

## **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 more urgent knowing death is near 2Tim 4:6
- C. Makes no apologies for stand in gospel & looks ahead to reward 2Tim 4:7-8 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 endure adversity & difficulty - taken from home & family, subjected to cold & heat, without food and in frightening situations
  2. Few knew hardships as Paul 2Cor 11:23-28
  3. Christians face trouble 2Cor 4:8-9; 2Tim 3:12
  4. "Real optimism aware of problems but recognizes solutions; knows about difficulties but believes can 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. Assumed these would distract them.
  2. 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."
  3. Christian's interests must be subservient to King, Anything jeopardizing service to Jesus our King must be identified and treated as a lower priority.
- C. 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 one hundred meter dash, setting new Olympic record and a new world record. American contender, Carl Lewis, came in second. After the race, 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 world and even 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 can't legally compete till learns rules of game
  - C. God's word gives us all the rules 2Pet 1:2-4
    1. Crucial to make sure we are in the faith 2Cor 13:5
    2. 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 Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16
- B. Everyone plays different part in 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 own conversion: someone planted truth, someone else nurtured it until you responded to God's power to save. Now you must do the same for someone else
- C. Hope in sowing seed is that it grow & produce fruit.
  1. Plowman plows in hope, and thresher threshes in hope of sharing the crops. 1Cor 9:10
  2. What if we never sow seed? What if someone says to us, "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 that we never tried to sow or reap
  1. Look for opportunity, share gospel when you can.
  2. Forget excuses like: They wouldn't be interested; I'm too shy; I don't know enough.
  3. Can be overcome by resolving to do best we can.

### CONCLUSION:

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