

A Soldier, A Farmer
And A Servant

2 Timothy 2:1-26

MEMORY VERSE

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A blindfold for each child in your class.

Enough templates for one bookmark for each child, construction paper, markers or crayons, scissors, glue sticks, and clear contact paper.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Walking in Another's Shoes

In today's lesson we are going to learn about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We will be introduced to a son, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, a vessel and a servant. If we walk in their shoes we will understand a little bit better what it means to be Jesus' disciple.

For this activity you will need a blindfold for each child in your class. Divide your children into groups of 5 or 6 children. Have them sit in a circle and take off their shoes. Place the shoes in a pile in the center of their circle. Have them place blindfold on (no peeking!). Once the blindfolds are on mix up each of the shoe piles. When you say, “go” give the teams a couple of minutes to find their shoes and put them on. Some may find their shoes while others will put on another child's shoes. Call time and have the children remove their blindfolds. Have fun with the children wearing the wrong shoes. Explain that it is sometimes good to walk in someone else's shoes to get an idea how they live. We are going to walk in some other people's shoes today in our Bible study to learn more about being a disciple of Jesus.

LESSON TIME!

The letters that Paul wrote to Timothy are very good letters for young people to read and study. The section of scripture we are studying today is from Paul's second letter. This chapter talks to Timothy about being a disciple of Jesus. A disciple means a follower or learner. So to be a disciple of Jesus means that we follow Him and become like Him.

What does a disciple do? How are we supposed to act and live out our lives as a follower of Jesus? Paul uses seven different word pictures to give Timothy lots of encouragement. Word pictures are when a writer gives a picture or illustration to describe a truth. Let us look at those pictures today and learn from Paul's letter to Timothy how that **Jesus wants us to be His disciple.**

2 TIMOTHY 2:1, 2

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Paul calls Timothy "my son." Timothy was not Paul's physical son; he was his spiritual son. It was because of Paul's ministry that Timothy came to Jesus. Paul taught him and encouraged him for many years and then he left Timothy in charge of a new church on one of his journeys. Paul and Timothy had a really neat relationship. Paul lived out for Timothy what he asks him to do in verse two. Paul wanted Timothy to look for a train up more disciples who can help him in the ministry. God wants all of us to share our faith with others and to help those who are new to Jesus to grow in their faith.

In verse one, Paul tells Timothy to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." This is a beautiful reminder that none of us can live the Christian life on our own. The Christian walk is not about gritting our teeth and following a bunch of rules even if it kills us. The New Testament is very clear that we are saved by grace, not by what we do. So now, every day, for the rest of our lives, we are to live by His grace, walk in His grace and be strong in His grace (Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans.8).

Grace is undeserved favor. What a blessing that we can live everyday strong in His favor. He loves us! We do not have to try to make Him like us because we do good things. We do good things because He loves us already and has shown us that by giving us Jesus, who died for us on the cross. His grace is there for us when we are weak, when we have failed, when we are afraid, or when we need help loving others.

Grace helps us to walk on the narrow path, even when the whole world walks down another. God wants us to be strong in His grace!

In verse two we see Paul encouraging Timothy to pour out the things that he has learned as he has walked with the Lord into other people's lives. As we mentioned before, God wants us to be active in sharing our faith in Jesus with others and also in discipling others. There is a picture throughout the Bible of older saints in the Lord passing on all they have learned to the younger believers. It is kind of like a father who wants to pass on everything they have learned in their lives to their son or daughter.

Timothy was the young pastor of a new church so Paul wanted him to teach others what he has learned so that the church could become mature. In order for us to disciple others we must first be a disciple ourselves. Where are we at in our relationship with Jesus? Have we matured in Him enough to share with others how they can grow in Him? That is what He wants us to do. **Jesus wants us to be His disciple.**

2 TIMOTHY 2:3-7

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Now Paul begins to encourage Timothy in His walk with the Lord. He begins to give Timothy some illustrations to help him to understand how he is to walk with the Lord. The first picture he gives is that of a soldier. What a great picture this is to understand our walk with the Lord.

How is the child of God a soldier? Well, do you remember Ephesians 6— about the armor of God? The Bible says that we are in the midst of a spiritual battle. God gives us equipment that helps us to do battle as a soldier. So for us to be a disciple of Jesus we can think of ourselves as a good soldier. Let us look at how a soldier lives their lives and see how that compares to a disciple of Jesus.

A soldier has to be obedient to their commanding officer. In the same way we need to be completely obedient to our commanding officer, Jesus. A soldier needs to put on their protective armor to be safe in the midst of battle. In the same way we need to put on the full armor of God every day so we can be protected in the battle we are fighting against our enemy the devil. A soldier needs to be in constant communication with their commander. In the same way we need to pray every day so we can receive instruction on how to live our lives and what Jesus would have us to do.

Another aspect of being a good soldier is that soldiers do not get entangled in the affairs of this life. They need to be on call and ready to head into action in a moments notice. When a commander says, “Let’s go!” a soldier is not going to say, “Well, let me take care of a few things and then I’ll be ready in a few weeks.” No, a good soldier will be ready to immediately go and do all that their commander says. In the same way we need to be ready to follow Jesus no matter what and no matter where. **Jesus wants us to be His disciple.**

Now picture your Sunday school teacher waking up on Sunday morning and saying, “Lord, I don’t feel like teaching this morning, I’m just going to skip church today, ok?” Lots of little children would not hear about Jesus’ love that day. That is no way to win the world for Christ, is it? No! A good soldier has his priorities straight. He knows the most important things to do and he trains himself to do those things first. God’s Word is teaching us to endure hard things in order to keep on doing what is right, even if we have to suffer for it. Sometimes that means going to church instead of sleeping in; it might mean doing homework instead of watching T.V; it might mean doing chores instead of playing with friends. What else might it mean? (Allow for responses). Our Lord does not want us to get so tangled up in the world that we cannot be about His business, like sharing Jesus with a lost and dying world and serving our brothers and sisters in the church.

Another picture of a disciple that Paul gives us is that of an athlete. How hard does an Olympic athlete have to train to win the gold medal? Olympic athletes train for hours every day and for years in order to compete in the games. They work with one goal in mind: winning the prize. That is what God wants us to strive for also (Philippians 3:14). Paul was encouraging Timothy to run a race; be an athlete and do not cut any corners on the way to finishing the course (Hebrews 12:1-2, I Corinthians 9:24-27).

Just as an athlete can't cut the corner of a race track and neither can a baseball player run past second base without touching it; so we disciples of Jesus need to live our lives according to God's rules. We need to study every day and concentrate on how we can best do what God has called us to do. **Jesus wants us to be His disciple.**

One more picture that Paul gives us of a disciple is that of a farmer. A farmer works the soil, plants the seeds, pulls the weeds, and waters the plants until it is harvest time. He cares about the soil and the weather and takes care of his fields seriously. He works very hard. Paul was showing Timothy how his work in the church and in the community is like that of a farmer. God wants us to remember that Jesus was raised from the dead and whenever we tell people about Him, we are caring for people's hearts (the soil) and planting a seed (the gospel) (see also Luke 3:5-15; 1 Corinthians 3:5-10).

“Timothy Says”

This game is simply a variation of Simon Says. As you talk about the athlete and how they have to follow the rules in order to win the prize use this game to reinforce the concept of following the rules.

Choose one child to be “Timothy”. Have them stand at one end of the room. The rest of the children can line up at the wall at the opposite end of the room. Have Timothy give various commands, but only by saying, “Timothy says”. If the Timothy says a command without saying, “Timothy says” then the children who follow the command will be out of the game.

Give a few children the opportunity to be Timothy. After you are finished gather the children together. Ask, “How important was it to follow the rules in this game?” “Could you win the game and not follow the rules?” “How is this like the athlete in our story?” How important is it to follow rules in our walk with Jesus?”

2 TIMOTHY 2:8-19

Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,

for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained.

Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him,
We shall also live with Him.

If we endure,
We shall also reign with Him.
If we deny Him,
He also will deny us.

If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Paul is encouraging young Timothy in a few different areas in these verses. He is reminding Timothy of all that Jesus has done for us. How that He is raised from the dead and now we have the privilege of proclaiming that truth to others. But not everyone is going to like the truth or receive it. Paul has had much suffering and difficulty in proclaiming the truth. He explains to Timothy that he will also have to endure hardship if he is faithful to declare the truth.

Paul tells Timothy to remain steadfast and faithful no matter what. Then he tells Timothy not to get caught up in silly arguments. Sometimes people can argue about silly things that do not mean anything in the bigger picture. Unfortunately God’s people can sometimes get caught up in that as well. Paul is telling Timothy to stay away from arguing.

Rather, Paul encourages Timothy to keep studying the Bible as much as possible. He needs to rightly divide the Word of truth to help others to understand what God’s Word says. If Timothy keeps focused on God’s Word then he will not get caught up in all of these useless arguments. **Jesus wants us to be His disciple.**

Paul also warns Timothy to avoid people who like to come into the church and stir up trouble. He even mentions a couple of men by name. How embarrassing that must have been for them, but God is serious when it comes to protecting His people from those who would want to hurt them. If we are busy about studying God’s Word and living for Him every day then we will not have time or interest in getting caught up in all of these other things.

So we need to understand as a soldier, farmer and athlete that we may have hard times that we hit. We need to remain strong in God’s grace. We may also have others in our lives that would want to get us distracted from God’s purpose in our lives. We need to remember to keep focused on prayer and the study of God’s Word. Then we should also stay away from those who would teach wrong things about the Bible. **Jesus wants us to be His disciple.**

2 TIMOTHY 2:20-26

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

In these verses we see two more pictures: that of a vessel and a servant. Paul uses everyday things in people's life at that time help Timothy understand his purpose as a disciple of Jesus. They are good pictures for disciples of God at any time to study and learn more about.

A vessel in those days was basically a container, kind of like a pitcher or a jug. There were silver and gold vessels and there were wood and clay vessels. The type of vessel that we are depends on how much we allow God to work through our lives. The important thing is not the vessel, but what is inside the vessel. They were designed to hold something else. In the same way we are be vessels of Jesus Christ. We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and like Jesus described in John chapter 7, torrents or rivers of living water should flow out of our lives. A good question for us to ask ourselves is what is flowing out of our vessels (our lives)? Is it the fruit of the Holy Spirit or something else?

Paul also tells Timothy to flee youthful lusts. This is important instruction for young people. Remember that Timothy is a young pastor. Sometimes a characteristic of being young (or immature) is doing whatever we feel like doing. Paul is saying that instead of doing whatever we feel like doing, or giving into sinful desires, we need to rather pursue righteousness. We should be focused on doing God's will, especially as young people.

The last word picture Paul gives us is that of a servant. We are servants of Jesus Christ. The best example of that is Jesus Himself (John 13; Philippians 2). Remember when Jesus washed His disciples feet? He showed them what it meant to be a servant of God. In the same way we need to lay down our rights and wants in order to serve others. If we want to be first in the kingdom of God then we need to be willing to be the servant of all.

Isn't God's Word wonderful to give us so many good pictures to help us understand how to live our Christian life? As a follower of Jesus you are His disciple. We will spend our entire life learning all about what that means. Jesus wants us to grow as His disciple and has given us some great pictures to understand what that should look like. Let us seek to serve Him with all of our hearts as a son, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, a vessel and a servant.

Good Soldier Bookmarks

This craft is a bookmark that the children can put in their Bibles to remind them how important it is to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and how important it is to study God's Word. You will need enough templates for one bookmark for each child, construction paper, markers or crayons, scissors, glue sticks, and clear contact paper.

Cut out the bookmark templates from the curriculum template provided (two bookmarks per template). Give one to each child. Give construction paper (various colors) to the children to cut out a rectangle to glue their template onto. The rectangle should be large enough to allow a border around the bookmark. Next, allow the children to color the bookmark with crayons or markers. Then cut out contact paper to cover the front and back of the bookmark. Trim any excess with scissors to make the edges even. As an option you can punch a hole at the top of the bookmark and tie a piece of yarn or ribbon.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

