

a. Whose soldier are we?

4. What are the characteristics of a good soldier?

a. Why is this particularly important for the leadership of the church?

b. What is at stake if leaders (and Christians in general) fail to grasp this metaphor?

5. How does Ephesians 6:10-17 help us know what armor a good soldier should be wearing for battle?

6. Are you denying yourself and suffering hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus?

a. Are there areas of a soldier's life you need to work harder at implementing?

Day 2 Spiritual Strength – Active Duty

No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. —2 Timothy 2:4

1. What is Paul illustrating in this metaphor?

2. What are the differences between a soldier on active duty and a soldier in reserve?

d. Colossians 1:9-10

e. Psalm 51:16-17

6. Why might we be more concerned with pleasing people rather than God?

a. Are you more concerned with pleasing God, or with pleasing people?

b. What is the consequence of pleasing people over God?

4. As well as following the rules, an athlete must possess certain qualities. From the verse below what must they have to receive the prize?

a. Romans 5:3-5

b. Romans 12:12

c. Hebrews 12:1-3

d. James 1:2-4

e. 2 Peter 1:6

5. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. How does this passage help you to better understand Paul's point in verse five?

6. What are we competing for? See 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4; and James 1:12.

a. What is the danger of thinking we are competing against one another?

Day 4 Spiritual Strength – The Hard-Working Farmer

The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. –2 Timothy 2:6

1. What is Paul illustrating in this metaphor?

2. Paul describes the farmer as “hard working”. Based on what you know of farming, how hard do farmers work?

a. What application(s) can we draw from this for our own spiritual lives?

3. How long does it take for the farmer to see the results of his hard work?

a. What application(s) can we draw from this for our own spiritual lives? (See also 1 Cor. 3:6.)

4. Read Luke 16:10. What does this verse teach us about diligence in the mundane hard work that often makes up so much of our lives?

a. Why is this quality so important for our leaders?

5. How can desiring to see immediate fruit be a stumbling block to both leaders and the church? See also James 5:17.

Day 5 Spiritual Strength – Faithful Men

Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. –2 Timothy 2:6

1. What was Timothy to consider?

2. What is at stake if Timothy doesn't understand these metaphors and their applications?

- d. Perseverance, endurance, and patience in mundane and difficult toiling?
6. Each of these metaphors show us the difficulty of the Christian life but there is much joy in grasping them. How can 1 Corinthians 15:58 and Galatians 6:9-10 be an encouragement to you to keep pursuing spiritual strength?

Dig Deeper

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. Write a prayer using this verse and the passage that we have studied this week. Thank the Lord for what he has done in and through you, confess where you have fallen short, ask him for wisdom and strength for the road ahead.
2. “Pastoral ministry is daunting for many reasons; 2 Timothy 2 asks leaders to meditate on them. Like good soldiers, pastors endure hardships. Like athletes, they obey the rules and cannot quit if they desire the prize. Like farmers, they toil intensely and then wait patiently for the crops to mature.” (Reformed Expository Commentary). Write or say a prayer for the leaders in our lives (including our husbands) that they would be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1) and continually run the race to win the prize!