

Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church  
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

# Getting the Picture

Scripture text: **2 Timothy 2**

# GETTING THE PICTURE

## *2 Timothy 2*

While attending a convention, I noticed a man wearing two name badges. When I asked him why, he replied, **“Oh, I’m having an identity crisis!”**

Paul did not want Timothy to have an identity crisis, **so he carefully explained what a pastor is and does.** (Of course, **the same principles apply to all Christians.**) Paul represented seven pictures of the Christian minister.

## **1.) The Steward (2 Tim. 2:1–2)**

**The ministry is not something we get for ourselves and keep to ourselves.** We are stewards of the spiritual treasure God has given us. **It is our responsibility to guard the deposit and then invest it in the lives of others.** They, in turn, are to share the Word with the next generation of believers.

**It is important that we get our original treasure from the Word of God,** and not from the ideas and philosophies of men. We do not test modern teachers by their popularity, education, or skill. **We test them by the Word of God,** and particularly the doctrines of grace as given by Paul.

**It is not we who examine Paul to see if he is right; it is Paul who examines us!**

**It takes strength to teach the Word of God.** We must dig out of the rich mines of Scripture the “gold, silver, precious stones” that are hidden there.

**Proverbs 3:13-15 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.**

**Proverbs 8:10-19** Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, **for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.** "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. **The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.** Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. **I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength.** By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. I love those who love me, and **those who seek me diligently find me.** Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. **My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver.**

**1 Corinthians 3:10-16** According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. **Let each one take care how he builds upon it.** For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, **which is Jesus Christ.** Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, **because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.** If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. **Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?**

**1 Corinthians 3:17-23** If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and **you are that temple**. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. **For the wisdom of this world is folly with God.** For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "**The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.**" So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--**all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.**



This strength can only come from God's grace. The secret of Paul's great ministry was the grace of God.

**1 Corinthians 15:10** But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

The ability to study, understand, and teach the Word of God is a **gift of God's grace**. "Apt to teach" is **one of God's requirements for the pastor** (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). "Apt to teach" implies apt to learn; **so a steward must also be a diligent student of the Word of God**.

**1 Timothy 3:2** Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, **able to teach,**

**2 Timothy 2:24-26** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, **able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.** God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

## 2.) **The Soldier (2 Tim. 2:3–4, 8–13)**

Paul often used military illustrations in his letters. This is not surprising since he lived in a military state and was in prison himself. He described in these verses the characteristics of a **“good soldier of Jesus Christ.”**

**A.) He endures hardship** (v. 3). Many people have the idea that the ministry is a soft job. Preachers are often the butt of jokes that suggest they are lazy and should be ashamed of accepting their salaries. But a **dedicated Christian minister is in a battle that requires spiritual endurance** (see Eph. 6:10ff).

**Ephesians 6:10-13** Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, **that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.**

**Act 20:26-31** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of **God**. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. **Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears.**

**B.) He avoids worldly entanglements (v. 4).**

**He is totally committed to his Commanding Officer, the One who enlisted him. In our case, this is Jesus Christ.**

I recall a story about a Civil War soldier who happened to be a watchmaker. One day the bugle sounded and the men were told to break camp. “But I can’t go now!” the soldier complained. “I have a dozen watches to repair!”

It is sometimes necessary for a pastor, or a pastor's wife, to be employed because their church is not able to support them. This is a sacrifice on their part and an investment in the work. But a pastor who is fully supported should not get involved in sidelines **that divide his interest and weaken his ministry.**

I have met pastors who spend more time on their real estate ventures than on their churches. **Our purpose is to please the Lord, not ourselves.**

**C.) He magnifies Jesus Christ (vv. 8–9).**

**“Remember Jesus Christ!”** is the way this phrase should be translated. It sounds almost like a war cry, like “Remember the Alamo!” or “Remember Pearl Harbor!” Jesus is the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), and our purpose is to bring honor and glory to Him. **What an encouragement Jesus Christ is to a suffering Christian soldier!**



For He died and rose again, **proving that suffering leads to glory**, and that seeming defeat leads to victory. **Jesus was treated as an evildoer, and His soldiers will be treated the same way.**

**John 15:18-20** "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but **I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**

Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

**The best way to magnify Christ is through the ministry of the Word.** Paul was bound, but God's Word cannot be bound.

**Psalm 147:15** He sends out his command to the earth; **his word runs swiftly.**

**Act 12:24** But the word of God increased and multiplied.

**D.) He thinks of the whole army (v. 10). "The elect" are God's people, chosen by His grace and called by His Spirit.**

**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14** But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because **God chose you** as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification **by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul not only suffered for the Lord's sake, but **he also suffered for the sake of the church.** There were yet many people to reach with the Gospel, and Paul wanted to help reach them. **A soldier who thinks only of himself is disloyal and undependable.**

## **E.) He trusts his Commanding Officer (vv. 11–13).**

This “faithful saying” is probably part of an early statement of faith recited by believers. (For other “faithful sayings” in the pastoral letters, see 1 Tim. 1:15; 4:9; and Titus 3:8.) **It is faith in Jesus Christ that gives us victory** (1 John 5:4).

**We do not fear the enemies, for He has already conquered them. Through our identification with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, we have won the victory** (see Rom. 6).

**1 John 5:2-6** By this we know that we love the children of God, when **we love God and obey his commandments**. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. **For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.** Who is it that overcomes the world except **the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?** This is he who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And **the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.**

**What a pair of paradoxes! Death leads to life!  
Suffering leads to reigning in glory! We have nothing  
to fear!**

The important thing is that we not “disown” our Lord; for if we disown Him here, He will disown us before the Father. In that great “roll call” in glory, when the “medals” are given out, we will lose our reward if we disown His name.

**Matthew 10:32-33** So everyone who acknowledges me before men, **I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven**, but whoever denies me before men, **I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.**

### **3.) The Athlete (2 Tim. 2:5)**

Paul sometimes used athletic illustrations in his writings—wrestling, boxing, running, and exercising. The Greeks and the Romans were enthusiastic about sports, and the Olympic and Isthmian games were important events to them.

Paul had already urged Timothy to exercise like an athlete (1 Tim. 4:7–8).

**Now Paul admonished him to obey the rules.**

**1 Timothy 4:7-8** Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather **train yourself for godliness**; for while bodily training is of some value, **godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.**

A person who strives as an athlete to win a game and get a crown must be careful to obey all the rules of the game. In the Greek games in particular, the judges were most careful about enforcing the rules.



**Each competitor had to be a citizen of his nation, with a good reputation.** In his preparations for the event, he had to follow specific standards. If an athlete was found defective in any matter, he was disqualified from competing. If, after he had competed and won, he was found to have broken some rule, he then lost his crown. Jim Thorpe, a great American athlete, lost his Olympic medals because he participated in sports in a way that broke an Olympic rule.

From the human point of view, Paul was a loser. There was nobody in the grandstands cheering him, for “all they which are in Asia” had turned away from him (2 Tim. 1:15). **He was in prison, suffering as an evildoer. Yet, Paul was a winner!** He had kept the rules laid down in the Word of God, and one day he would get his reward from Jesus Christ. Paul was saying to young Timothy, **“The important thing is that you obey the Word of God, no matter what people may say. You are not running the race to please people or to get fame. You are running to please Jesus Christ.”**

## 4.) The Farmer (2 Tim. 2:6–7)

This is another favorite image found in Paul's letters. Paul once compared the local church to a cultivated field in which all the believers worked together (1 Cor. 3:5–9). Each Christian has his particular task to perform—plowing, sowing, watering, or harvesting—but **it is God alone who gives the increase.**

Several practical truths are found in this image of the farmer and field. For one thing, a farmer has to work. If you leave a field to itself, it will produce mostly weeds. Solomon had this truth in mind when he wrote about the field of the sluggard (Prov. 24:30–34).

**1 Corinthians 3:5-9** What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. **I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.** So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but **only God who gives the growth.** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. **For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.**

**Proverbs 24:30-34** I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. **Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction.** A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Real ministry is hard work, and a pastor (and church members) **ought to work in their spiritual field as diligently as a farmer works in his field.** Pastors do not punch clocks, but they ought to be up in the morning and at their work just as if God blew a whistle for them.

**A farmer needs patience.**

**James 5:7** Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. **See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.**

As some might need to be reminded, “**The harvest is not the end of the meeting—it is the end of the age.**”

A farmer deserves his share of the harvest. **2 Timothy 2:6** *It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.*

Paul is stating here that a faithful pastor ought to be supported by his church. The same idea is found in 1 Corinthians 9:7, where Paul used a soldier, a farmer, and a herdsman to prove his point: “The laborer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:18).

Paul deliberately gave up his right to ask for support so that nobody could accuse him of using the Gospel for personal gain (1 Cor. 9:14ff). But this policy is not required for all of God's servants.

As a local church grows and progresses, the people ought to faithfully increase their support of their pastors and other staff members. "If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?" (1 Cor. 9:11) It is sad to see the way some local churches waste money and fail to care for their own laborers. God will honor a church that honors His faithful servants.



**Something else is true in this image of the farmer:**  
The spiritual leaders who share the Word with the people **are the first ones to enjoy its blessings.**

The preacher and the teacher always get more out of the sermon or lesson than do the hearers because they put much more into it. **They also get great joy out of seeing planted seeds bear fruit in the lives of others.**

Farming is hard work, and it can have many disappointments; but **the rewards are worth it.**