There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God.
Brother Lawrence

Prayer Study #499
2nd TIMOTHY 2
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

2 Timothy 2 Amplified Bible (AMP)
BE STRONG

2 *So you, my son, be strong [constantly strengthened] and empowered in the grace that is [to be found only] in Christ Jesus.* ***2*** *The things [the doctrine, the precepts, the admonitions, the sum of my ministry] which you have heard me teach [in the presence of many witnesses, entrust [as a treasure] to reliable and faithful men who will also be capable and qualified to teach others.*

Timothy has been born in the family of God (*Being born again, not fo corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever*-1st Peter 1:23). His spiritual father is Paul, who refers to Timothy in this passage as "*my son.*"

Paul urges Timothy to be strong in grace, *the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* We cannot make it in this life without His grace. Grace is often defined as *unmerited favor.* The writers of the *New Bible Dictionary,* published by Tyndale, say grace is much more than this. Grace involves subjects such as forgiveness,

salvation, regeneration, repentance, and the steadfast love of God. It also includes the idea of the divine power which equips a man to live a moral life. One of the great stories of grace in the New Testament is the Parable of the Prodigal Son. For the Jews, this story was not really about the son but was about the father. The son was welcomed home by his father in a way he did not deserve. In Paul's writing grace has a prominent place and is used, along with the normal Jewish greeting "Shalom" or peace, in opening greetings and closing benedictions in Paul's epistles. The emphasis in Paul's writings is that God, in His grace treats man, though guilty, as if he had never sinned. The Bible translator Moffatt concluded that the religion of the Bible "is a religion of grace or it is nothing…no grace, no gospel."

Timothy had the privilege of sitting under perhaps the greatest Bible teacher who ever lived, the Apostle Paul. Paul teaches whom he considers *reliable and faithful men* so that they can learn and then be qualified to teach others.

THE SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

3 *Take with me your share of hardship [passing through the difficulties which you are called to endure], like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.* ***4*** *No soldier in active service gets entangled in the [ordinary business] affairs of*

civilian life; [he avoids them] so that he may please the one who enlisted him to serve.

The Bible writers used figures of speech, such as metaphors and similes, oxymorons, hyperbole and parables, to teach Biblical truth. Sometimes we , not understanding the Jewish use of these figures of speech, miss the intended meaning or take something literal which is not literal. In English, for example, foreign speakers have trouble understanding common English phrases, such as *it is raining cats and dogs.* Here Paul uses similes to explain the Gospel message. A simile is a special kind of metaphor that compares two or more unlike things using the specific words *like* or *as.* Most of you have seen this type of comparison when others try to bring an understanding to the character of God.

Here are a few similes, comparing God to things we are familiar with:

God is like COKE…He's the real thing.

God is like HALLMARK CARDS…He care enough to send His very best.

God is like TIDE…He gets the stains out that others leave behind.

God is like ALLSTATE…You're in good hands with Him.

I think you get the point! In these verses Paul uses the simile of a soldier and later of a athlete or farmer. A Christian is like a good soldier. He is called upon to endure hardships, to not be entangled in the things of this world, and to please the One, our Commander in Chief, who enlisted him to serve. This is a common simile that the Greeks and Romans would have instantly understood. Being a soldier was a high calling, and one that many Greek and Roman boys aspired to be. Paul uses this simile throughout his epistles. In 1st Timothy 1:18 he urges Timothy to fight a good campaign. In Philemon 2 Paul calls Archippus, in whose house a church met, "our fellow soldier," and in Philippians 2:25 he refers to Epaphroditus, the one who carried messages to and from the Philippian Church, as "my fellow soldier."

Barclay gives us four characteristics of the soldier that Paul wanted to see repeated in the Christian life:

a. "The soldier's service must be concentrated. For the Romans a soldier was a soldier and nothing else. Soldiers of Christ must still live in this world and must make a living, but they must be careful not to get entangled in the affairs of this world and totally concentrate on fighting

for the Lord."

b. "Soldiers must walk in obedience, leaving the decisions of what and when to do something up to the commander who sees the whole field. As Christian soldiers, we must hear and listen and respond to the voice of the Holy Spirit and act in total obedience to what He says."
c. "Soldiers must be willing to sacrifice, even life itself, if necessary, to win the battle. The Christian must always stand ready to give his life for the Lord."
d. "Soldiers must be loyal, being faithful even to death. The Christian soldier stays faithful to the calling on his life and to allegiance to the King."

THE ATHLETE AND THE FARMER

5 *And if anyone competes as an athlete [in competitive games], he is not crowned [with the wreath of victory] unless he competes according to the rules.* ***6*** *The hard-working farmer [who labors to produce crops] ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.* ***7*** *Think over the things I am saying [grasp their application], for the Lord will grant you insight and understanding in everything.*

Next Paul shifts to two other similes. The Christian must be like both a competing athlete and a toiling farmer. No athlete can win the crown without

following the rules of the contest. The Christian also must follow the rules found in the Word of God.

Paul then encourages Timothy to note the patience and hard work of a farmer, whose efforts pay off in the end and these efforts allow the famer to receive the first fruits of the harvest.

These three similes give us pictures of the Christian as a soldier, athlete, and farmer. The soldier keeps going because he wants to win the final victory. The athlete keeps going because he wants to win the crown. The farmer keeps going because he wants to have a great harvest. The Christian also keeps going because he wants to get to heaven and to influence as many as possible, on his way there, to come to Christ. Paul urges Timothy to think about the application of these similes to real life in Christ.

REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST

8 *Remember Jesus Christ [the ever-living Lord who has] risen from the dead, [as the prophesied King] descended from David [king of Israel], according to my gospel [the good news that I preach],* ***9*** *for that [gospel] I am suffering even to [the point of] wearing chains like a criminal; but the word of God is not chained or imprisoned!* ***10*** *For this reason I [am ready to] patiently endure all things for the sake of those who are the elect (God's chosen ones), so that they too may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it the reward of eternal glory.*

Paul is trying to inspire Timothy to give his all for the tasks that lie before him. He has compared the Christian life with the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer. Now he comes to the greatest motivation of all to live the Christian life: *"Remember Jesus Christ."* He has risen from the dead and is the ever-present Lord. He was born of the seed of David and thus shares our humanity. He alone paid for our sins, and anyone who will, may come to Him for the cleansing power of the blood.

Paul is writing these words as he is suffering inside of a dark, dirty jail cell with a Roman soldier chained to his side. He is a political prisoner, a criminal to the Romans, and to them also a leader of a hated sect.

Yet Paul is encouraged by two thoughts: First, though *he* is bound, the Word of God *was not*. Secondly, he knew his suffering was not in vain and would in the end be a help to many people. He patiently endures the suffering, believing that his suffering will inspire many to come to salvation in Christ Jesus and to eternal glory in our heavenly home.

THE SONG OF THE MARTYR

11 *This is a faithful and trustworthy saying:*
If we died with Him, we will also live with Him;
12
If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He will also deny us;
13
If we are faithless, He remains faithful [true to His word and His righteous character], for He cannot deny Himself.

This is one of the first hymns of the Christian Church. Some believe that verse 11 refers to baptism, and Paul did liken baptism, in Romans 6, to death: *"Therefore we have been buried with Him by baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4). However, based on the context and on what was going on in Paul's life at the time, we can assume that this is about martyrdom or actual physical death and not about baptism.

Verse 12 recalls the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:22: ***"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."*** A better translation of the word *endure* in modern English would be the word *suffer.* We know that many in Paul's day suffered greatly. In fact, it is believed that 5 million of the early Church Christians were martyred for the faith because they refused to deny Christ. Again I quote the words of Jesus from the book of Matthew: ***"Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess***

also before the Father, who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

Verse 13 is true because God's nature does not change, regardless of circumstances. Numbers 23:19 says, "*God is not a human being that He should lie or a mortal that He should change His mind."* We may veer from the faith and become faithless, but His Word remains unchanging.

THE DANGER OF WORDS

14 *Remind the people of these facts, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God to avoid petty controversy over words, which does no good, and [upsets and undermines and] ruins [the faith of] those who listen.*

How we use Words is so important. This verse is zeroing in on "disputes." We, as believers, do not need to argue over our differences. J. Vernon McGee writes: "…there are three sides to every question: your side, my side, and the right side!" We waste a lot of valuable time speaking negative words and trying to correct other believers. Instead of that, let's try to stay on the positive side, praise and encourage people, and enjoy each other's company.

THOUGHTS ON RESURRECTION

15 *Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth.* ***16*** *But avoid all irreverent babble and godless chatter [with its profane, empty words], for it will lead to further ungodliness,* ***17*** *and their teaching will spread like gangrene. So it is with Hymenaeus and Philetus,* ***18*** *who have deviated from the truth. They claim that the resurrection has already taken place, and they undermine the faith of some.*

Paul is urging Timothy to present himself for service as a teacher who has studied the Word and is approved by God. He is to teach the Word of Truth unashamedly, but only after he has been tested to be sure he is suitable to do the work of Christ.

On the other hand, Paul speaks of false teachers who engage in "*irreverent babble and godless chatter*." The more they talk the further they get from the Gospel message. Paul gives two examples of false teachers: Hymenaeus and Philetus. These men taught that the resurrection of believers had already taken place.

Two false doctrines concerning baptism had gotten in the Church. First, some claimed that resurrection of the physical body happened

simultaneously with water baptism in the here and now, before physical death. Secondly, some taught that resurrection was not really a personal thing but was simply living on after one died, in his or her children. Neither of these doctrines lined up with Scripture.

The high priests most often came from the Sadducees. They did not believe in the resurrection of the body. Nor did the Greeks believe in resurrection of the body, although they did believe in immortality. Both of these opinions were simply not scriptural. The correct Christian belief is in a resurrection, although not simultaneously, of spirit, soul and body. The bodily resurrection will take place at the Rapture, if there is one, or at the Second Coming of Christ. But the body will be glorified. In other words bodies eaten-up with cancer and disease or smashed by accidents will be changed into a glorified body. Still, we will recognize and know each other, even as we will be known (1st Corinthians 13:12).

THE FIRM FOUNDATION

19 *Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God [which He has laid] stands [sure and unshaken despite attacks], bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord stand apart from wickedness and withdraw from*

wrongdoing."

God's foundation is unshakable and is Jesus Christ, the WORD. The Christian builds his house not on the shifting sand of worldly wisdom but on the rock, which is Christ. ***"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who build his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock"*** (Matthew 7:24-25).

The foundation bears a seal. A seal was a mark of authenticity and ownership. The seal shows that those who build upon God's foundation belong to Him.

The two quotes that follow are not literal quotes from the Scriptures. Apparently, Paul took an Old Testament idea and filtered it through the Words of Jesus. The first quote, "*The Lord knows those who are His"* (or as is often quoted: *"The Lord knows those who are His"),* is similar to what Moses said when the rebellious friends of Korah rebelled against Moses' leadership in the wilderness. Moses says in Numbers 16:5, *"The Lord will make known who is His."* Perhaps Paul was filtering this through what Jesus said in Matthew 7:22: ***"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord,***

Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and cast out demons in Your name, and do many deeds of power in Your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from Me, you evildoers.'"

The second quote is similar to Moses' words when he was dealing with Korah, "*Turn away from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing of theirs"* (Numbers 16:26). This reflects the words of Jesus in Luke 13:37: ***"Go away from Me, all you evildoers,"*** which Jesus says to those who falsely claim to be His followers.

The addition of these quotes helps us to understand that the early Church read the Old Testament in the light of the words of Jesus. They also show us that these genuine believers meant business and firmly believed that they, turning away from evil, belong to and were possessed by the Spirit of God and, although not perfect, were headed in the right direction.

VESSELS OF HONOR AND DISHONOR

20 *Now in a large house there are not only [vessels and objects of gold and silver, but also vessels and objects of wood and of earthenware, and some are for honorable (noble, good) use and some for dishonorable (ignoble, common).* ***21*** *Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things [which are*

dishonorable—disobedient, sinful], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified [set apart for a special purpose and], useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Unfortunately, not everyone in the early Church was headed in the right direction. Two of these were Hymenaeus and Philetus. Paul explains that there were honorable men and dishonorable men in the Church. He illustrates this mixture by metaphorically comparing the Church to a large house with all kinds of utensils and serving pieces. Some of these vessels were precious and some dishonorable. The Church will always be a mixture as long as the Church is an earthly organization.

Barclay comments on these verses: "Those who criticize the Church because there are imperfect people in it are criticizing it because it is composed of men and women. It is not given to us to judge; judgment belongs to God. But it is the duty of Christians to keep themselves free from polluting influences. And if they do that, their reward is not special honor or special privilege but special service."

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

22 *Run away from youthful lusts—pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those [believers] who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.* ***23*** *But have nothing to do with*

foolish and ignorant speculations [useless disputes over unedifying, stupid controversies], since you know that they produce strife and give birth to quarrels. ***24*** *The servant of the Lord must not participate in quarrels, but must be kind to everyone [even-tempered, preserving peace, and he must be], skilled in teaching, patient and tolerant when wronged.* ***25*** *He must correct those who are in opposition with courtesy and gentleness in the hope that God may grant that they will repent and be led to the knowledge of the truth [accurately understanding and welcoming it],* ***26*** *and that they may come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.*

"Flee from youthful lust" Is a needed word for our generation. Including in youthful lust is sexual sin, but Paul is talking about much more that just sex. Ours is society that lusts after material possessions and power and riches too.

Paul also exhorts the believers to live the Christian life by following after righteousness, faith, love and peace; by not getting caught up in foolish arguments about the nonessentials of the faith; and by having a servant heart that is gentle, patient, apt to teach, and meek.

J. Vernon McGee says of these verses: "The soldier was to fight, but the servant is not to fight. Is this a contradiction? No, it is a

paradox When you are standing for the truth, you are to be definite [and quick] to let people know where you stand. Don’t be a coward! … However, if you are trying to win a person to Christ, don’t argue with him. If he disagrees with you, let him disagree with you. Just keep on giving him the Word of God.”