

Mastering the Demands of the High Calling

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Philippians 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

2Tim. 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2Tim. 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2Tim. 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2Tim. 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2Tim. 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

2Tim. 2:6 The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

Being a faithful servant of Christ is a high calling, indeed. It calls us out of the ordinary. It calls us out of the pursuit of our own fleshly aspirations. It calls us to a labor which has high demands. They are high demands because they are spiritual demands. We are not up to the task without help from God. But God calls us to it, knowing that He has help available for us that we may access.

(Illustrate the idea of calling by the conversation with Allen's family about being "called.")

In Chapter One of 2 Timothy, Paul has just finished writing to Timothy how so many had abandoned the cause in Asia and turned against him. He was very sensitive to the fact of how easy it is for men to turn from the whole truth of God and be turned to compromise. He has learned firsthand that people who will stand with the preacher during any long uneventful trip will get out of the car when a sudden rough bump is hit and maybe a blowout occurs. Among the several who had abandoned ship when he got in trouble with the law, Phygellus and Hermogenes stand out to him as particularly guilty. They were probably preachers at churches in Asia. Legend has it that they were two of the 70 sent out by Jesus in Luke 10:1. At any rate, they were pointed out by Paul as two to be specifically considered as having turned away from him.

So, we begin to read in Chapter Two, Paul's warnings to Timothy about things necessary in the life of a faithful witness. From this we can get a great overview of experiences related to conflicts and how we are to conduct ourselves in them.

I. V.1 Being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus is the key

II. V. 2 Strength in this grace of Christ demands proper transfer of the Lord's truths to others

III. V. 3 To faithfully transfer the Lord's truths, the servant must endure hardness as a good soldier

IV. V. 4 Enduring hardness means detachment from things of the world that might give more comfort; it also means attending to the duties of the soldier

V. V. 5 But, in the midst of execution of duties, the servant of the Lord must remember that there are rules to be followed in order to win

VI. V. 6 The labor for Christ to bring forth fruit among men must be enhanced by the laborer eating of God's fruit first. (Viz. What a person sows, he reaps)