

## **Title: A CALL FOR FAITHFULNESS AND PERSEVERANCE**

**Text: II Timothy 2:1-7**

**Intro:** Paul, the experienced veteran knew two things Timothy needed: faithfulness and perseverance. II Timothy chapter 2 is Paul's advice for Timothy to continue in the service God has called him. As servants of God, we too need to listen and obey such words of admonition. It is often humanly easy to sign up and start working for God and faint in the midst of the course. Paul gives us seven word pictures to enjoin us to be faithful and to persevere.

**1. As SONS, we are to be strong in the grace of Christ (v.1).** *My son*" indicates that Timothy is Paul's spiritual son in the Lord. Every true Christian is a son of God (**John 1:12; Gal. 3:26**). He is to grow not only physically, mentally, emotionally and socially but more importantly spiritually (**II Pet. 3:18**). Spiritual growth is not automatic. It has to be nurtured by prayer, Bible study, fellowship, worship, and application of biblical truths.

**2. As SOLDIERS, we are to be steadfast and disciplined (vv.3-4).** Paul, a veteran soldier of Christ, experienced terrible hardships in the mission field for the sake of the Gospel (**II Cor. 11:23-28**). As a soldier is not tied up with the cares of normal civilian life, even so a good soldier of Christ is not focused with the temporal matters of this life. Rather, he disciplines himself and endures sufferings in order to please his Heavenly Commander.

**3. As ATHLETES, we are to strive according to the rules of the game (v.5).** A good athlete must train hard and play based on the regulations of the event in order to win. Not a few cheating athletes have been disgraced and deprived of prize and glory due to their use of drugs and violation of rules. As Christians, we are to put an end to every evil work and sins which beset our spiritual race (**Heb. 12:1**). Like the awarding ceremonies of the Olympics, we shall one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be rewarded or to suffer lost (**I Cor. 3:12-15** cf. **I Cor. 9:24-27**).

**4. As FARMERS, we are to labor for an abundant harvest (v.6).** Farming involves hard work and much patience. Not only is soil preparation and seed planting dreary but the subsequent nurture of the crop and its ultimate harvest requires months of patient waiting. Even so, is the Lord's work which is bountiful and ready for harvest but the laborers are few (**Matt. 9:37-38**).

**5. As WORKMEN, we are to be skilled in using our tools (v.15).** Every master craftsman (carpenter, mason, blacksmith, tinsmith, etc.) has proper tools and skills to effectively accomplish his job. Similarly, the Christian as a workman has the Holy Bible as his greatest tool. He is charged to *"rightly divide the word of truth."* This means careful study of the Holy Bible by observing its right historical, textual, and doctrinal context in order to attain correct interpretation and application. Serious searching and study of the scriptures is a must for those desiring to become approved and unashamed workmen of God (**John 5:39** cf. **Acts 17:11**).

**6. As VESSELS, we are to be clean and available for the Lord's use (vv.20-21).** In a large house there are many vessels of various sizes, shapes and colors. Some are made from clay, stone, ceramic, glass, plastic or metal. Regardless of its kind, a vessel must be useful for the purpose it was made for. It must be worth the price it was paid for by its owner. Christians as living chosen vessels have Christ spiritually living in them (**Col. 1:27**; **Rom. 8:9**; **II Cor. 4:7**). As the residence and temple of the Lord, the Christian has to be ever clean and available for the Lord's use.

**7. As SERVANTS, we must be gentle, patient and meek (vv.24-25).** Here to *"strive"* means to *"to fight vigorously against as in a quarrel or verbal dispute."* While a good servant of God does well when he PUBLICLY exposes and rebukes sin and error, there are times when he has to be gentle, patient and meek while PRIVATELY instructing and correcting certain wayward and unsaved individuals. The faithful servant of God must persevere when he recognizes that a person is blocking his own salvation or foolishly destroying his life. God's servant must be firmly rooted in biblical truth so that he may be able to shed light and counsel by right teaching and overcome the arguments and confusion of doubters. (**Tit. 1:9**; **3:2**).

**Conclusion:** Here then is Paul's sevenfold call and exhortation for Christian believers to be faithful and persevere in their earthly mission. As we have seen in this brief study, the Christian is God's spiritual – SON, SOLDIER, ATHLETE, FARMER, WORKMAN, VESSEL, and SERVANT. With great spiritual privileges come great spiritual responsibilities! The Lord never promised an easy-going life for those who would faithfully follow after Him. Rather, He has only guaranteed to be with them who will seek and obey His will.