

May 23, 2021 -

II Timothy 2:1 -7 - **“Endure Hardness, as a Good Soldier”**

Introduction:

Chad Williams is an evangelist he was a U.S. Navy SEAL. He has written a book, “SEAL of God,” about the dramatic events that led to his decision to become a SEAL and subsequently to enlist as a soldier in the Army of God. It been said, if you been hit by the Navy Seals, they are long gone before you even know it. The Seals have the most intense training of any of the Armed forces. The average recruitment is about 1000 per year but only 200-250 will even qualify. When Chat trained only 179 made it. These men know what it means to endure hardness as a good soldier and Chat Williams is one of the few who understand it take as much grit to be a spiritual soldier. He was in the Navy for over six years and served on SEAL Teams 1 and 7. Chad retired as a SEAL, on May 18, 2010. He has since devoted his life to being an evangelist and knows the rigors of fighting the spiritual battles against the hordes of Satan.

Paul likened the Christian life to a soldier. Josephus, the Jewish historian of Paul’s time, described the Roman soldier like this: "Each soldier every day throws all his energy into his drill, as though he were in action. All their camp duties are performed with the same discipline, the same regard for security; the procuring of wood, food-supplies, and water, as required - each party has its allotted task; nothing is done without a word of command. The same precision is maintained on the battlefield...no panic paralyzes, no fatigue exhausts them. Too often as Christians we forget that we are at war with God’s adversary Satan. Scriptures such as Ephesians 6:11-12 indicates we are at war. Staying faithful to God despite pressure and discouragement in this war can inspire other people to give Him glory. We need to be...

I. Empowered by God’s Grace (2:1).

1. Many of Paul’s friends and associates had deserted him. It was becoming increasingly difficult to be a Christian because of the persecution by Nero. Paul writes to Timothy: **Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2:1)**. The verb translated be strong literally means “be empowered.” The grace in 2 Timothy 2:1 refers to sustaining, empowering grace. There is also saving and equipping grace. As God’s army we must be empowered by His grace. It is the grace God gives us when we have a problem that will not go away. God’s empowering grace is most clearly seen in the midst of our weakness. Our own abilities, talents, and successes only obscure God’s power in our lives.

2. How do we obtain this empowering grace? First, we must acknowledge our weakness. A good soldier is aware of his weaknesses and strength. Second, we receive empowering grace by asking for it (**James 4:6**). Third, we saturate our minds with God’s Word. God’s written Word is an awesome source of power. This is one of the twenty-five times Paul encouraged Timothy to be strong and endure in his work in Ephesus. God empowers us through His Word, and that is why it is so important to be faithful in Sunday school and worship services where the Bible is taught and preached.

3. Paul tells Timothy: **And 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 (2 Timothy 2:2). A good soldier will entrust his life to his comrades and share his military know how as well as any weapons to help his troops. He would not keep back that which he could share to help save lives. We must share our own faith with family and friends. We need to ...

II Endure as a Good Soldiers. (2:3-4).

1. Paul now gives us three illustrations of what it means to be a strong Christian. He begins with the illustration of a soldier by writing: **Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2:3)**. Paul didn't want Timothy to have any illusions. In this world we have to endure hardness, which includes persecution, being misunderstood, and opposition. Jesus told his church in John 15:18 - **If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you**. Paul knew what it meant to suffer hardship.- **2 Cor.11:24-28**

2. Paul explains what it means to be a good soldier. He says we are to be "good" (Gk. Kalos means- honorable, conferring honor) soldiers. We are not to be soldiers simply in terms of function and duty--we are to be active, noble, and heroic soldiers. Those are the kind of soldiers who earn medals of valor and honor. **No man that warreth** implies we are at war. The Greek word is (strateuōto / strat tool el) to do military duty, be on active service, be a soldier. So we as Christians are "in active service" (v. 4). The Christian army does not have any members on reserve we are all on the front lines of an active battle.

3. Paul says to Timothy 2:4a - We are not to get too entangled with the affairs of this life. He is stressing not to become entangled to the point it eats up our time and energy, hindering our service as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. A believer's life is not to be wrapped up in the non-essentials of this life. Because we live on the battlefield, all things are to be subservient to winning the battle. Folks, we are at war with sin, the lust of the flesh. We are at war with unbelief like against the ACLU, Plan Parenthood and the like of. We are at war with the hordes of hell, Satan and his demons. This is real, more real than most want to believe.

Illustration:

Dr. John Macarthur tells of his experience when he came to realize how real this warfare is; He writes, "I will never forget a battle with a demon-possessed girl one night at church. She was in one of the rooms of the church kicking, screaming, and throwing furniture around. When I walked into the room, she said, "Don't let him in!" But the voice that said that wasn't her-own. My first response was, "Fine, I'm leaving!" But I realized that if the demons didn't like me, it was because I was on God's side. I went in and the girl attacked me, kicking me in the shins so violently I began to bleed. In the power of God several of us spent hours there until she confessed her sin and accepted God and His grace in Jesus Christ. As I left that night I realized for the first time the extent of our warfare against demons.

4. A good soldier also wants to please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier (2:4b). By refusing to get entangled in outside involvements, a good soldier is ready and anxious to follow the orders of the one who has chosen him to be a soldier. This requires being able to distinguish between doing good things and doing the main thing. As someone has once said, "The main

thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” We must be men and women on a mission, refusing to be distracted. Occupy until the Commander the Lord Jesus returns and stay at our post knowing that we are engaged in spiritual warfare. **(For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) – 2Cor. 10:4**

III. Persevere with an athlete’s attitude: (2:5).

1. Paul often drew upon the world of athletics for illustrations of the Christian life. An athlete must know the rules of the event, train diligently, and compete with an understanding of those rules. Paul knew what it meant to keep the rules. I Cor. 9:24-27

The point is Christians must strive lawfully, or contend according to the rulebook, the Bible. It is possible to fall into the mistake of thinking that we can make up our own rules for our Christian life. This means we run the race set before us with love, compassion, purity, and integrity if we are to receive the victor’s crown. From the world’s point of view, Paul was a loser in the game of life. He was a prisoner, deserted by his friends. He was penniless, having to ask Timothy to come before winter to bring him a coat. Was he a loser? Note what is said in **2 Timothy 4:8!**

2. The crown probably refers to the wreath given in Greek Olympic Games. The word translate crown (*stephanos*) is the Greek word from which we get our English names “Stephen” and “Stephanie.” In contrast to the kingly crown (*diadema*), which always refers to kingly dignity or position, this crown was a token of honor for distinguished service or accomplishment. This crown reveals that our goal should be to attain Christ’s approval.

IV. Persist with the Expectation of a farmer. (2:6-7)

1. In this illustration we learn that being a Christian is sometimes just plain hard work. A farmer (husbandman) does all kinds of back - breaking work, such as plowing, planting, and cultivating. Sometimes it’s no fun being a farmer, especially when there are droughts, weeds, insects, or early frosts. The same is true of being a Christian. Sometimes it’s just plain hard work. Verse 6 also makes the point that when the crop does come in the farmer ought to receive the first of the harvest. Many blessings await those who work hard in ministry--both in the present and in the future. Paul tells us this truth in **Galatian 6:9.**

2. God has given all of us a spiritual field in which to plow, plant, cultivate, and harvest. It may be a school, an office, a factory, a store, a warehouse, etc. Most of us discover soon after becoming a Christian the newness and glamour wears off, and it begins to be just plain hard work. When being a Christian is just hard work, we need to remember these great illustrations of what is involved in being a strong Christian.

Conclusion:

Paul concludes this section by writing: **Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things (2:7).** This means you are to look at your own life and ask yourself, “Am I a strong Christian?” Paul says if we consider his words, the Lord will give us insight. As you consider this passage, what insights have you had that require changes in your life?