

## The Soldier, The Athlete, and the Farmer

What do you imagine the “normal” Christian life to be like? What are some characteristics that every Christian is supposed to have? Towards the end of chapter 1, Paul lists out some people who deserted him, and also others who have served and loved him (1:15-18). In chapter 2, Paul urges Timothy to adopt a similar mindset<sup>1</sup> as those who served Paul in guarding the good deposit of the Gospel.

It is here that we get a picture of what a Christian life is supposed to be like from Paul. He certainly did not have a comfortable life, as he endured much suffering. This might be quite different from the picture of the Christian life that many people may have in our day. In this passage, we have three analogies from Paul that will give us a solid glimpse into Paul’s vision of the Christian life.

### Launch

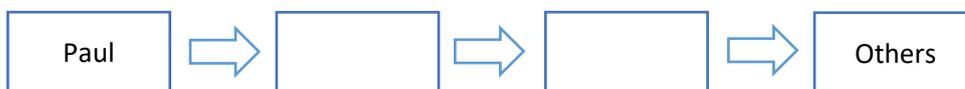
- 1) How have Christians and non-Christians describe the Christian life? What are some words that people use to describe the Christian life?

### THE SOLDIER, THE ATHLETE, AND THE FARMER

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7.

- 2) What do you think it means to be “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”? (v1)
- 3) What does Paul call Timothy to do? (v2)

- a. Fill in the following diagram based on v2.



- b. What do you think are the “things that [Timothy] has heard [Paul] say”?
  - c. How do you think these “things” can be entrusted to others?
- 4) What kind of life is Paul calling Timothy to? (v3) Why would what Paul asked Timothy to do in v2 lead to a life like that?

<sup>1</sup> In the NIV, the word “then” is used to show the connection to what came before. The word should have been translated “therefore” instead, to show a much stronger connection to that which came before.



5) Paul uses three analogies to describe the Christian life. Fill in the following table from v4-6.

<u>Analogy</u>	<u>Do's</u>	<u>Don'ts</u>
Soldier		
	Compete according to rules	
		Lazy

6) What is the “reward” for each of these roles at the end?

7) What are some examples in our Christian lives that would fall under the “Do’s” category?

a. What are some examples of the “don’ts”?

8) Which of these examples do you struggle with and how can your brother/sister-in-Christ help you?

9) How would the “grace that is in Christ Jesus” help you in living out the Christian life as described in the last few questions?

10) What is the “reward” for living a Christian life as God intended? (cf. 2 Tim 2:10, 4:8)

## Conclusion

The Christian life is not to be “cruisy” life. It is an intentional life – lived with a purpose and goal in mind daily. Just like the soldier, athlete, and farmer, it is a life of focus. A soldier does not get distracted by civilian affairs. The athlete competes according to the rules of the competition. The farmer works hard daily on his crop. Each of them has a purpose every day, and at the end of their hard work and effort, they receive their reward.

That is what the Christian life is like. The Christian life consists of purposeful daily effort to entrust the Gospel to others (v2), be it in one-to-one Bible reading, discipleship of your children in all aspects of your daily life, or the intentional modelling of Christlikeness at your workplace. For some, this would be a life of suffering, like Paul, because there will be others who will oppose the message of the Gospel. However, at the end of our race, we will receive our “crown of righteousness” (4:8) and obtain our future salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, with eternal glory. (2:10)