

Pictures of the Christian Life

2 Timothy 2

INTRODUCTION:

- Describe what a Christian ought to look like. *Allow for discussion...*
- Ultimately, as a Christian, we are to look like Jesus Christ. But the Bible also gives us a number of other portraits that we can emulate.
- In 2 Timothy 2, Paul paints five pictures of what the Christian should look like that provide us clear direction on how we are to live.

BIBLE STUDY:

TEACHER TIP: Divide the class into five groups (rearrange the room if needed) and assign one point to each group to research and then present to the class.

1. The Soldier (vs. 1-4 & 8-13)
 - a. Though Satan was thoroughly defeated at Calvary, the Christian life is in constant conflict in this world and will remain so until Jesus comes again.
 - b. Rather than a playground, Paul likens the Christian life to a battleground which involves suffering on the one hand and separation on the other.
 - c. We have to “endure hardness,” meaning life involves sacrifice and Jesus must come first.
 - d. Like a soldier, obedience must come first with total allegiance to our Commander-in-Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - e. Discuss: What are the similarities that exist between the Christian and a soldier in today’s armed forces.
2. The Sportsman (vs. 5)
 - a. The Greek word “strive” was a term used in the public games performed in the arenas. Our English term “athlete” has its roots in this term.
 - b. As you read this verse, you will notice that Paul is not talking about someone who dabbles in sports. Rather, he is referring to a professional athlete – someone whose job is to compete.
 - c. Paul makes two points about the athlete:
 - i. They must compete lawfully. In other words, they must abide by the rules of the game. Where do we find the rules of the game for the Christian? (The Bible!)
 - ii. They will be crowned eventually. All the work and discipline will be rewarded. All the sweat and tears will eventually be rewarded with a crown of joy.
 - d. Compare this verse with Philippians 3:14 and Matthew 25:21, 23.
 - e. Discuss: What are the similarities that exist between the Christian and a sportsman in today’s armed forces.
3. The Sower (vs. 6-7)
 - a. Paul shifts his attention to agriculture and likens the Christian to a farmer who sows and harvests his crops.
 - b. The life of a farmer is hard. No one works as hard as a farmer. While there is fresh air, homegrown food, etc. there are also draughts, weeds, varmints and pests that will all destroy a good crop.
 - c. For the farmer that sticks with it, there is a great reward. His hard work eventually pays off.

- d. Discuss: What are the similarities that exist between the Christian and a sower in today's armed forces.
4. The Student (vs. 14-19)
 - a. The Christian is a lifelong learner, and our textbook is the Word of God. It is what provides direction through the good times as well as the bad.
 - b. In these verses, Paul contrasts two types of teaching the believer might receive:
 - i. False teaching (vs. 14, 16-18). These words offer "no profit." Their design is to "subvert" the hearer. We must avoid useless word battles and needless bickering over unimportant issues.
 - ii. True teaching (vs. 15). Pay attention to faithful preaching and teaching of the Word. We are to study it and learn how to "rightly divide" the Scriptures.
 - c. The student is to faithfully stand on the Word (vs. 19).
 - d. Discuss: How is the Christian best equipped to deal with false doctrine?
5. The Servant (vs. 20-26)
 - a. Paul outlines three qualities of a servant's life:
 - b. They are to possess a dedicated life (vs. 20-21). Dedicated to what? To the "great house" – or the church! Every believer is placed within the household of faith. We can't separate our faith from the church.
 - c. They are to possess a determined life (vs. 22-23). The Bible places a premium on separation (not a popular topic). We must flee sin and follow righteousness.
 - d. They are to possess a disciplined life (vs. 24-26). A disciplined person is one whose attitude is in check with the Word of God (vs. 24).
 - e. Discuss: Which of these three is most difficult and why?

DISCUSSION:

- After each group presents their material, go back and hit the high points that you think are especially applicable to your class members.
- Challenge your group to choose one picture from this chapter that they will try to follow this coming week.