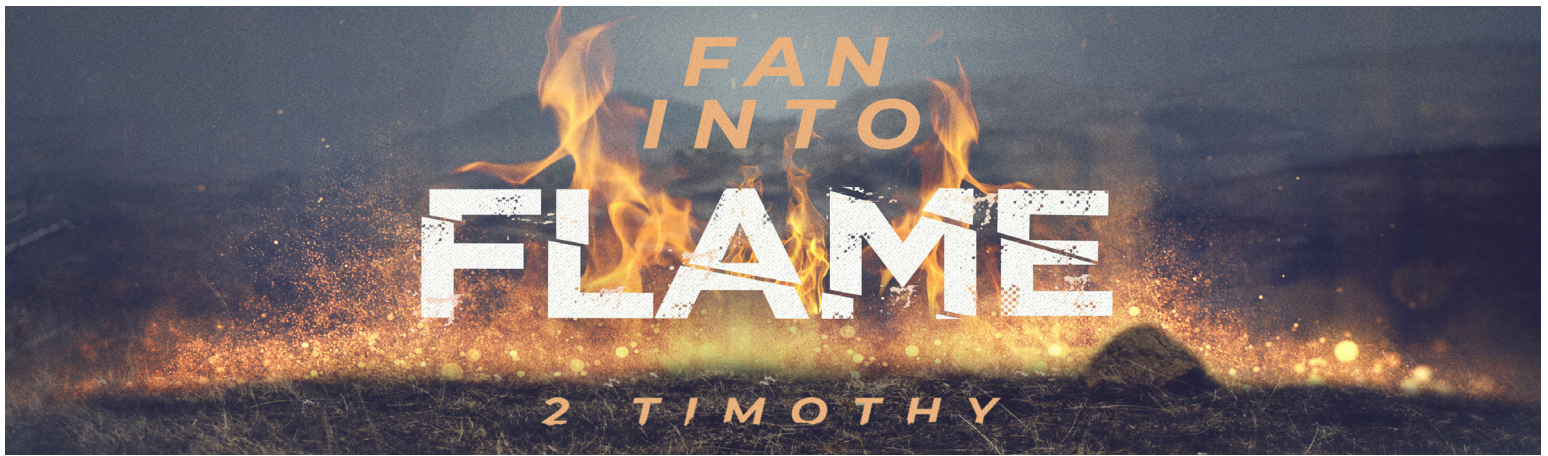




DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Reflect

2 Timothy 2:1-7

1. **2 Timothy 2:1-7 - You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² 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. ³ Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. ⁵ Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷ Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.**

What ideas, themes, or thoughts immediately stand out to you from this passage?

How do the themes of this passage speak to you?

2. Verses 1-6 contain 3 commands that Paul gives to Timothy followed by 3 analogies that Paul uses to motivate Timothy. The first command is for Timothy to be strong in the Lord. The analogy that fits best with this command is that of an athlete. **2 Timothy 2:5 - Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules.** By using the analogy of the athlete, Paul is telling Timothy that there are no shortcuts. Athletes need to be strengthened through their training and they must compete according to all the rules.

What do you think it means to take a shortcut instead of following the rules? Tell a story of a time in your life when you chose to take a shortcut instead of doing what was required of you.

When we consider our growth spiritually, the analogy of the athlete fits well. Athletes need to train and to grow spiritually we also need to train through using spiritual disciplines. Being completely honest, would you say you currently are training to become like Christ, or are you taking shortcuts in that process?

Tim Tebow has said, *"Don't worry about what you can't control. Our focus and energy needs to be on things we can control. Attitude, effort, focus - these are the things we can control."*

3. The second command that Paul gives Timothy in this passage is to entrust Paul's teaching to faithful people who will become qualified teachers. When you think about the context of this passage, it is easy to see the importance of training new leaders to carry on the work of the gospel. The analogy that best fits with this command is that of the hard-working farmer. **⁶ The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.** The analogy of the Christian worker planting seeds like a farmer is consistently used in the Bible. It's easy to see how teaching scripture and living as a good example can become like seeds that are implanted in the heart. Tell the story of a time when someone impacted you by planting seeds of God's Word into your life.

When Paul comments on the hardworking farmer he notes that the farmer should receive a share of the crops. This implies that there should be a reward that Timothy will receive for his work. The greatest reward that Christian leaders see is this - people coming to know Christ, being baptized, and being formed into the image of Christ. Many Bible scholars think that Timothy is not seeing a harvest from his work because he's not working hard or applying himself in the ministry. Be honest, are you consciously and consistently attempting to spiritually invest in the lives of those around you? If so, share how you are currently planting these spiritual seeds. If not, share how you might start spiritually investing more into others' lives.

4. The third command that Paul gives Timothy is to suffer with him. The third analogy is the good soldier. **³ Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.** What immediately jumps out to you from these verses?

We all know there is a certain amount of suffering required to live here on planet Earth. There are also vocations, such as being a soldier, that require higher levels of suffering. Soldiers suffer as they train to become better soldiers, but they also suffer to fulfill their mission. Those of us who have chosen to follow Christ will also be called upon to suffer. Like good soldiers, we suffer as we seek to grow, and we also suffer to fulfill the mission that God has given to us. Take a moment to articulate what you see as the mission that God has given to you specifically.

What are some ways that you are currently suffering to fulfill this mission? When Paul says "join me in suffering", he is implying that no one should suffer alone. Do you feel that you are suffering alone? Explain.

It would be foolish for a soldier to become entangled in civilian affairs. Soldiers cannot risk dividing their loyalties between civilian affairs and following their commanding officer. What do you think are some examples of how those who follow Christ allow themselves to get caught up in what Paul describes as civilian affairs? What are some civilian affairs in which you allow yourself to get caught up?