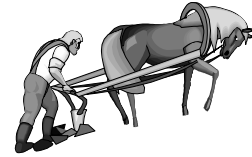


# Endurance & Faithfulness

2 Timothy 2:1-13

## Be Strong in Hardship

1. In general, how do people become strong? How do people become more able to endure difficulties, trouble and suffering?



- ❑ Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7.

2. Paul tells Timothy, “You then, my son, be strong<sup>1</sup> in the grace that is in Christ Jesus ... Endure hardship with us<sup>2</sup>” (2:1, 3a). From Paul’s perspective (a Christian perspective), how can Timothy (and other Christians) be strong in hardship and suffering?<sup>3</sup>

- ❑ Paul tells Timothy to entrust “the things that Paul has said” to reliable (trustworthy) men, who will also be qualified to teach others (2:2).<sup>4</sup>

3. Earlier, Paul told Timothy to “guard the good deposit that was entrusted to [him]” (1:14). How might this earlier instruction be related to Paul’s instruction in 2:2?

## Illustrations

- ❑ Paul tells Timothy to “suffer hardship with me” (2:3, *NASB*), and then he provides three illustrations.

- **The Soldier** (2:3-4).<sup>5</sup> “No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life” (*NASB*). The soldier is single-minded in purpose, not allowing the affairs of everyday life to interfere and distract him from his service.
- **The Athlete** (2:5).<sup>6</sup> The athlete is committed to disciplined training and all-out effort in the contest, according to the rules, both in training and competition.
- **The Farmer** (2:6). The farmer must work hard, and endure various difficulties with patience and trust.<sup>7</sup>

4. What do you think motivates and encourages the soldier, athlete, and farmer to suffer hardship?<sup>8</sup> How do you think this might apply to the Christian?



<sup>1</sup> “be strong” (ενδυναμου) – literally, “be (continually) strengthened”

<sup>2</sup> “endure hardship with us” (συγκακοπάθησον) – literally, “share in suffering”

<sup>3</sup> Besides verse 1 (“in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”), consider 2 Timothy 1:7, 8b, 12, and 14.

<sup>4</sup> “the things you have heard me say” include the gospel and related teaching, also referred to 1:13, which is the “good deposit” entrusted to Timothy (1:14; 1 Timothy 6:20-21).

<sup>5</sup> “gets involved” (εμπλέκεται) – “entangles himself;” “commanding officer” (στρατολογησαντι) – actually, “the one who enlisted him” (*NASB*). God has “enlisted” (called) Christians to service.

<sup>6</sup> Paul uses the athlete metaphor elsewhere (e.g., 4:7-8; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

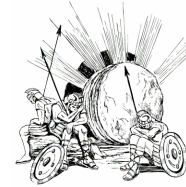
<sup>7</sup> The emphasis here is hard work, but the farmer must also be patient in hardship, trusting God (see James 5:7-8).

<sup>8</sup> See 2:4-6 and 4:7-8.

## Suffering & Faithfulness

- ❑ Read 2 Timothy 2:8-13. When enduring hardship, it is helpful to remember certain things. Paul tells Timothy, “Remember Jesus Christ ...” (2:8). Then he mentions two truths about Jesus: 1) He is risen from the dead; and 2) He is a descendent of David.<sup>9</sup>

5. How could these truths about Jesus help Paul, Timothy, and other Christians to endure suffering?<sup>10</sup>



- ❑ Though Paul is imprisoned like a terrible criminal, he knows that God is faithful. The messenger may be bound, but God’s message is not bound! (2:9)
  - ❑ Therefore, Paul endures suffering for the sake of God’s chosen people (those who are “in Christ” through faith), that they may finish the race and experience complete salvation with eternal glory (2:10).
  - ❑ Paul offers this “trustworthy saying:”
    - 📖 If we died with him, we will also live with him.<sup>11</sup>
    - if we endure, we will also reign with him.<sup>12</sup>
    - If we disown him, he will also disown us.<sup>13</sup>
    - If we are faithless ... he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.<sup>14</sup>
6. This passage has instructed Timothy (and all Christians) to be strengthened, endure suffering, be committed, be disciplined, and work hard (2:1, 3-6). But what do you think is the most important ingredient in serving God?

### Reflection/Application

- What is your source of strength in times of trouble and suffering? Is it yourself, or something else? In this passage, Paul is talking about the strength needed to serve God. If you are not a Christian, you may think this doesn’t apply to you. But God wants you to know Him, serve Him, and be strengthened by Him. Continue to seek the truth about these matters.
- As a Christian, do you sometimes lose heart in your service of God? Review this lesson. Remember Jesus Christ. Remember the value of the gospel! Remember the faithfulness of God, who promises to strengthen you. This week, reflect on one or more of the metaphors (soldier, athlete, farmer), and ask the Lord to give you insight into all this (2:7). Then apply the principles to your service of God. (If you need to start serving God, do so.)

<sup>9</sup> These truths are pieces of “the gospel” along with the truths mentioned in 1:9-10.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus endured much suffering. He was rejected, unjustly arrested, tortured and crucified. But God raised him from the dead! Jesus Christ is victorious over sin and death. Christians, united with Christ, share in this victory (though the full realization of this victory is future). Jesus knows our present struggles (Hebrews 4:15). He entered this world in human flesh. He was a descendent of David, in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises and prophecies (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Luke 1:26-33). God has been faithful to his promises in the past, and He remains faithful.

<sup>11</sup> See Romans 6:1-14, esp. 6:8. “Died with him” happened when we received Christ (6:3). We died to sin (6:2). The “old self” died (6:6; Galatians 2:20). We died “with Christ.” However, Christ was raised! So we were raised with him (6:5), in the spiritual sense now, but ultimately in the complete sense. The result is a “new life” in Christ (6:4).

<sup>12</sup> “endure” (ὀπομένομεν) – present tense; “reign with him” - in the future kingdom (Revelation 3:21; 20:4, 6).

<sup>13</sup> Jesus said, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 10:32-33, NIV)

<sup>14</sup> Compared to the first three lines, the “then-clause” of line 4 is different and surprising (which is why the explanation “for he cannot disown himself” is needed). Christians may lack faith at times, but God must be consistent with his nature. God is always faithful. This grace of God is essential to living the Christian life.