

BE FOCUSED, STAY FAITHFUL, LOOK FORWARD

2Tim 2:1-7

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Paul's final letter to Timothy exhorts him and all who believe in Christ to persevere.
- B. Paul seems to be more urgent knowing his death is near 2Tim 4:6
- C. Makes no apologies for stand in gospel & looks ahead to his reward 2Tim 4:7-8
- D. Paul urges us to:

DISCUSSION:

I. BE FOCUSED LIKE A SOLDIER 2Tim 2:3-4

- A. A fact that hardships will come Vs 3
 - 1. Soldiers must endure adversity & difficulty - taken from home & family, subjected to cold & heat, sometimes without food and in frightening situations
 - 2. Few knew as many hardships as Paul 2Cor 11:23-28
 - 3. Every Christian will face trouble 2Cor 4:8-9; 2Tim 3:12
 - 4. "Real optimism aware of problems but recognizes solutions; knows about difficulties but believes can be overcome; sees negatives but accentuates positives; is exposed to worst but expects best; has reason to complain but chooses to smile." (From William Arthur Ward).
- B. We are soldiers on a mission! - FOCUS! Vs 4
 - 1. Roman soldiers forbidden to marry, engage in business.
 - 2. Assumed these things would distract them.
 - 3. In Scotland, about A.D. 1420, "golfe" became so popular King James II feared the pastime placed country at risk in ongoing war with England. He reasoned his soldiers spent too much time chasing "golfe" balls and too little time practicing archery. The Scottish archers would pose very little threat to their English foes. So the King persuaded government to pass an act of parliament banning "golfe."
 - 4. As Christians, our interests must be subservient to our King, Jesus Christ. Anything jeopardizing service to King of kings must be identified and treated as a lower priority.
- C. Jesus said some would be overcome by distractions Mk 4:18-19
- D. Withstanding temptation takes focus, study, diligence, & training Heb 5:14
- E. The key is in active service! 2Tim 2:4
 - 1. Activity in the service of our King requires that we concentrate on Him as our example Heb 12:1-2
 - 2. Must keep your eyes on the prize!

II. STAY FAITHFUL LIKE AN ATHLETE 2Tim 2:5

- A. We must recognize rules and boundaries
 - 1. Where would sports be without rules?

- 2. "In 1988 Summer Olympics, Ben Johnson of Canada won the one hundred meter dash, setting a new Olympic record and a new world record. Our American contender, Carl Lewis, came in second. After the race, the judges learned Johnson had an illegal substance in his body. He ran race illegally, so judges took away his medal. Though he ran faster and made an unforgettable impression, he did not deserve the reward.
 - 3. Though the world and even our fellow Christians may be impressed with and applaud our deeds, let's not forget that God is the final judge! Jhn12:48
 - 4. Rules ensure a "level playing field." without them, confusion would reign. Rules allow us to set a strategy 1Cor 9:24-27
- B. Athlete cannot legally compete till he learns the rules of the game
 - C. God's word gives us all the rules 2Pet 1:2-4
 - 1. It is crucial to make sure we are "in the faith" 2Cor 13:5
 - 2. Must be always re-aligning ourselves with the truth.

III. LOOK FORWARD LIKE A FARMER 2Tim 2:6

- A. Faithful disciples sow the word in hope that it will bear fruit. And Remember we are all sowers!
- B. Everyone plays a different part in the process. 1Cor 3:5-8
 - 1. Nothing grows without being planted & watered but God causes the growth! However, God will not cause growth where nothing is planted!
 - 2. Think of your own conversion: someone planted the truth, someone else nurtured it until you responded to God's power to save. Now you must do the same for someone else
- C. Our hope in sowing seed is that it will grow & produce fruit.
 - 1. "... the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops." 1Cor 9:10b
 - 2. But what if we never sowed any seed? What if someone said to us in heaven, "You never mentioned Him to me?"
- D. Jesus said the time of harvest is NOW Jhn 4:35-38
- E. Never let it be said of any of us that we never tried to sow or reap
 - 1. Look for opportunity, share the gospel when you can.
 - 2. Forget excuses like: "They wouldn't be interested."; "I'm too shy."; "I don't know enough."
 - 3. All these can be overcome by resolving to do best we can.

CONCLUSION:

- A. It is possible to please God with our work.
- B. However, we must "Stay Focused" - "Be Faithful" - "Look Forward"
- C. Are you working for the Lord

Adapted from an outline by Zeke Flores