

## ***Be Strong in God’s Grace: Live as a Vessel of Honor (2 Tim. 2)***

### **I. PAUL CALLED TIMOTHY TO SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCE**

A. Paul called Timothy to be strong by engaging with the grace of God so that he would walk in excellence and fullness in his spiritual life. Paul gave him three pictures of the kingdom that are helpful to walking strong in the grace of God—the soldier, the athlete, and hardworking farmer.

***1...be strong in the grace that is in Christ...<sup>3</sup>You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life...<sup>5</sup>Also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. <sup>6</sup>The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. <sup>7</sup>Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding [personal application] in all things. (2 Tim 2:1-7)***

B. ***Be strong in grace:*** We cannot produce strength, but we can position ourselves in the grace of God to experience more strength. Do not be casual about your growing strong in your relationship with Jesus. It will not happen automatically, but only by intentionally pursuing it. The Lord will give understanding to each of us how to apply these specifically to our life (v. 7).

C. ***Good soldier:*** This includes hardships, adventures, risks, sacrifices, lost opportunities, etc.

1. ***Endure hardship:*** Soldiers in combat are exposed to the injustices of war and the risks of mistreatment. Paul was imprisoned as a criminal—he suffered as an evildoer (v. 9).

***9...I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains... (2 Tim. 2:9)***

2. ***Entangles himself:*** Do not get swept away by many things happening around you, but be single-minded and focused like a soldier on active duty. Paul is comparing a soldier to the civilian who is free to engage in many things unrelated to their vocation.

***1...lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us... (Heb. 12:1)***

D. ***Athlete:*** An athlete must honor the rules of the game. Our culture honors independence of spirit (some of which is good). However, athletes cannot break rules such as stepping out of bounds, grabbing an opponent, taking performance-enhancing drugs, etc. Rules can be restricting, but must be kept to gain the crown (4:8). David wanted to bring the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6). David was very sincere, but he brought the Ark back his own way, and God’s judgment ensued.

***13“...our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.” (1 Chr. 15:13)***

E. ***Hardworking farmer:*** The farmer performs much work that is routine and mundane. He plants a seed and waits with confidence for a harvest in the future. There is a harvest beyond this age. The farmer is first to receive the benefit of his work—this happens in fullness in the age to come.

*8...there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which...the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)*

## II. LIVING AS A VESSEL OF HONOR BY THE POWER OF GOD’S GRACE

A. Paul endured hardship for the sake of others experiencing the power of God’s salvation.

*8Remember that Jesus...was raised from the dead according to my gospel... <sup>10</sup>Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain [walk in] the salvation which is in Christ...<sup>11</sup>This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup>If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. <sup>13</sup>If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. (2 Tim. 2:8-13)*

B. By God’s grace, anyone can be a vessel of honor that is useful to Jesus in deep partnership.

*21...if anyone cleanses himself...he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. <sup>22</sup>Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Tim. 2:21-22)*

C. Paul declared that those who receive the abundance of grace will reign in life; therefore they must reckon or see themselves as alive to God or as under grace. (Rom. 5:17; 6:11, 14). These truths have many implications that affect how we approach and interpret our lives.

*17...those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ... (Rom. 5:17)*

*<sup>11</sup>Reckon [see] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ...<sup>14</sup>For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:11, 14)*

D. **Under law:** Being free from the law speaks of being free from the requirements of the **OT system** of animal sacrifices, free from our former **position** of condemnation and powerlessness, and free from an **attitude** of seeking to earn God’s favor by our works or deeds. The law causes people to strive to try to earn God’s forgiveness, acceptance, and favor. Some interpret being free from the law as being free from Jesus’ leadership or pursuing Him with diligence.

E. **Under grace:** Being under grace speaks of being accepted and empowered by God as a free gift. This leads us to respond to Jesus with confidence, gratitude, and wholeheartedness.

F. **See yourself alive to God:** We received a new position, power, nature, insights, and destiny. We are now accepted, enjoyed, indwelt, empowered, and commissioned by God, with a relevant purpose. We have the *authority of Jesus’ name* and the *indwelling Spirit*, which enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan. Now we have a significant *destiny* in God. We are sons of God and the Bride of Christ, who function as kings and priests (Rev. 5:10).

*13...present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...<sup>14</sup>for you are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:13-14)*

- G. We want to *fully experience* what Jesus *freely provided* on the cross. This occurs as we reckon ourselves alive to God or see ourselves the way that God sees us in Christ. What Jesus freely and instantly *worked for us* on the cross is what He progressively *works in us* as we respond to the Spirit’s leadership. This is referred to as abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:5) or reigning “through” Jesus.