

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Soldiers, Athletes & Farmers

Read Verse 1-7

Consider what I say: Think about this Analogy

Paul writing to Timothy – encouraging him in his ministry: Strong leader

A) Gives him 3 Analogies: – Christian life / Christian ministry is like:

- A Battle
- A Race
- Like Farming

DEDICATED Soldiers
DISCIPLINED Athletes
DILIGENT farmers

B) Although Paul is dealing with 3 different professions –

1) There are Similarities to the three analogies

C) All 3 deal with Submission to a higher authority

Soldier is under the Authority of his superior officer He takes orders.

A) His desire is to please his superior – Motivates a good soldier more than anything

B) The Athlete is under the Authority of his trainer – He has to submit to rigorous training and to the rules of the competition

C) The Farmer is under Authority of the Elements – He has to submit himself to the seasons.

D) So all 3 deal with Submission to a higher authority

All 3 involve discipline, **TEDIOUS training and hard work**

All 3 have their own difficulties and hardships

All 3 offer some form of REWARD

Last time we spent the whole morning talking about Soldiers –

A) Today – look at **DISCIPLINED Athletes** and **DILIGENT farmers**

B) **Start with Athletes** - Mentioned last time how much Paul loved the analogy of the Soldier – Even more found of the Analogy of the Athlete!

C) **In his letters he makes more than 2 dozen references to athletics:**

1) If Paul was living today he definitely would have been into ESPN & ESPN2!

D) **The Greeks & Romans were enthusiastic athletes, & spectators. RELEVANT picture.**

Paul knew that the Romans considered sports a good source of entertainment

A) And that the Greeks saw athletics as a means of personal enrichment, reasoning that a healthy body was associated with a healthy mind.

B) Gymnasiums (where the athletes trained) and stadiums (where they competed) were in most major Greco-Roman cities.

C) In ancient Greece sporting events were a religious event even including sacrifices to the patron gods (e.g., **Zeus at the Olympic Games**).

D) The games were so esteemed in ancient times that states involved in wars would call **a cease fire** to allow the games to go on unhindered.

1) In fact many of the competing Greek athletes were also soldiers.

Now Paul states here that an Athlete has no Chance of being rewarded unless he competesrules

A) Every participant had to meet three qualifications:

1. Trueborn Greek - contending athletes were required to produce a Greek birth certificate

2. The athlete had to compete within specific rules for the individual athletic event.

3. All Greek athletes had to train for 10 months prior to the actual competition.

Now important to not be misled by this idea: The Christian life isn't so much about a set of rules to follow.

A) As it is a **DAILY SUBMISSION** {**Abide**

B) Some people wish it was as simple as **10 rules to follow**

1) Instead it requires a relationship, daily communication.

C) Christian faith is the only faith where you have a personal coach with you 24 X 7

1) Colossians 1:27 – “**Christ in you is your hope of glory!**”

D) That right there is **the DIFFERENCE**:

There is no other religion in the world that makes available a personal trainer – always with you.

A) You see, Jesus is not just by your side, or on your side – He is inside- your inside

B) He is in the heart by His Spirit – constantly speaking to your heart – mind – spirit.

1) Our Guide book is the Bible – instruction in every area of life.

C) He is constantly bringing understanding and conviction – concerning His Word

Now if you are into Islam: Your god is Allah – who requires appeasement through the five articles of faith and practicing the five pillars of faith.

But Allah doesn't live inside!

Hindu: Your god is Raman- The ultimate reality, but man can only get to him after going through a progressive cycle of dying and being reincarnated.

Buddhist: For you there is no real personal god. The ultimate objective in Buddhism is to be free of suffering. You achieve that through one's own self-discipline.

Scientologist: Your god is not really a personal god –but rather an impersonal force – a realm of spirituality you might be able to attain to one day if you follow the practices of Scientology faithfully and correctly.

Christianity is uniquely different because the author died and rose again – Now lives in His followers

A) Personally teaches / empowers and guides

B) I spent the first half of my life really involved in athletics – lots of coaches

1) Some who knew the sport / others didn't.

2) Some good teachers / others poor.

3) Some mean / others nice

4) Some great motivators / others very poor.

C) I never had a coach like Jesus – who could literally get inside my head / my heart

1) Move my will – and empower me to do His !

D) That really is the Beauty of the Christian life!

Like this glove: No hand in it – Empty glove – useless

Only becomes useful once the hand is inside

A) Same is true spiritually – Christ inside is your Hope of glory.

B) The Christian life is all about learning to respond to and be led by the hand living inside the glove

1) Sensitive to His spirit –

C) Thru His guidance – learning to follow the hand

D) If we are going to be Victorious – we have to follow His instruction.

E) If we don't, we might achieve results that make us look successful in the eyes of others.

1) And still not receive a reward from Christ

We need to realize that we are not running against each other: We all have our own race to run!

A) Rather, our competition is against our fleshly old self, against the world, and against Satan

B) And our goal is to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

The Greeks had a race in their Olympic games that was unique. The winner was not the runner who finished first. It was the runner who finished with his torch still lit.

We are so often so busy with life's activities that we are in danger of allowing the torch of our spiritual life to become extinguished.

I want to run all the way with the flame of my torch still lit for Him."

In order to do that it takes training& Discipline!

A) Any athlete that is going to be successful – has to learn to discipline his flesh – put it into subjection

Someone has defined a football game as an event in which thousands of people who need exercise pay for the privilege of cheering for twenty-two healthy men who need no exercise

B) Most of us would rather watch someone else work out for us!

C) Discovered my Problem with getting in Shape – I love sports – Hip doesn't let me participate like I would want to.

D)I love sports but I absolutely hate – working out – and I love to eat ! – Bad combo

E) Always Monday: often ½ hearted

For some of us – Problem spiritually – ½ hearted effort -

Warren Wiersbe

"If Christians were putting into their spiritual walk the kind of discipline that athletes put into their chosen sport, the church would be pulsating with revival life. "

The same Tedious discipline that is involved in working out – is needed for spiritual training

A) Difference – Never been able to see working out as more than – Work – done it, never enjoyed it

B) But Spiritually it is different! – I always hated reading – High School – little as possible

C) Really changed once I started studying the Bible

D) There is a discipline involved – but it is much more enjoyable- see the benefits faster.

Growth is little by little – Reading in Deuteronomy. Devos

A) The Lord said – not going to give you the land all at once – little by little

B) Each day is a race – / Boxing match – Little by little – victories

Scott Hamilton, the Olympic skater, shortly after winning his Gold medal said, "Someone asked me why I was looking at the medal so intently. What I was doing was looking at 16 years of my life."

NO CUTTING CORNERS

Associated Press headline “Marathoner Loses by a Mustache.”

A) It happened in Brussels, Brussels Marathon

B) It appeared that Abbes Tehami of Algeria was an easy winner until someone wondered where his mustache had gone!

B) Checking eyewitness accounts & video replay – Tehami had started the race with a mustache and finished it without one.

1) it quickly became evident that the mustache belonged to Tehami's coach, Bensalem Hamiani.

D) Hamiani had run the first seven-and-a-half miles of the race for Tehami, then disappeared into the woods to pass his race number on to his pupil.

“They looked about the same,” race organizers said. “Only one had a mustache.”

Christian race, there are no short cuts – can't get someone to run your race for you.

A) Daily run – listening to your coach –

B) Things to avoid – Right diet –

C) Result ? Reward:

Note those who ran well: David /Jonathan / Moses { Hebrews 11 Tonight

Paul moves onto to the Analogy of the farmer.

A)This analogy I think describes what Christian ministry is like 90% of the time.

B) True it can feel like a Soldier in a battle at times – 1) Even though we are always battling in ministry – There are times where the battle doesn't seem as intense

C) There are those times where it is like an athlete – especially preparing for an event – Racing toward a goal, an outcome

But it is always like farming: How is Ministry like Farming?

A) Pastor friend of mine who lives in an area where they do a lot of farming, 4 Comparisons

B) Asked – What makes for a good farmer!

C) #1 A Good farmer can't be lazy, there is no substitute for hard work!

Hardworking = to toil intensely, to sweat and strain to the point of exhaustion if necessary.

A) He starts early in the morning and quits late in the day.

B) Not glamorous work – but he is doing something that is needed.

1) He **Plows the field** – He prepares the soil – He plants the seed.

C) He endures the cold, the heat, the rain, and the drought.

1) He plows the soil whether it is hard or loose.

D) He does not wait for his own convenience, because the seasons do not wait for him.

1) When the time comes to plant, he must plant; when weeds appear, he must remove them; and when the crop is mature, he must harvest it

#2 He has to be patient! Perseverance

A) The soldier often has the excitement of battle, and the athlete the thrill of competing.

B) But most of a farmer's working hours are tedious, humdrum, and unexciting.

1) And, unlike the soldier, and the athlete, a farmer often works alone.

C) He has no fellow soldiers to fight with him, no teammates or crowd to cheer him.

D) His work is **TEDIOUS** – the same thing day in and day out

He has no idea what transpires under the surface of the ground

Aa) But he waits – he trust in the Lord – to bring the fruit – bring the increase

A) There is so much that is out of his control

B) Doesn't see the results – he gets up and does it all over again

C) Tomorrow – When you wake up to face the daily grind – think of as planting seeds in the soil – harvest
The renowned and eloquent British evangelist, George Whitfield, in his dying words prayed "Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of Thy work.

You pour into your kids – Little evidences that it's taking

A) But you have no idea what is going to transpire until years later

B) You pour into others in Discipleship – no idea the impact making –

1) Just spending time with them

C) Years later you hear them say: Affect that it made on them

Cc) Pastor: same – sometimes never see – occasionally email – someone was here years ago

D) Yrs go by – **Marc Orozco** {Bible college / Oregon Here / Florida

Loren Dunn

Jason Duff / Jim Stewart / LA Nelson / Robert Nettles/ John Morten

Phil McKay / Dave Andersen – list goes on

#3 He is constantly conscious of how the field is doing.

A) Absentee farmers don't do very well.

B) Ministry is the same way

C) It is constant – Absentee Pastors don't do well
1) Absentee – Parents

D) Discipleship – Constant – continual -

#4 He needs to sow good seed into good soil. Reap what you sow

**There is an element in this of you get out of it
what you put into it**

Here: Good seed – Giving word -

Only you can affect soil {Parable of sower

1) Hard

2) Stone – Shallow

**3) Distracted – Thorns – deceitfulness of riches –
cares of this life**

4) Good – Soft pliable – movable

ULTIMATE REWARD?- ETERNITY

**A) People there, because of your impact – you
sowed a seed – shared the word – took time –
plant life**

B) You water some seed –

C) You did some farming

A battle: Fight the good fight –

A Race: Follow Jesus {Author and finisher

A farm: Be faithful – tedious – work hard –

**Don't grow weary in well doing – because in due
season you will reap if don't lose heart!**