us. Join us in obedience. Join us in unflagging loyalty. Join us in sacrifice.”
p. 195

Knight, speaking on the IMPERATIVE “suffering with us,” says:

. . . Paul returns to the main reason that Timothy needs to be “strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (v. 1). This section (and the next) drives home the need for suffering hardship as a good soldier of Christ with the imagery of the soldier (v. 4) being supplemented with that of an athlete (v. 5) and a farmer (v. 6). Paul concludes with an appeal for reflection, understanding, and application (v. 7).
p. 392

Calvin says:

People who offer to be Christ’s servants must be prepared to endure hardships patiently. Unless evils are endured there will never be any perseverance.
p. 131

Kelly says:

As illustrations the Apostle then points to the experience of the soldier, the sportsman, and the peasant. All three—the first with his detachment, the second with his strict training, the third with his unremitting toil—reflect different aspects of the life of anyone who gives himself to Christ’s service.
p. 174

Whereas, we had in:

verse 1—the MAINTENANCE FOR MINISTRY, and being “strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus,”

verse 2—the MISSION OF MINISTRY, and that is to take the message and pass it on “to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also,” and now

verse 3—the MANNER OF MINISTRY, and that is being a soldier, being an athlete, and being a farmer.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

A Roman soldier’s single-minded purpose, rigorous discipline, an unquestioning obedience to **his commanding officer** . . . [it is these things, of course, that Paul wants to emphasize in seeing our ministry as that of a soldier in warfare.]

p. 752

Michael Griffiths says:

Paul gives us three pictures to help us understand why the Christian life is sometimes so tough. Why does he choose soldiers, athletes and farmers?

- All are people who sweat and work hard.
- All three pass on what they have learned to others: drill sergeants to recruits; coaches to athletes and farmers to their sons.
- All see results only if they persevere over an extended period of time.
- They are goal-orientated people who are motivated by clear purposes.

pp. 180-81

Matthew Henry says:

The soldiers of Jesus Christ must approve themselves good soldiers, faithful to their captain, resolute in his cause. Those who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardness; we must count upon it in this world, and bear it patiently when it comes.
p. 1895

Lock says:

Here stress is laid on two points: (a) the conditions of true service: it needs whole-hearted devotion (4), loyalty to the rules (5), hard work (6); (b) the natural hope of a reward, the reward of pleasing the Master, of winning a crown, of partaking of the results.
p. 93

Liefeld says:

The three images in verses 3-6 appear elsewhere in Paul, but with different emphases. The military image here has to do not with warfare but with disciplined obedience; the athletic image deals less with success and more with conformity to the rules; the agricultural image stresses hard work.
p. 247

I take issue with Liefeld on this point because I believe that all of us are in a **CONSTANT SPIRITUAL WARFARE**, from the minute that we become Christians until we depart this earth to go and be with the Lord.

Satan is a **SCHEMER** and a **DECEIVER**. He is constantly shooting his fiery darts at us on a regular basis.

In my book I listed several of the arrows that are in Satan's quiver.

(Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger by Donald E. Anderson)

ARROWS IN SATAN'S QUIVER:

DOUBT—Satan wants us to doubt God's goodness in the midst of difficult circumstances.

DECEIT—Satan wants to fool us and fake us into following his plan.

DEFENSIVENESS—He delights in seeing us defend ourselves and rationalizing our behavior that is contrary to the desires of the Heavenly Father.

DISCOURAGEMENT—Satan knows if he can get us discouraged, our next step is to throw in the towel and quit trying.

DISTRACTION—He loves to scramble our priorities and get us to invest our time on temporal things rather than eternal matters.

DIVISION—Satan wishes to divide and conquer marriages, families, and churches. Warring factions lose their witness and their joy.

DESTRUCTION—With sovereign permission Satan destroyed Job's business, possessions, and wiped out all ten of his children. He can wreak havoc when he is turned loose. The casualties of war mount with his every effort.

DISOBEDIENCE—Satan has used this one ever since the Garden of Eden to cause the downfall of many believers.

DOCTRINAL ERROR—He tries to inflict false doctrine by using counterfeit ministers and false teachers to pervert the pure teaching of Scripture.

DELAY—Paul tells the Thessalonians that he has been hindered by Satan in coming to see them.

DENIAL—If we fail to face reality, Satan has free reign, and he loves to be in that position.

p. 63

Spurgeon says:

A soldier is a serving man. He does not follow his own pleasure; he is under law and rule; each hour of the day has its prescribed duty; and he must be obedient to the word of another and not to his own will and whim.
p. 841

Spurgeon says again:

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.
p. 841

REPORTING FOR DUTY

I have never met Mary Ruth, but I've received inspiring letters from her. She has known Christ as her Savior for 63 years, and she is investing her life in doing business for Him until He returns. Here is an excerpt from one of her letters:

"Each night before I go to sleep, I say, 'Good night, Lord Jesus. I love You. I'll see You in the morning, either here or there (heaven).' When I awake and see that I am still here, I say, 'Good morning, Lord. I love You. I see we have another day together.' Immediately I report for duty and ask Him to let me know, moment by moment, His plans for the day so we can 'get with it' together. I aim to help everyone I can to get ready to meet Him."

Mary Ruth then wrote about recent opportunities she and her brother had to witness to people from other countries, and she said that several had received Christ. "God reached Chinese, Vietnamese, Buddhists, and a Jew—all in 3 days, and I didn't need a passport, visa, or plane ticket. God brought them to us, and all I had to do was report for duty."

The example of Mary Ruth and Jesus' parable about the 10 servants in Luke 19 remind us that God is willing to employ all of us in the work of His kingdom.

It's time to report for duty. —JEY

*O what can I give to the Master,
The One who from sin set me free?
I'll give Him a lifetime of service
To thank Him for dying for me.* —K. De Haan

**WE OFFER OURSELVES FOR CHRIST'S SERVICE
BECAUSE HE OFFERED HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Friday, November 3, 2000)

The real problem is not why some pious, humble, believing people suffer, but why some do not.
—C. S. Lewis

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books)

**Ninety-nine percent
of failures come from
people who have the
habit of making excuses.**

■ ■ ■

*But they all alike began to make excuses. . . . I tell you, not one of those men
who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.*

Luke 14:18, 24

“You see, God, it’s like this: We could attend church more faithfully if your day came at some other time. You have chosen a day that comes at the end of a hard week, and we’re all tired out. Not only that, but it’s the day following Saturday night, and Saturday night is one time when we feel that we should go out and enjoy ourselves. Often it is after midnight when we reach home, and it is almost impossible to get up on Sunday morning. And you must realize that you have picked the very day on which the morning paper takes the longest to read — the day when the biggest meal of the week must be prepared. We’d like to go to church, and know that we should; but you have just chosen the wrong day.”

This tongue-in-cheek excuse for poor church attendance speaks well of the excuses we use to justify our unproductive behavior. Many of us need to own up to the fact that we are not succeeding because of our own laziness, errors, or lack of vision.

Charles W. Morton, an editor for *Atlantic Monthly*, once wrote about a Harvard freshman who came to the Dean’s office to explain his tardiness in handing in an assignment. “I’m sorry, sir, but I was not feeling very well.” The dean replied, “Young man, please bear in mind that by far the greater part of the world’s work is carried on by people who are not feeling very well.”²⁴

²⁴*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, Paul Lee Tan, ed. (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1979), pp. 687,688.
pp. 62-63

(Fénelon: Talking with God by François Fénelon)

How many there are who, in consequence of too soft an upbringing in Jesus Christ, and too great a fondness for the milk of his word, go back and abandon their interior life as soon as God undertakes to wean them! We need not be astonished at this, for they mistake the portico of the temple for the very sanctuary itself. They desire the death of their unrefined external passion, so that they may lead a delicious life of self-satisfaction within.
p. 91

(Keep a Quiet Heart by Elisabeth Elliot)

Maybe there is a reader who is very weak and very lonely as he reads this today, tempted to feel that prayer is futile and goes nowhere. Think of the great Unseen Company that watches and prays as we “run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1, NIV)! Think of that and be of good cheer—it’s much too soon to quit!
p. 190

(Will God Heal Me? by Ron Dunn)

The health-and-wealth teachers are successful because their message appeals to these “hidden” motives. They promise to satisfy the deep-seated longings that we all carry within us—the longing to be free from pain and misery, to escape death and disaster, the longing to have happiness guaranteed, assured, nailed down, in the bag. Larry Crabb gives us insight with these words: “The gospel of health and wealth speaks to our legitimate longing for relief by skipping over the call to endure suffering...*Yet there is no escape from an aching soul, only denial of it*” (emphasis added).(8)
p. 73

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal
edited by Edward K. Rowell)

To live a disciplined life, and to accept the result of that discipline as the will of God—that is the mark of a man.
—Tom Landry
p. 47

The greatest thing is to be found at one's post as a child of God, living each day as though it were our last, but planning as though our world might last a hundred years.
—C. S. Lewis
p. 48

(The Game and the Glory: An Autobiography by Michelle Akers with Gregg Lewis)

Though I still looked like I'd tried to kiss a freight train, the plastic surgeon told me I should heal up as good as new.
p. 211

(Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions by Joni Eareckson Tada)

Someone once said that Satan may power the ship of calamity, but God steers it to serve His own purposes.
(February 6)

(Approaching God: How to Pray by Steve Brown)

My friend Lea Clower says that religion is for people who want to stay out of hell, and Christianity is for people who have been there. He's right. I grow so tired of those people who "tip-toe through the tulips" with Jesus. Their testimony is filled with victory, success, accomplishment, joy, and peace. One gets the feeling that they have a special relationship with God and that God is sort of a bellhop, bringing them whatever they desire.
p. 67

v. 4 No one engaging in military service is allowing himself to become entangled in civilian pursuits in order that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

No one who is serving in the military is allowing himself to get distracted. His whole PURPOSE in that is so:

“THAT HE MAY PLEASE THE ONE [CHRIST JESUS] WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER.”

Jacques Ellul says:

“The first duty of free people is to say no.”
(source unknown)

THE SOLDIER’S SINGLE FOCUS IS THE CONFLICT.

The word “ENTANGLED” has the idea of a SHEEP with his wool caught in the thorns.

No one serving in the military is becoming:

“ENTANGLED IN CIVILIAN PURSUITS.”

There are no PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENTS, no STIPULATIONS, no CONTRACTS that have to be hassled over before a person joins the military.

Why is the SOLDIER single-focused? The PURPOSE is seen in the last phrase in verse 4:

“IN ORDER THAT HE MAY PLEASE THE ONE WHO ENLISTED HIM AS A SOLDIER.”

Liefeld says:

There could be no weakening of resolve, skill, or strength. Daily discipline was enforced; diversions could not be tolerated. Because of the extensive distribution of the troops, Paul's image of the soldier's devotion was immediately recognizable and impressive.

p. 248

Calvin says:

It is as if he is saying, "The rule of military discipline is that as soon as a soldier has enrolled under a commander he leaves his home and all his affairs and concentrates only on the war. In the same way, we also can only be devoted to Christ if we are free from all the world's entanglements."

p. 131

Knight says:

The statement in this verse speaks of the discipline needed to be a soldier. The operative verbs are "entangle" and "please." The soldier does not become entangled in things that would be a hindrance to his single-minded dedication to follow gladly the commands of his leader. The implication is that Timothy should not let anything in this life distract him, Christ's soldier, from pleasing and following Christ, his commander, even though such a course involves suffering hardship.

p. 393

He says further:

The implication, following v. 3, is that such service involves suffering and that Timothy should be willing to please his commander by bearing such suffering.

p. 394

Hughes says:

The single-minded disciple is in the world, but he does not get “entangled” (literal translation) in the world. He avoids anything that will hinder single-minded dedication to his Master. Paul put it this way to the Philippians: “But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (3:13, 14). Paul was fervent!

Single-minded devotion to a thing (a sport, a philosophy, or a cause) can turn you into a machine. But when it is given to Christ who is perfect God and perfect man, whose commands are consonant with perfect love and wisdom and our highest good, then we become what we ought to be and can stand tall even in suffering.

p. 195

Lea & Griffin say:

The soldier was concerned to obey his commander twenty-four hours a day, and Paul wanted Timothy to display the same zeal in commitment to the Lord.

The ambition of the Christian soldier must be that of pleasing the Commander. The phrase “one serving as a soldier” is not merely a reference to someone’s serving as a minister or a full-time Christian worker. Paul desired that all believers live as soldiers.

p. 203

They say further:

... “Singleness of purpose and detachment from extraneous cares are essential conditions of successful service.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴Bernard, *Pastoral Epistles*, 117.

p. 203

Lea & Griffin say finally:

Servants of Christ are not merely to be well-rounded dabblers in all types of trivial pursuits. They are tough-minded devotees of Christ who constantly choose the right priorities from a list of potential selections. Paul prohibited the loss of single-mindedness and the longing for an easy life.
p. 203

Milne underscores this when he says:

The Christian ministry demands a total concentration on being obedient and useful to Christ.
p. 145

Demarest says:

The accumulation of wealth, mostly for our own security, becomes a sacred creed. We spend an overwhelming proportion of our time, energy, and money mostly satisfying our own needs and desires, and praise God for His preferential treatment of us.
p. 255

King says:

But there is one more thing which is, after all, better than anything we have already said: (c) *"He may please Him."* What greater glory can a human being have, what deeper joy can he experience, than to win a smile from His LORD?
p. 46

Hendriksen says:

These verses contain a threefold figure, beginning with the soldier-simile, continued from verse 3. The three illustrations clearly belong together, and must be seen as a unit in order to be understood: . . .

p. 247

Hendriksen says further:

Timothy must perform his task *wholeheartedly*. . . .

The soldier in the field has just *one* purpose, namely, to satisfy the officer who enlisted him.

p. 248

He says finally:

One holy passion must fill his frame. He must devote himself completely to his Lord who appointed (“enlisted”) and qualified him for his task.

p. 248

Lenski says:

The truth of this statement is obvious. The man who enlists steps out of the common . . . or course of life. All its ordinary “affairs” no longer concern him. His enlistment assures him of support; it also takes him out of all other occupations. His one aim and object is to be a soldier . . .

p. 780

Barnes says:

It is not to pursue his own plans, or to have his own will, or to accumulate property or fame for himself. His will is absorbed in the will of his commander, and his purpose is accomplished if he meet with his approbation.

p. 222

Quinn & Wacker paraphrase the verse:

No one on active duty in the military gets involved in the business of civilian life. Lit. “No one doing military service . . . is entangled . . . in the activities of life . . .

p. 620

They say further:

If a soldier is to provide the needed protection of a society, that society must provide his livelihood, his material means, albeit small compensation for the hardships of military life.

p. 620

They say finally, speaking on the purpose of pleasing “THE ONE WHO ENLISTED HIM”:

. . . “please the one in whose ranks you serve” . . .

p. 621

When people fail to accomplish what we have just talked about in the purpose of the good soldier, that “HE MAY PLEASE THE ONE WHO LISTENED HIM AS A SOLDIER,” what is it that causes us to get our priorities mixed up and forget what pleases our heavenly Father?

(Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger by Donald E. Anderson)

Through the years, I've observed six factors which characterize, to some degree or another, people who are spiritually away from home and the close relationship they once had with their Heavenly Father.

- *Neglect of spiritual disciplines*—Failure to deepen their relationship with God by omitting Bible reading, Scripture memory, and prayer.
- *Messed up priorities*—Temporary and material things begin taking the place of more lasting relationships and eternal matters.
- *Loss of God-consciousness*—A growing unawareness of His presence, a loss of the sense of His reality.
- *A cold, callous heart toward the things of God.*
- *A refusal to become accountable to others.*
- *A burning interest in living only for today.*

p. 74

A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. —Theodore Roosevelt

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

THE SUPREME MOTIVE

A little first-grader beamed with satisfaction about a spelling test on which his teacher had written a large “100—Good work!” The boy said, “I showed this to Dad and Mother because I knew it would please them.” We can just see him riding home on the bus, hardly able to wait for the moment when his parents would express their excitement with how well he had done. His desire to make Dad and Mom happy was obviously a very important motivating factor in his life.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

SEMPER FIDELIS!

After the tragic bombing of a Marine base in Beirut in October 1983, the steadfastness of one young soldier moved and heartened the American people back home. He had been critically wounded in the explosion of the revamped hotel where he and his fellow marines had been staying. Many of his buddies had been killed. He was covered with bandages and a jungle of tubes was attached to his body. He could not speak. Yet when he was visited by General Paul X. Kelly, Commandant of the Marine Corps, he indicated he wanted to write something. Painfully he wrote the words “semper fi,” a shortened form of the U.S. Marine Corps motto, Semper Fidelis. It means, “Always faithful.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Truth for Each Day: Meditations for Every Day of the Year
by Vance Havner)

Today the quality of our church people is at a frightening low. We are many but not much. Doing has become a substitute for being and we have failed on character. We are conformed to the age but not to the image of God's Son. What we ought to do has been magnified above what we ought to be. God looks on the heart—what we *are*.
p. 151

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor)

LEARNING TO LET GO

The joy is not always in getting what we want but in letting go of what we don't need.
p. 278

(Churchill on Courage: Wisdom for Perseverance by Frederick Talbott)

We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.

Winston Churchill
House of Commons, June 4, 1940

(quote 59)

We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.

Winston Churchill
London Broadcast, February 9, 1941

(quote 73)

Our solid, stubborn strength has stood the awful test.

Winston Churchill
London, June 12, 1941

(quote 77)

It's an Honor to Serve

Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr. held captive, after being shot down behind enemy lines, for 7 1/2 years. He was tortured and kept in solitary confinement for years.

When released his first words, when the plane landed at Clark Field in the Philippines, were:

“We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our commander-in-chief and to our nation for this day, God bless America.”

*He was just a young man
When he first heard the call
Come and join in the battle
Come and give us your all
And he rose up to follow
Leaving all else behind
And he joined in this song
When he reached the front lines.*

*Chorus:
It's an honor to serve
To join in the fight
To lift up my voice
And to lay down my life
Giving glory to God
Seeking none in return
It's an honor an honor to serve.*

*Now the day he was captured
They locked him in chains
And though weeks turned to years
Still his faith stayed the same
As his body was broken
His dark hair turned gray
But each night in his cell
He would stand up and say.*

Chorus

Now one day the war finally came to an end And he spoke with his heart as he stood with his men: "We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country under difficult circumstances. We are profoundly grateful to our commander-in-chief and to our nation for this day . . . God Bless America."

*As they lifted the flag at the front of the crowd
I watched him stand up and bring his hand to
his brow
Oh Lord help me remember what true honor means
And no matter the cost to stand up and sing.*

Chorus

"An Honor to Serve" © 1998 Shepherd Boy Music/ASCAP (adm. by Word, Inc. a division of Word Music) from Compact Disk "Honor and Glory" by Ray Boltz © 1998 Ray Boltz Music Inc. Distributed by Word Music Group, Inc., Nashville, TN.

I find myself singing the last stanza of:

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

("When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" by Isaac Watts. *Christian Praise Hymnal*, Broadman Press, 1964. #87)

v. 5 And if a person is competing in the athletic games, he is not being crowned as the winner unless he competed according to the rules.

Paul now turns from his illustration of the SOLDIER and speaks of the RUNNER.

There are numerous passages in the New Testament where the Apostle likens LIFE to the RACE. In fact, he will conclude this epistle by returning to this very thought.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Every athletic event has its boundaries, its rules; moreover, all who fail to discipline themselves to observe these rules are disqualified.
pp. 752-3

The RUNNER is “COMPETING” to be crowned but Paul says:

“HE IS NOT BEING CROWNED AS THE WINNER UNLESS HE
COMPETED ACCORDING TO THE RULES.”

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Milne says:

There were established disciplines and rules that competitors had to abide by if they were ever to win the contests, disciplines that extended for months in advance. In just the same way, the Christian leader must gain control over his own passions and self-interests if he is to be faithful and fruitful in Christ's service, and not be disqualified on the grounds of his own moral indiscretions (1 Cor. 9:24-27).
pp. 145-6

Lea & Griffin say:

In the Pastorals, Paul had used athletic images in 1 Tim 4:7-8; 6:12 in order to emphasize that the Christian life demands the practice of self-discipline which affects both personal behavior and inner attitude. Christians must practice self-control. Each Christian must also have an inner preparedness to endure cheerfully the demands and hardships that spiritual commitment will bring.
p. 204

Hughes observes:

So Paul says again that there must be single-minded, wholehearted discipline. The truth is, none of us will get anywhere without this in any area of life. Disciplined training is very close to single-mindedness, though not exactly the same. In addition to focus, it suggests rigor and sweat. A person conditioned by such dedication will be able to willingly join in the suffering.
p. 196

Knight says:

The principle is that, just as with a soldier, so also with an athlete there are things that must be done.
p. 394

Calvin says:

Christ wants us to strive every day. The person who gives up halfway through a race loses his honor, even though he may have set out bravely.
p. 132

Liefeld acknowledges that:

Paul writes elsewhere about athletic competition, especially in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. In that passage the emphasis is on personal training and discipline; here it is more on keeping the rules. Both are with a view to winning. Athletic contests were popular and highly valued in the Greco-Roman tradition. Cities were proud of their arenas, and winners were highly honored.
p. 248

I am reminded of the statement that I have hanging on my wall, once again this morning:

“The runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment.”

IN TRAINING FOR VICTORY

Steve Lawson played college football for Texas Tech in Lubbock. That meant practicing in August under the scorching Texas sun. While most other students were sitting around in air-conditioned comfort, he was out there in an empty oven-like stadium getting ready for the first game.

The playing field had synthetic turf. It was like playing on a hot skillet. Lawson remembers looking across the field and watching the heat waves rising. Nobody dared to walk on that field barefoot. He had to wear two pairs of socks just to avoid heat blisters.

There they were, practicing twice a day in this inferno—in spite of dehydration, leg cramps, and exhaustion. Why would anybody in their right mind do it day after day?

Because victory always carries a high price. You have to pay the cost of personal discipline, training. It takes sacrifice. “Training today makes for victory tomorrow” is an axiom of athletics. It’s just as true in the spiritual realm.

[Men Who Win by Steve Lawson. NavPress, 1992. Pages 80-81.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

CLASS-MASS SOCIETY

When only a few are willing to study the Word of God, attend prayer meeting, and accept leadership responsibilities, the result is comparable to a recent description of life in the United States by the Gannett News Service. It released this commentary: “America is rapidly turning into a class-mass society, comprised of an elite that reads, votes, and runs the community and a mass that vegetates in front of the TV set.” The Christian community must be careful not to let itself become like a society with “an elite” that does the work and “a mass that vegetates” in front of the pulpit. The race to be run cannot be won by spectators.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

ATHLETE'S PSALM

The Lord is my Coach, I cannot lose.

He gets me in shape through drills in practice sessions and makes sure I have a healthy training table.

He keeps me in condition: He opens up the field for me to follow according to the boundaries and rules of the game so that I can be the champion of His cause.

Yes, even though the contest be on the brink of defeat, I will not even consider the possibility of conceding, for He always calls the right plays. His discipline and direction (instruction and guidance) constantly challenge me.

He arouses my competitive spirit and inspires me to be at my best for the game, even though my opponent may have the home advantage.

He enables me to score even more points than I need.

I am confident that victory and triumph will be the result in the arena of my life, and when the final whistle blows, I will be enshrined in God's great Hall of Fame forever.

(source unknown)

LET RIGHT BE DONE

An engaging family film, *The Winslow Boy*, tells the story of a 13-year-old who is accused of stealing and is expelled from a British military school. The father believes his son is innocent and marshals all his resources to defend him. As the case attracts public attention, many people rally behind the boy with the slogan “Let right be done.”

There is something within us that longs for justice for others and for ourselves. But there is only one aspect of justice that is fully within our control, and that is our behavior toward others.

To a people who hurt the Lord deeply by their selfishness and unjust treatment of others, the prophet Micah said, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Mic. 6:8). What does the Lord long for from us? He wants *action* (“do justly”), *affection* (“love mercy”), and *association* (“walk humbly with your God”).

As Christians, instead of demanding “Let right be done *to* me,” may our rallying cry become “Let right be done *by* me.” Great things can happen when we say, “In my family, in my community, in my workplace, in every relationship, let right be done by me!” —DCM

*To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill;
O may it all my powers engage,
To do my Master's will!* —Wesley

**JUSTICE IS ACCOMPLISHED
ONE RIGHT AT A TIME.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Friday, August 11, 2000)

I love one of the translation of the Scripture which has Paul saying:

1 Corinthians 9:26 (TLB)

So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step.

A golfing friend changed Proverbs 3 to read:

“In all your ways acknowledge him and he will keep you in the fairway.”

The longer I live, the more I become aware of the fact that life is not a short SPRINT but a long and difficult MARATHON.

The further you get into the race, the more you become aware of the fact that it will just be a great joy to be able to finish.

I have a picture by GARY PETERSON hanging in my bathroom called “The Finisher.” The runner is laying out, spread eagle, with one finger across the finish line. There’s a moon in the sky, and there are tracks all around him of those who have finished ahead of him. I take great comfort from that every time I see that picture.

There are FOUR F’s that I would like to have inscribed upon my tombstone:

1. FORGIVEN,
2. FAITHFUL,
3. FRUITFUL, and
4. FINISHER.

(The One Year Book of Poetry by Philip Comfort & Daniel Partner)

. . .

*There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast;
And they, who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white. . . .*

BERNARD OF CLUNY (fl. mid-12th c.)
Translated by John Neale (1818-1866)
(January 9)

(Called & Committed: World-Changing Discipleship by David Watson)

“The great tragedy of modern evangelism,” writes Jim Wallis, “is in calling many to belief but few to obedience.”²⁶

26. *Agenda for Biblical People* (Harper & Row, 1976), p. 23.
p. 10

(Sport Shorts Calendar by Jay Carty)

Class is striving hard to be the best at what you do while taking
the needs of others into consideration.

Roger Staubach, NFL Quarterback

(January 8)

The most important thing in becoming a success is the
three P's—practice, perseverance, and prayer.

Doak Walker, NFL Running Back

(January 29)

(Sport Shorts Calendar by Jay Carty)

We're going to get in two hours of good practice even if it takes six hours.

Lou Holtz, College Football Coach

(August 16)

(Our Daily Walk: Daily Readings by F. B. Meyer)

Do not look at your circumstances, or count your five loaves and two small fishes, wondering if they will suffice; or at the waves, questioning if they will bear you up. Keep your eyes fixed on him, and your ears open to his voice, and when once you are sure of his leading, go forward in his name. Jordan will divide before you, and the walls of Jericho will fall flat.

(July 1)

v. 6 The hard-working farmer must be the first to receive his share of the crops.

Thus far, Paul has ILLUSTRATED the Christian commitment that he desires from Timothy, by the picture of:

a SOLDIER and

an ATHLETE competing according to the rules.

Now he turns the illustration to:

a hard-working FARMER.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

[The emphasis is on hardworking, contrasting lazy and idle.] A diligent soldier gains the approval of his commanding officer; a diligent athlete wins the victory; a diligent farmer wins **the first . . . share of the crops**.
p. 753

Liefeld says:

This image of the farmer, like the other two, is well chosen. Unlike countries today with their urban sprawl, everyone in Paul's day knew the image of the hardworking farmer.
p. 248

Calvin says:

This verse means that the **farmer** does not gather his fruit until he has worked hard in cultivating the earth by sowing and other work. If a farmer does not shrink from the hard work of obtaining fruit after a period of time, and if he waits patiently for the harvest, how much more absurd it is for us to refuse the work Christ sets on us, as we have the promise of such a great reward.
p. 132

Knight says:

The image of the farmer who receives his share of the crops reiterates the idea of reward and continues the emphasis on the need for suffering by the use of the qualification “hard-working” . . .

p. 394

Hughes observes:

Farming is hard work today, and it was especially hard in the first century. The farmer’s life involved: 1) early and long hours because he could not afford to lose time; 2) constant toil (plowing, sowing, tending, weeding, reaping, storing); 3) regular disappointments—frosts, pests, and disease; 4) much patience—everything happened at less than slow motion; and 5) boredom.

p. 196

Lea & Griffin observe:

The phrase “to receive a share of the crops” is not an appeal for a diligent worker to receive an adequate salary. It promises a spiritual reward from God for a job devotedly done. The time of this reward may be either in this life or at the last judgment. The reward may consist of honor and recognition from the church or a divine approval and blessing by God.

p. 204

They say further:

As Bernard aptly observes, “The main thought is that labor, discipline, striving are the portion of him who would succeed in any enterprise, be he soldier or athlete or farmer.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶Bernard, *Pastoral Epistles*, 118.

p. 205

Barnes says:

This sense will accord with the purpose of the apostle. It was to remind Timothy that *labour* must precede reward; that if a man would reap, he must sow; that he could hope for no fruits, unless he toiled for them.
p. 222

WHOLE-HEARTED DEDICATION, as we have seen in the SOLDIER.

PLAYING BY THE RULES, as we have seen in the RUNNER, must be followed with hard work.

So, Paul, in the third ILLUSTRATION likens the Christian experience to a HARD-WORKING FARMER. As the farmer toils and fights all the enemies of nature in order to produce a crop, the reward which is his is to be first partaker of the fruits from his harvest.

If we are going to LEAVE A LEGACY that has eternal ramifications, it will be:

by being willing to be TOTALLY DEVOTED to the task,

PLAYING the game according to the RULES, and

WORKING HARD at the task He has given us to do.

Lenski says:

Also the fact that he toils so that other people may have produce lies in the nature of the case. The whole world lives on the farmer's produce. The point that Paul wishes to make is the fact that the farmer himself must ever be the *first* "to take his share," . . .
p. 783

Hendriksen says:

Timothy, then, must *fight wholeheartedly*, for the good cause. He must also *compete according to the rules*. And now, thirdly: *he must toil energetically*, like *the* (generic use of the article) hard-working farmer.
p. 249

King says:

There is a certain thrill for the serving soldier, and for the all-out runner, but there is no thrill for the busy farmer.
p. 42

He says further:

That means, doesn't it, that we shall ourselves receive some enjoyment and enrichment from our labours. Done for Him, and done for others, yet we ourselves shall have gains for our pains.
p. 45

Kelly says:

. . . Paul's point being that it is the peasant who has really exerted himself in the field **who has the first claim on the crop**, i.e. has the priority over those who have either done nothing or been thoroughly idle.
p. 176

Stott says:

If the athlete must play fair, the farmer must work hard.
p. 56

Barclay says:

One thing remains in all these three pictures. The soldier is upheld by the thought of final victory. The athlete is upheld by the vision of the crown. The husband-man is upheld by the hope of the harvest. Each of them submits to the discipline and the toil for the sake of the glory which shall be. It is so with the Christian. The Christian struggle is not a struggle without a goal; it is not a pointless effort. It is always going somewhere. And the Christian can be very certain that after the effort of the Christian life, there comes the joy of heaven; and the greater the struggle the greater the joy.
p. 188

Wiersbe says:

Several practical truths are found in this image of the farmer and field. For one thing, *a farmer has to work*. If you leave a field to itself, it will produce mostly weeds. Solomon had this truth in mind when he wrote about the field of the sluggard (Prov. 24:30-34). Real ministry is hard work, and a pastor (and church members) ought to work in their spiritual field as diligently as a farmer works in his field. Pastors do not punch clocks, but they ought to be up in the morning and at their work just as if God blew a whistle for them.

A farmer needs patience. “See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the fall and spring rains” (James 5:7, NIV). A pastor friend of mine often reminds me, “The harvest is not the end of the meeting—it is the end of the age.”
p. 133

MacArthur says:

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. And, unlike the teacher, the soldier, and the athlete, a farmer often works alone. He has no students to stimulate him, no fellow soldiers to fight with him, no teammates or crowd to cheer him.

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. But whatever their day-to-day responsibilities may involve, all faithful believers are promised God's blessing and reward. We may be underpaid, treated unfairly by our boss or fellow employees, and misunderstood or unappreciated by fellow Christians. But Christ's reward to His faithful disciples is never deficient, never unfair, never late, and never omitted.

p. 48

Wilson says:

'It is the man who has bathed himself in sweat to secure a harvest who has the premier title to its produce. Labour expended on an object renders it our own' (Simpson).

p. 140

Fee says:

The point of his receiving **the first share**, therefore, is not about his making a living from the gospel (D-C, Hanson), which is totally foreign to the context, but about his final reward for being **hardworking**.

p. 243

Fee then says:

Thus, even though the military imagery does not precisely say so, each of the metaphors, besides calling Timothy to “take his share in suffering,” looks forward to the eschatological prize. As Barrett nicely puts it: “Beyond warfare is victory, beyond athletic effort a prize, and beyond agricultural labour a crop” (p. 102).
p. 243

Quinn & Wacker say:

... “the hardworking . . . farmer . . . ought . . . to be first . . . to receive his share . . . of the fruits . . .”
p. 622

THE NEXT PLANTING

When I was a child, it was a family custom to look for the first ripe tomato in our garden. Somehow that first red tomato (often allows to finish ripening on the kitchen window sill) always seemed to taste the best.

As the summer wore on, my mother found a variety of ways to serve the tomatoes that followed: stewed, sliced for sandwiches, and even breaded fried green tomatoes. Many quarters were canned for winter use in spaghetti and goulash.

One thing we never neglected: Dad always saved some of the seeds from his prized tomato plants for the next year's planting. Thus a harvest was assured, year after year.

I think Paul had that same principle in mind when he told Timothy to commit the truths of the gospel to faithful believers who would be able to "teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Like seed, God's Word must be continually planted in the hearts of faithful followers of Christ, who in turn will pass it on to others. As they do, the process of sowing and reaping will continue until the Lord of the harvest returns.

Someone has taught you the truths of the gospel and helped you to understand the teachings of the Bible. Are you planting seeds for the next harvest? —DCE

*O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart. —Havergal*

**WE ARE TO BE CHANNELS OF GOD'S TRUTH,
NOT RESERVOIRS.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, August 7, year unknown)

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory)

A farmer overheard a flock of chickens in his barnyard talking together just as a football flew over the fence and landed in their midst.

The barnyard rooster waddled over, studied it, then said: "I'm not complaining, girls, but look at the work they're turning out next door."

(GENERAL FEATURES)

p. 113

(Abide in Christ: Thoughts on the Blessed Life of Fellowship with the Son of God by Andrew Murray)

Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as the condition for enjoying His salvation, but a consenting to let Him do all for us, and in us, and through us. It is a work He does for us—the fruit and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for what He has engaged to perform.

pp. 22-23

(Humor for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal & Christian Reader edited by Edward K. Rowell & Bonne L. Steffen)

My friend Dorothy spent several weeks in prayer and special training to lead a Bible discussion group. Finally the big day arrived for the first class. Getting her family of six out the door was more hectic than usual that morning. Breakfast didn't turn out right, and several arguments were going on among the children. Dorothy, quickly getting frazzled, tried to regain her composure. In the midst of the bedlam, her husband entered the kitchen and surveyed the uproar.

"Kids! Settle down! he admonished. "Your mom has only 45 minutes until she has to become a radiant Christian."

—Roseann Hill

p. 161

(Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives by Richard A. Swenson, M.D.)

“I view my life as a tree,” explains Jean Fleming. The trunk is the anchor of her life, her relationship to Christ. The limbs represent those major focus areas that God has given her—family, job, ministry, and personal development. And the branches represent the ever-proliferating multitude of activities. “Even without special care, activity branches multiply. Soon the profusion of branches becomes more prominent than the trunk and limbs. When this happens, I feel trapped, frustrated, and empty. Why? Because my life is shaped and drained by activities that have lost their pertinence to Christ.”¹⁷

Activities and commitments often have a way of self-perpetuating even when we are no longer particularly interested in them. It is much harder to stop something than it is to start it. Periodically, it is important to get the clippers and prune away.

17. Jean Fleming, *Between Walden and the Whirlwind: Living the Christ-Centered Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1985), page 40.

p. 156

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The three illustrations have in common the point that success is achieved through discipline, . . . hard work, and single-mindedness.

p. 753

We have FOCUSED on in the:

SOLIDER—PROTECTION,

ATHLETE—PERFORMANCE, and

FARMER—PATIENCE.

There are FOUR THINGS that the SOLDIER, ATHLETE, and FARMER have in common:

1. HARD WORK,
2. DISCIPLINE,
3. SUBMISSION, and
4. GOALS.

The SOLDIER is not to be distracted.

The ATHLETE must be running by the rules.

The FARMER eats of his harvest.

The RESULT of:

the WARFARE is PEACE,

the RACE is VICTORY, and

the FARMING project is FRUIT (that is the harvest).

Psalm 126:5, 6

Those who sow in tears
 will reap with songs of joy.
 He who goes out weeping,
 carrying seed to sow,
 will return with songs of joy,
 carrying sheaves with him.

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

John 15:4, 8

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. . . . By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Galatians 6:9, 10

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

v. 7 Think over what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

I have always preceded this verse with my own name:

“[DON] THINK OVER WHAT I AM SAYING, FOR THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS.”

What Paul is doing for Timothy right now is making an application of these previous illustrations.

The COMMAND to “THINK OVER” is in the PRESENT IMPERATIVE. We could translate it:

“Be continually thinking over what I am saying.”

These things ought to be in your thinking all of the time.

Paul has asked Timothy to do THREE THINGS so far in this section of study:

1. To be strengthened by “means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus,”
2. “The things you have heard from me,” along with many witnesses, “these things” commit to “faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also,” and
3. “Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

Now we have a final bit of ADVICE:

4. “THINK OVER WHAT I AM SAYING, FOR THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS.”

As Timothy has time to reflect upon the illustrations that Paul has used, he says the Lord will be giving him “UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THESE THINGS.”

In the process of obeying this command to be continually thinking over what Paul is saying, the Lord will give Timothy “UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS.”

Proverbs 3:5, 6 (version unknown)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path.

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

The word thinking over has in it the thoughts of meditation and contemplation. This discipline equals the Lord granting insight.
p. 753 (paraphrased)

The Greek word “to think over” has in it the thoughts of:

PERCEIVE,

APPREHEND,

UNDERSTAND, and

GAIN AN INSIGHT INTO.

Wilson says:

Thus, when taken together, these three metaphors show that the ministry of the gospel demands: 1. the whole-hearted devotion of the soldier; 2. the self-discipline of the athlete; 3. the wearisome toil of the farmer.

p. 140

He says further:

If Timothy will reflect on the meaning of what Paul has just said, he will see that he must suffer his share of hardship before he can enjoy the reward which is implied in each of the preceding figures (the victory after battle; the prize after the race; the harvest after much labour).

p. 140

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

7. Consider the force of the illustrations I have given from the soldier, the contender in the games, and the husbandmen, as *applying to thyself in thy ministry*.

p. 1376

A. T. Robertson says of the word translated “consider”:

[It is a] Present active imperative of *noeō*, old verb, to put your mind (*nous*) on. See Eph. 3:4 and like command in I Cor. 10:15. *Understanding (sunesin)*. “Comprehension” . . . This is a blessed promise that calls for application.

p. 617

Matthew Henry says:

He prays for him: *The Lord give thee understanding in all things*. The most intelligent man needs more and more of this gift. If he who gave the revelation in the word does not give the understanding in the heart, we are nothing.

p. 1895

Knight says:

Imperative . . . urges Timothy to “consider,” i.e., to contemplatively “think over” this series of analogies . . .
p. 396

Lea & Griffin say:

Just in case Timothy had missed the point of Paul’s illustrations, Paul urged him to ponder them (“Consider these three illustrations of mine,” (Phillips). He encouraged his meditation by promising that God would grant him help in understanding their intent.
p. 205

They say further:

Paul emphasized traits that believers need to demonstrate in their service for the Lord. These include (1) the faithful skills of a competent teacher, (2) the willingness to suffer and the choice of priorities of a soldier, (3) the self-discipline of an athlete, and (4) the hard work of a farmer. Paul demanded the pursuit of excellence in the Christian life. He tolerated no images of mediocrity for the believer. Can you image Paul illustrating the Christian life with the images of a dropout or a turncoat.
pp. 205-6

Gaebelein says:

These are the practical conditions for all who are engaging in service—enduring hardship, self-denial, unentangled, separated from the world and its ways, fighting lawfully and laboring first to be partaker of the fruits.
p. 188

Stott says:

So far, then, we have looked at the first three metaphors with which Paul illustrates the duties of the Christian worker. By them he has isolated three aspects of wholeheartedness which should be found in Timothy, and in all those who like Timothy seek to pass on to others 'the good deposit' they have themselves received: the dedication of a good soldier, the law-abiding obedience of a good athlete and the painstaking labour of a good farmer. Without these we cannot expect results. There will be no victory for the soldier unless he gives himself to his soldiering, no wreath for the athlete unless he keeps the rules, and no harvest for the farmer unless he toils at his farming.
pp. 58-59

Kelly says:

. . . **Think out my meaning**, i.e. 'work out what I am getting at', is a better rendering of the Greek . . .
p. 176

Lenski says:

Be understanding what I am saying! The present imperative is in place: "be applying your mind"; "consider" . . . would be a different verb. The idea is not that Paul's figures are dark and difficult; they are quite lucid. But so much is concentrated into them that one must pause and think to apprehend it all.
p. 784

Towner says:

Thus the three images reinforce the main command to persevere in suffering (v. 3). But Paul's teaching does not apply only to unusual circumstances. He portrays the normal Christian life. In fact, to judge from the New Testament, it is not the presence of struggle and suffering in the life of the Christian that ought to be questioned, but rather the absence of them. The images remind us that discipline, devotion and diligence all come into play in faithful Christian service. The strength to serve in this way comes from Christ (v. 1), but the images persistently sound the note of personal decision and commitment to the task.

p. 174

Guthrie says:

As the Christian ponders and applies the exhortations to his own life, the Lord will increase his powers of understanding.

p. 142

MacArthur says:

Paul continues. The verb *noeō* (**consider**) is used only here in the New Testament. It denotes perceiving clearly with the mind, of understanding fully, of considering carefully, of pondering and mulling over. The form here is an imperative, indicating that Paul was giving a strong admonition, not mere advice.

The apostle was saying to Timothy, and still says to believers today: "Under the Lord, think over and carefully ponder what I have been saying. Look at your own life and ask yourself if you are a strong Christian, a spiritual Christian, a mature Christian. Are you devoting yourself to guarding and teaching God's Word? Do you deny yourself and count your life as nothing in order to faithfully serve the Lord? Do you keep a distance between yourself and the affairs of the world? Do you continually prepare yourself to serve your Master? Do you understand self-denial and self-sacrifice? Are you willing to pay the price that He demands?"

p. 49

Hughes puts it this way:

Paul concludes, “Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this” (v. 7). These analogies of the farmer, the athlete, and the soldier would help Timothy understand the call to join with him in suffering. All three have the element of suffering—the soldier’s single-minded devotion, the athlete’s rigorous exercise, the farmer’s toil—and they all have their reward. As C. K. Barrett observes: “Beyond warfare is victory, beyond the athlete’s effort is the prize, and beyond agricultural labor is the crop.”

pp. 196-7

DO THE RIGHT!

This poem by Norman Macleod is an encouragement to continue doing what is right no matter what the cost.

Courage, brother, do not stumble,
Though your path be dark as night
There’s a star to guide the humble,
Trust in God, and do the right.

Perish policy and cunning,
Perish all that fears the light
Whether losing, whether winning,
Trust in God, and do the right.

Some will hate you, some will love you,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Cease from man, and look above you,
Trust in God, and do the right.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

“HOW IS YOUR IQ TODAY?”

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

My uncle called again recently to pass along something he'd found in the Bible. After showing an interest in my work, he said, “How's your IQ today?” That doesn't mean much to you, but it sure did to me. He has asked me that same question before. It's his way of referring to my spiritual potential for the day. He wondered whether I had “gone to the cross” yet that morning to remember what Christ had done for me. Had I on the basis of that great undeserved sacrifice asked the Father for mercy, grace, and wisdom? He wasn't trying to put me on the spot, but he wanted to impress upon me the fact that ability for service comes only from God. It's not just a matter of natural aptitude, a good night's sleep, or a brisk morning run. No, strength for the day in the highest sense comes directly from the Lord in the form of His mercy, grace, and wisdom.

In today's text the apostle tells us to consider his words. Then he says, “. . . and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” That's the kind of IQ we need. We must be responsive to the Lord who reaches down and opens our minds to things we otherwise would not see. To overlook His kindness, grace, and power is to fail to live up to our spiritual potential.

I'll be honest with you—I get embarrassed sometimes when my uncle calls and inquires about my spiritual IQ. But I would much rather be made a little uncomfortable by someone who truly loves me than to have not, because I ask not (Jas. 4:2).

By the way, how's your IQ today?

—M.R.D. II

You'll go forth a little stronger
With a fresh supply of grace,
If each day you meet the Savior
In a secret, quiet place.

—Adams

THOT: Time is Christ's service requires “time out” for renewal!

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, August 13, year unknown)

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration
by Mary W. Tileston)

. . . My ears are dull, so that I cannot hear Thy voice. My eyes are dim, so that I cannot see Thy tokens. Thou alone canst quicken my hearing, and purge my sight, and cleanse and renew my heart. Teach me to sit at Thy feet, and to hear Thy word—Amen.

John Henry Newman.

p. 80

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah)

One commentator has written, “He first of all opened the Scriptures, then He opened their eyes, and then He opened their mouths.” And they couldn't stop talking about the One they had seen.

p. 53

In this study we have been talking about the:

Legacy: What Am I Passing On before I depart?

THE LEGACY WILL COME TO:

THE SOLDIER WITH A SINGLE FOCUS OF PLEASING THE LORD,

THE ATHLETE WHO IS OBEDIENT, and

THE FARMER WHO PREPARES AND PLANS.

(Payne Stewart by Tracey Stewart with Ken Abraham)

Payne rolled the putt across the eighteenth green, dropped it in the cup, and the party at Pinehurst began! I fought my way through the crowd and finally reached him. We kissed and hugged each other tightly, and he said to me, “Luv’ie, I kept my head down all day long. I kept my head down!” Then I said, “I know you did. I am so proud of you!”

Payne later said, “People are telling me that it was the best Open finish of the century, one of the greatest Opens ever. But I never thought about how this would go down—especially during the Open itself. I thought about getting the job done. Once the job’s done, then you reflect on it and think, *Wow, those last three holes were pretty special.*”
p. 271

Trying to comprehend what Paul has been saying to Timothy in this passage, caused me to write these words as I concluded my book Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger:

“I am totally spent and spilled out. I have given myself fully to the Savior and His plan for me. I am so filled with joy. I am ready for some celebrating!”

You know, what Paul says is really true. One of the greatest joys in eternity will be knowing we gave ourselves away in sacrificial involvement. Every day is a joy to live as we learn how to Give! Give! Give!

Lord! When I come home on the flight You’ve scheduled for me, I hope I can say: “I have fought, I was faithful, and I finished.” I am longing to hear You say: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”
p. 240

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: We can get through anything and everything if we are sustained by the strength of His grace.

LESSON #2: We can not be victorious by ourselves. We must be dependant upon Him.

LESSON #3: His strength is there for us in the time of test, trial, and temptation. We will be victorious if we avail ourselves of this resource.

LESSON #4: What are you doing in your legacy to pass on the great message of the Gospel to the next generation?

LESSON #5: How about making it a goal to become a faithful man or woman “who will be qualified to teach others also”? (verse 2).

LESSON #6: Are you prepared to be obedient to Paul’s command to Timothy in verse 3: “Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus”?

LESSON #7: Are you entangled in “civilian pursuits” that keep you from being a soldier who is pleasing the Lord? (verse 4).

LESSON #8: Can you say that you want written on your tombstone: forgiven, faithful, fruitful, finisher?

LESSON #9: Are you sowing seeds on a daily basis in anticipation of a rich harvest?

LESSON #10: Lord, make me a soldier that is not distracted, an athlete who is running by the rules, and a farmer who is enjoying eating the fruit of his labor.

LESSON #11: Hard-work, discipline, submission, and goals are part and parcel to the normal Christian life.

LESSON #12: The legacy will come to the soldier with a single focus of pleasing the Lord, to the athlete who is obedient, and to the farmer who prepares and plans.

Knight says:

Paul has called on Timothy to suffer hardship and has placed before him three models for him to consider in that service: The soldier who pleases his commander and is not distracted from his service to him, the law-abiding athlete who gains the crown, and the hard-working farmer who receives his share of the crops. Together they speak of a vigorous and undivided service that is rewarded (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58).
p. 396

Hughes concludes his exposition by saying:

The apostolic gospel is everything. We must guard it by being *strong*—“be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Because we are “in Christ” we have “the grace”—“grace upon grace”—the inexhaustible goodness of God—free grace, saving grace, gifting grace, enabling grace, providing grace, abounding grace, strengthening grace. Nothing that we will encounter in guarding the gospel will exceed God’s grace.

We must also guard the deposit by *delegating* it to the faithful. This delegation begins with our children but also involves entrusting the gospel to faithful believers who are qualified to teach it to others.

We must also guard the deposit by willingly *joining in suffering* for it “like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.” We must be single-minded in our devotion to Christ like a soldier who wants only to please his commander. We must be disciplined like an athlete. We must labor like a hardworking farmer.

Such a life is not safe, but it is glorious.

Semper fidelis!

p. 197

There is a sense, of course, in which every Christian has an apostleship. We are all of us to be witnesses, no matter what our other calling, profession or labor. A generation ago there was a wealthy man in the Midwest who was an outstanding Christian layman. People used to ask him what he did. He would reply, “I am a witness for Jesus Christ, but I pack pork to pay expenses.” Your apostleship differs in degree but not in kind from the apostleship that was given by God to Paul.

—Donald Grey Barnhouse

(From *Parson's Technology*)

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

In any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.

—Theodore Roosevelt

p. 9

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll)

BRUCE THIELEMANN, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, told of a conversation with a member of his flock who said, “You preachers talk a lot about ‘do unto others,’ but when you get right down to it, it comes down to basin theology.”

Thielemann asked, “Basin theology? What’s that?”

The layman said, “Remember what Pilate did when he had the chance to acquit Jesus? He called for a basin and washed his hands of the whole thing. But Jesus, the night before His death, called for a basin and proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples. It all comes down to basin theology: Which one will you use?”

—Craig Larson, *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching from Leadership Journal*

p. 516

This past summer I was touched by a painting called “Safely Home.” As I was doing my morning walk on the beach, I was trying to accept reality. With two knee braces and a fake hip, I was still going. I told the Lord I WAS LIMPING TOWARD HOME.

The thoughts came to my mind of:

Isaiah 40:30, 31

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

With an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE I kept going on my walk and it was just as if the Lord had said:

“You know, when you can’t walk anymore, then I will carry you the rest of the way.”

Tho’ much is taken, much abides: and tho’ we are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are; one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

—Tennyson, “Ulysses”

(source unknown)

This is the true joy in life . . . being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one . . . being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. . . . I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It's a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

—George Bernard Shaw

(source unknown)

WE REST ON THEE

This is the song that was sung by Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Jim Elliot, Roger Youderian and Pete Fleming in their devotional period the morning of January 3, 1956, before leaving the mission station at Arajuno to establish a beachhead on the River Curaray, deep in the territory of the Auca Indians of Ecuador's Amazon jungle. They had a peaceful and gratifying contact with three members of the tribe on January 6, 1956, but two days later a group of about ten Aucas came to that now famous beach and slew the five missionaries. The phrase of the fourth stanza, "THROUGH GATES OF SPLENDOR," has been used as the title of the book written concerning this incident by Betty Elliot, one of the five widows.

We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender!
 We go not forth alone against the foe.
 Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender
 We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go.
 Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender
 We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go!

Yea, in Thy name, O Captain of salvation!
 In Thy dear name all other names above;
 Jesus our righteousness, our sure Foundation,
 Our prince of glory and our King of love.
 Jesus our righteousness, our sure Foundation,
 Our Prince of glory and our King of love.

We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling,
 and needing more each day Thy grace to know;
 Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing;
 We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go.
 Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing;
 We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go!

We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender!
 Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise.
 When passing thro' the GATES OF PEARLY SPLENDOR,
 Victors, we rest on Thee thro' endless days.
 When passing through the GATES OF PEARLY SPLENDOR,
 Victors, we rest on Thee thro' endless days.

(source unknown)