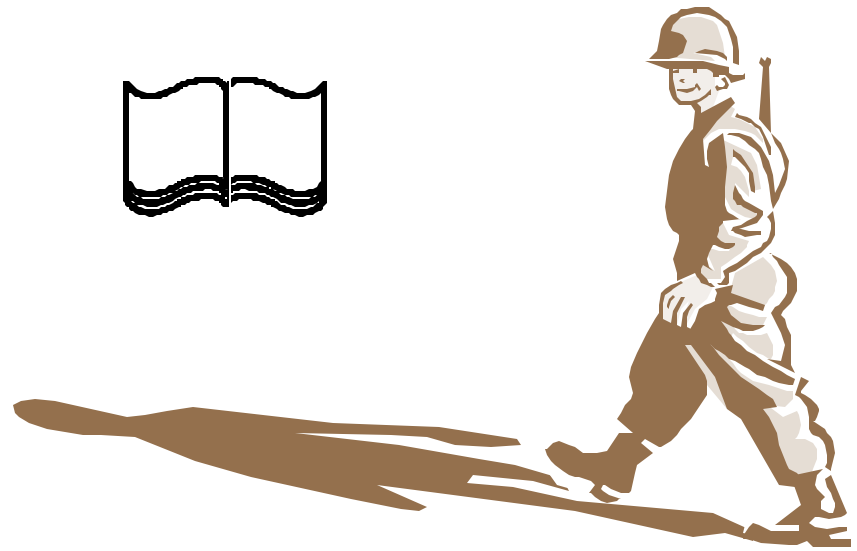
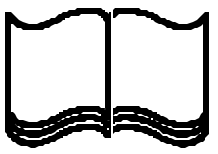


# Endure Hardness as a Good Soldier

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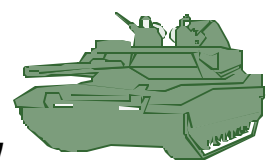


II Timothy 2:3,4

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

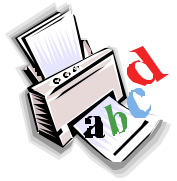
In exhorting Timothy to endure hardness, Paul was encouraging him to stand up under persecution, stand firm under suffering, stand under trials and temptations:



*Timothy, you have to endure!!*

II Timothy 4:5a

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions



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We're to stand. No matter how hard the road seems to be, or how hard the trials and afflictions are - we are called to stand. Nothing will be able to sway us when we are determined to stand against the opposition.

Psalm 34:19

Many are the afflictions of the righteous:  
but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

Out . . .  
not from

God delivers the righteous *out of* afflictions - not *from* afflictions.

The Word of God doesn't tell us that we'll never go through any afflictions, but that He will deliver us out of them all.

Matthew 13:20,21

But he that received the seed into stony

places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

As a good soldier of Jesus Christ, we can't be one of those type of people who want to give up all they had gained in the Lord when persecution comes their way, or when trials and tribulations come on the scene.

We must purpose in our hearts that we're going to stand up and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Tribulation, a way of life

Acts 14:22b

. . . we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Paul certainly knew what he was speaking about when he exhorted Timothy to endure. He went through much suffering and persecution for the sake of the Gospel - but the Lord delivered him out of them all.

see II Corinthians 11:24-27

5 times received 39 stripes

3 times beaten with rods

1 time stoned

3 times suffered shipwreck

a night and a day in the deep

In journeyings often

in perils of waters

in perils of robbers

in perils by mine own countrymen

in perils by the heathen

in perils in the city

in perils in the wilderness

in perils in the sea

in perils among false brethren

in weariness and painfulness

in watchings often

in hunger and thirst

in fastings often

in cold and nakedness

Paul was stoned, beaten, expelled from their coasts. But through it all he never lost the joy of the Lord.

He was thrown in the Philippians jail, and beaten with many stripes.

Yet, in the midnight hour - bound in stocks, his back bleeding - he was able to sing praises unto Almighty God.

Unlike Paul, though, too often we begin to moan and groan, feeling sorry for ourselves because someone said something about us, just as soon as someone calls us a name, .

We feel like crying, and our whole day is spoiled just because of a few words.

But Paul was telling Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. If you want to be a good soldier of the cross, you'll have to start learning to endure some hardness.

You'll have to begin to take persecution when it comes your way, instead of trying to run from it.

II Timothy 4:7

**I have fought a good fight,  
I have finished my course,  
I have kept the faith**

Many get out of sorts with God and fall by the wayside. They don't want any suffering to come their way, so they avoid it by compromising.

But Paul didn't shrink back from persecution. He stood faithfully, taking the opposition that came against him.

**Are you living godly?**

**then expect persecution** - II Timothy 3:12

**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ  
Jesus shall suffer persecution.**

The true believer expects to be persecuted for his stand. Just start to live a godly life, and you can be certain of this one thing - you will be persecuted.

Now, persecution doesn't always come just from sinners. It sometimes comes from other Christians - so-called Christians, that is - those who don't want to sell out to God themselves. They'll do all they can to try and hinder those who are serious in their walk with the Lord.

I John 2:15,16

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

This walk is a holy, separated walk. God has called His people to a total separation from the world and the things in the world.

The pride of life hinders many from going on to serve the Lord. Many young people have planned for a successful career - anything but being a minister of the Gospel.

Many young people from Christian homes are surprised to find persecution coming from their family.

Everything is all right, until they decide to go all the way with the Lord. Then their Christian parents stand in the way, because they have other plans made for their children's future.

My, what greater thing could a young person do with his life than to totally surrender to the Lord, spending himself on the battlefield winning the lost to Jesus.

*Education and making money must be first!*

That's what the pride of life demands. If a parent's heart wasn't all wrapped up in the pride of this world, he wouldn't consider interfering with God's will for his child.

I'd certainly rather see my children sold out to God, spending their time in church and in the things of God, than to see them bound on drugs and sex.

Shame on you if you hinder your child from fulfilling the plan of God for his life.

Many young people go through terrible times of testing. Some parents put such great pressures on their children to serve their desires and plans, instead of God's desires.

And if you get older and God places a calling on your life, you will still find those who stand firmly to oppose and discourage you from fulfilling God's will.

My husband and I were on our way to worldly success when Jesus called us to forsake all and enter the ministry.

People warned us not to take that step, or we'd starve to death:

*You'll never make enough to live on!*

Later on, when God led us to leave our pastorate in Pennsylvania and go to Boston, we found people trying to pull us back.

But I thank God that we didn't follow man. I thank God that we obeyed Him, and took up His call to Boston.

We left Pennsylvania without knowing a soul up here in Boston.

We came here back in 1962 with our four small children - and from that day to this, God has kept us. He has taken good care of us. He hasn't forsaken us nor left us destitute. He has proven down through the years that He faithfully cares for His own.

Now, we didn't get out of Pennsylvania very easily. We went through many trials and tribulations - but God was with us all the way.

We must stand to do what God has told us to do, regardless of the opposition that may come our way. We just need to keep our eyes on Him, and He will take us through, no matter how dark it may look.

II Timothy 3:11

Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

How faithful God was to Paul. But he didn't get away without going through something. He suffered much. After all, he was living godly, so he could expect persecution to come his way.

II Corinthians 4:17

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

While we're going through persecutions and testings, it's hard to see any good coming from them - but God assures us those trials are working in our behalf.

I Peter 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ

Sometimes these battles seem to come one right after another, without any calm.

As we're brought through them in victory, we find we have gained greater faith to face the next ones that come our way.

And we find these battles drawing us closer and closer to the Lord.

Lamentations 3:1

**I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.**

This speaks of Jeremiah being a man of great afflictions: *I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.*

Why did Jeremiah say such a thing?

Jeremiah 20:2

**Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord.**

Stocks are used as a form of punishment: a wooden device that clamp over a prisoner's wrists and ankles, and sometimes even around his neck, to keep him from going anywhere.

This is what happened to Jeremiah. He was persecuted greatly all because of the call of God upon his life to prophesy the Word of the Lord.

Jeremiah 20:9

**Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.**

Jeremiah came to the place of being so discouraged that he felt like giving up - but he couldn't forbear. The message had become like fire in his bones. He had to give it out. He couldn't hold back any longer.

Some people are afraid to open their mouths because of the afflictions they know will come their way. They're afraid of facing any persecution.

But when the Word becomes like fire in our bones, we'll speak up - regardless of what the consequences may be.

We need to get the Word of God into our vessel, where it will become a fire within. Then, when we speak forth the oracles of God, it will be as a fire going forth from our mouths.

Jeremiah 5:14

Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

When your words become fire, they will burn the dross, and devour the chaff. Those who receive what you say will find the fire at work in their hearts and souls, burning out all that is displeasing to God.

Also, your words will cause the listeners to see the reality of the fires of hell. They won't be able to leave your hearing without getting saved, rescued from the fire.

Jeremiah 20:7

O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

Jeremiah was feeling the blues. He was feeling sorry for himself.

A lot of us are just like that. We cry out, *Oh, my! They treat me just awful.*

Do you know what happens when you react that way? You get out of sorts with God.

How can God use you when you're acting like that?

All the prophets of old, all those holy men, went through some times of persecution.

Yes, they went through something, all right!

Yet the last-day Christians think they don't have to go through anything. They think theirs is to be just a life of blessings and joy. But they ignore what the Word of God has to say:

Isaiah 59:19b

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

Deuteronomy 28:7

The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

Psalm 27:2

When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

Jesus stood up against Satan himself. And all Jesus did was to rest on the written Word of God: *Satan, it is written!*

And, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, you and I can endure hardness in the same way.

You say you can't stand because the way is too hard. Oh, no, it's not too hard! The Bible says that the way of the transgressor is hard - not the way of the righteous.

When you testify that the way is hard for you, then you're testifying that you are a transgressor! The only reason it seems hard is that you have yet to completely sell out to God.



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