

Raising Up Leaders, pt. 2 – Soldiers, Athletes, and Farmers

2 Timothy 2:1-2 – 1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:3-6 - 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

Suffer Like a Good Soldier

- “soldier” = Greek *stratiôtēs* = a common Roman foot soldier... a grunt
- **What Was it Like to be a Roman Soldier?**
 - Not very glamorous
 - Average Roman Soldier
 - 5’4” tall
 - 170-190 lbs
 - Lots of muscle and very little fat
 - Standard Soldier’s Equipment
 - 66-100 lbs of gear, weapons, and armor...
 - Up to 14 days’ rations
 - Saw
 - Shovel
 - Sickle
 - Pickaxe (slung on the belt)
 - Wicker basket
 - Waterskin
 - Piece of rope or leather
 - Large shield (*scutum*) made of wood, leather, and bronze/iron
 - Short 18-inch sword (*gladius*)
 - Shorter dagger (7-11 inches)
 - 2 x 7-foot long iron javelins
 - Bronze helmet (weighing about 2 lbs)
 - Armor made from metal strips
 - Heavy sandals with metal nails in the bottom, like cleats
 - The Roman March
 - The Roman Empire was famous for its system of roads, allowing soldiers to get to the battle rather efficiently
 - Soldiers marched everywhere
 - Standard march was 15-20 miles a day, marching for 7-10 hours a day
 - There are records of legions marching 26 miles in a day, but this was not normal
 - When the day’s march was done, soldiers set up camp: dug ditches, raised a palisade, dug latrines, and pitched their tents and those of the officers
 - After 3-4 days of marching, they usually took a day of rest
 - Professional Fighting Force
 - Importantly, Roman soldiers were the world’s first professional standing army
 - They were paid to fight year in and year out, wherever and whenever Rome needed them
 - During this period of Rome’s history, soldiers served for 15-20 years
 - During their service, though they were not slaves, they were not free to do as they wanted.
 - They gave up the right to marry

- They lived in garrisons with other soldiers
- They fought bloody, ferocious, constant battles
- They often acted as a local police force of sorts
- Once done with their years of service, they retired
- Different from Other Armies
 - The Roman soldiers were history's first paid, professional standing army
 - Other armies...
 - 1) Volunteer Citizen Soldiers
 - 2) Slaves
 - 3) Mercenaries
- Quote: General George Patton – "...It is a proud privilege to be a soldier – a good soldier ... [with] discipline, self-respect, pride in his unit and his country, a high sense of duty and obligation..."
- Paul Often Referred to the Saints as Soldiers
 - Here he exhorts Timothy to be a soldier for Christ (also 1 Timothy 1:18)
 - He compared himself and Barnabas to soldiers (1 Cor 9:6-7)
 - He called Epaphroditus as "fellow soldier" (Philippians 2:25)
 - Epaphroditus travelled from Philippi to Rome to visit Paul in prison
 - The trip took 19-37 days, depending on the type of transportation used and time of year he traveled
 - The trip would cost 1-4 years' salary
 - He traveled between 775-1774 miles, depending on the exact route
 - Something happened on the journey that almost cost him his life
- Quote: Author Gregory David Roberts – "Good soldiers are defined by what they can endure..."

Strive Like an Athlete

- 2 Timothy 2:5 - An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.
 - "athlete" = specifically refers to someone competing in the Greek athletic games, like the Olympics... lit. "one who contends, struggles, wrestles"
 - "according to the rules" = nomimos = lawfully, properly... conforming to the normal rules, laws, or customs... customary
- Training an Olympic Athlete (in Greece)
 - Athletes trained in a specific gymnasium for their sport, called a xystos in Greek
 - Training Program
 - Each coach developed their own ideas of training
 - Common training program was 10 months
 - Specific Training – particular to your sport
 - Coached by former champions
 - Wrestling, boxing, javelin-throwing, running, chariot racing...
 - Hoplitodromos – a foot race wearing full Hoplite armor
 - Pankration – a fighting contest in which only biting and eye gouging were prohibited
 - General Physical Training
 - Weight-lifting
 - Acrobatics
 - Rope-climbing
 - Various types of jumping
 - Using punching bags and shadow-boxing
 - Swimming
 - Horseback riding
 - Running – lots of running
 - Beyond Physical Training

- Training was all-encompassing
- Mental: Athletes were expected to take classes, study, and train their minds in addition to their bodies
- Diet: Athletes were given strict rules about what they could and could not eat while in training
- Daily Training Routine
 - Coaches designed personalized training regimens for the athlete
 - Athletes trained pretty much every day
 - They arrived at the gymnasium in the morning
 - They stripped down naked
 - An assistant rubbed their body w/oil
 - The athletes performed warm-up exercises, accompanied by flutes
 - Then your coach would take over, training you individually in your particular sport
 - Training would go on until you couldn't take anymore and collapsed on the ground
 - At the end of the day, enter a cool-down phase:
 - Breathing exercises to calm the heart
 - Scrape oils and sweat off the skin
 - A massage
 - A bath in hot or cold water
- Used Every Opportunity for Training
 - Outside of the 10-month training periods, athletes used every opportunity to train
 - The wealthy could train whenever they wanted to
 - Athletes trained in their spare time at home
 - Athletes trained at work – some purposely got work that demanded physical exertion (soldiers, stonecutters, messengers)
 - Many trained for years before officially entering the Olympics
- A Few More Interesting Training Methods
 - Running in deep sand
 - Running around the track, putting on successively heavier pieces of armor
 - Jumping over ditches and walls carrying heavy lead weights
 - Athletes raced against horses and rabbits, bent and straightened metal bars, pulled ploughs and carts, lifted bulls, wrestled lions (according to Philostratus)
 - Galen (Roman physician) recommended digging holes
 - One coach stabbed his boxer who gave up during a training match.
 - Milo of Croton (famous wrestler): legends say he lifted his calf and carried it on his shoulders every day for 4 years until it became a full-grown bull
- Quote: Greek Poet Pindar - “Not to be prepared beforehand is stupidity, for the minds of the unpracticed are insubstantial things.”
- 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - 24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.
- Quote: At Beginning of Olympic Games – “If you have worked in a manner worthy of coming to Olympia, and have done nothing in an offhand or base way, proceed with good courage. But as for those who have not so exercised... go away wherever you like.”
- 1 Timothy 6:12 - Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
 - “fight” = n. agon / v. agonizomai
 - We get our words “agony” and “agonize” from this Greek word.
 - This word was used to mean to compete in the Olympic games

- Competing in the games was such a serious endeavor that only those who agonized could hope to win.
- Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Work Hard Like a Farmer

- 2 Timothy 2:6 - It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.
 - “hard-working” = *kopiaó* = to grow weary with toil... to work until you’re worn-out, depleted, exhausted
 - When Jesus called Simon and Andrew, Simon told him they had “toiled all night” to catch fish but had caught nothing
 - Paul repeatedly wrote about how hard he “labored” for the churches of Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Galatia, Corinth... (Acts 20:35, Phil 2:16, Col 1:29, Gal 4:11)
 - When Jesus arrived in Samaria, it says he was “weary” from the long journey, so he sat down at the well
- Farmers Work Hard
 - 2016 Survey
 - Showed most American farmers worked over 60 hours a week
 - 26% worked over 80 hours / week
 - Farmers worked more hours per week than any other sector
 - And that’s with modern equipment and methods!
- What Does a Farmer Do?
 - You clear the ground of rocks and trees
 - You plough the dirt
 - You put down fertilizer
 - You sow seeds
 - You pull weeds
 - You water or irrigate the fields
 - You chase off birds, rabbits, and deer
 - And finally, after all this work, you reap the harvest
 - You eat some of it
 - You dry and preserve some of it
 - You bring some of it to the market to sell
 - You put some of it back into the ground and repeat

Do Hard Things

- *Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations* by twin brothers Alex and Brett Harris
- 1. Do things outside your comfort zone
- 2. Do more than what’s expected
- 3. Do small stuff (ie. be faithful in the little things)
- 4. Do stuff that goes against the crowd
- 5. Be a learner
- 6. Get going (just get started)