

# SOLDIER, ATHLETE, FARMER

## 2 TIM GEMS

### TODAY'S MAIN PASSAGE

2 Timothy 2:1-7 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. -NIV

### TODAY'S MAIN POINT

We are invited to join God as active participants in His work here on earth. Accomplishing God's mission for our lives is not a matter of hyperactivity nor inactivity. It is a matter of courageously living out who He has made us to be in joyful relationship to Him. In God's kingdom, His grace and our faith combine for a life whose impact stretches for eternity.

# I have a small but important role in the unfolding of God's agenda.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

#### Grace and Works

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

James 2:24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

(For the important mix of dynamics between Grace and Works see Romans 3:21-4:5 and James 2:18-26).

"Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning." - Dallas Willard

Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Matthew 7: 21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Philippians 3: 7-8 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ...

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

"I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking Him to do His work through me"— J. Hudson Taylor

"Do not work so hard for Christ that you have no strength to pray, for prayer requires strength."— J. Hudson Taylor