

# The Correspondent



## SUNDAY

Bible Study 9:30 AM  
Worship 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM

## WEDNESDAY

Bible Study (Adult) 1:30 PM  
Bible Study (All Ages) 7:00 PM  
[www.collinsville-troycoc.org](http://www.collinsville-troycoc.org)  
(618) 667-6708

*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

Vol. 49 No. 33

1400 Troy Road Collinsville, Illinois 62234

August 25, 2021

## A Soldier, An Athlete, and a Farmer

-Renn Ferguson

There was a young man that held a very special place in the heart of the apostle Paul. That young man was named Timothy. In fact, Paul often referred to him as his “beloved child” (2 Timothy 1:2). Paul wrote two letters to Timothy so that Timothy may, “...know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15). In the second letter addressed to this young man Paul offers some final encouragement to his son in the faith. Paul knew that he was about to die (2 Timothy 4:8). So, he wanted to make sure Timothy had what he needed to be a faithful minister. In 2 Timothy 2:1-7 Paul encourages Timothy by comparing the Christian life to a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer.

Paul here wrote, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” In these three illustrations Paul gives us several points to think about.

First, as soldiers there will be hardships. This is a very common teaching in the New Testament. Christ often reminded His disciples that they would face persecution because of their obedience to Him (Matthew 10:22, 34-39). However, much like a soldier, we are to take no thought for anything other than the mission at hand. Our aim is to please our Savior.

Second, as athletes we are to compete in accordance to the rules. On August 8th the 2021 Olympics ended. In all of the events there was a set of rules that must be obeyed if the athlete desired the gold medal. Even if one was exceptionally gifted if they broke a rule they would be disqualified. Paul reminds us that if we want the gold, we must obey the rules.

Finally, as farmers we must work if we wish to partake of the harvest. Paul classifies this farmer as “hardworking”. Farmers cannot afford to be lazy, if they do they lose their livelihood. In the same sense Christians cannot afford to be lazy. There will be great rewards for our labor and effort on earth. Speak of this Paul wrote, “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Let us remain diligent in our work so that we may enjoy the harvest.

These comparisons are often used in scripture to describe the life of a Christian. This life requires us to endure hardship, to submit to God rule, and to work patiently. Yet, our reward far exceeds our effort (Revelation 2:10).