

August 7

If a man contend in the games, he is not crowned unless he strive lawfully. 2 Timothy 2:5(Diaglott)

JESUS observed God's times and seasons and methods. He never recklessly exposed His life until from the prophets He recognized that His hour had come to be

delivered into the hands of His enemies. He did not make long prayers on the street corners to be heard of men, nor exhort the multitude with noisy harangue; as the prophet indicated, He did not lift up His voice nor cry aloud in the streets. (Isaiah 42:2) He chose God's methods, which are rational and wise, and which are effective in select-

ing from among men the class which He desires to be heirs of the promised Kingdom. Let those who would so run as to obtain the prize, mark these footprints of the Master, and be filled more and more with His Spirit. Z.02-265 R3070:5

R481 "It seems hardly necessary for us to add that no *faint* and *feeble* efforts in the study of the Word will be sufficient to "thoroughly furnish" us, for *many* will and do seek it in that way, and no man who shall "strive to enter in at the straight gate," who does not take pains to *understand* his "Master's will" so as to "strive *lawfully*," can expect to be crowned (2 Tim. 2:5). -- J.C. Sunderlin."

(2 Tim 2:15 KJV) "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

R4838 "THIS TEXT does not say, "Study the Scriptures," but "Study to *show thyself approved*" -- study to know what God would approve. And yet it means, first of all, to study *the Revelation He has made*. Then, after having come to some knowledge of the Scriptures, we must *meditate* upon them and consider how the Word is applicable to all of life's affairs. Thus we would study the nature of everything that we come in contact with, as to whether it is good or evil... The Apostle's thought here is that it should be our chief aim to please God.

"*Rightly dividing the Word of Truth*" would signify the *proper application* of the Word of Truth; the understanding of how and when and where it should be applied and what was the purpose and thought and Plan of the Divine Mind..."

R1530 "To know the Lord's will means to at once strive to do what is seen, and not merely to see the duty or privilege..."

(John 14:21 KJV) "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that

loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

(Psa 119:10-12 KJV) "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. {11} Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. {12} Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes."

SM639-640 "In order to grow in the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary that we study the Word of God. Furthermore, since we have the treasure of the new mind in earthen vessels that are leaky by nature, it is necessary that we study continually. No true Christian, therefore, would think for a moment of ceasing to study the Word... In some way the Lord's people should keep in touch with His Word continually; otherwise the New Creature life will wither.

There is also another kind of study which seems to be overlooked, even by those who study His Word faithfully. The study to which we now refer should be in progress from the moment when we awaken in the morning until we fall asleep at night. We should continually study to *apply* what we already know respecting God, respecting the Bible, respecting His will, respecting our duty toward others and toward ourselves, respecting the Golden Rule, etc. In other words, every Christian should daily, hourly, continually, be studying more and more how to *put off* anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, evil-speaking, and all other works of the fallen flesh and of the Adversary; and with equal perseverance he should be studying diligently how to *put on* the graces of the Holy Spirit -- meekness, gen-

leness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love.

All of the Bible, all that we learn respecting it, all the lessons taught us by Divine providences, and all the advantages we receive from fellowship with the brethren -- all these are merely preparations for the great study of life--how best to perform the will of God in thought, word and deed. We emphasize this kind of study for the reason that we perceive that many of the Lord's people do not understand the matter. They seem to think that their spirituality depends upon the number of hours which they spend in Bible study. Thus they are grasping only a fraction of the Truth. The great blessings come from our efforts to *apply* the principles which we have already learned from the Bible. This study requires, not that we should have our Bibles ever in hand, but that we should continually bear in mind the things which we have already studied from God's Word, in order to make practical application of them in the affairs of life, in our thoughts, words and doings toward God, toward our fellowmen, toward ourselves.

If to the right or left I stray,
That moment, Lord, reprove;
And let Thy goodness chase away
All hindrance to Thy love.
Oh, may the least omission pain
My well-instructed soul,
And send me to the blood again,
Which makes and keeps me whole"

(Eph 6:13 KJV) "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

R5785 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008)

STRIVING LAWFULLY

"No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier. And also if a man contend in the games, he is not crowned except he have contended lawfully." "Know ye not that they who run in a race all run, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.

Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible crown. I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly;

so fight I, not as one beateth the air: but I keep my body under and bring it into subjection,

lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

2 Tim. 2:4,5; 1 Cor. 9:24-27.

THESE EARNEST EXHORTATIONS of the faithful Apostle to the Gentiles were most clearly illustrated in his noble course of life. He shunned no danger, shrank from no labor or reproach or privation, and bravely and cheerfully endured hardness and suffered the loss of all things temporal that he might win Christ and be approved of him. As we look upon such a course and consider the fortitude and the strength of character necessary so to run, we may well conclude, that, except we be similarly supplied with the help of divine grace, we shall not be able to persevere to the end.

Paul sped along in that race, not in his own strength, but in the strength which God supplied. And the promise of such aid is none the less ours than it was his. The divine grace is imparted to us through the exceeding great and precious promises of God inspiring

us with new and glorious hopes beyond the wreck and ruin of the present order of things. Permitting our minds to dwell upon these we see in the now rapidly approaching dawn of the day of Christ a new heavens and a new earth; and by faith we sit together with Christ in the heavenly places of glory and honor, and together with him are crowned with immortality. By faith we see also the blessed privileges of such an exalted station, and the divinely appointed work in which we will be engaged together with Christ.

A weary, groaning creation awaits our ministry of power; and in the proportion that we partake of the loving, pitiful spirit of our Master will we be able to appreciate such a privilege. If we are cold and selfish and untouched with the feeling of earth's infirmities; if the woes of our fellow-men awaken in us no feelings of sympathy

and of desire to help, we can have no appreciation of the prize of our high calling. But if, on the contrary, we love our fellow-men as God and Christ loved them; if we pity their weakness and remember the hereditary cause, we will lay not all their sins and short-comings to their personal charge. We will be anxious to clear their minds from the mists of ignorance and superstition and the bias of prejudices; and to help them to more rational modes of thought and action, and to better ideas of life and its relationships and responsibilities. We will seek to gather out of their pathway all the stumbling stones whereby so many are now precipitated into a course of vice; and to cast up a highway of holiness upon which no lion of intemperance or other evil thing may be found. We will be ready to declare to them all the everlasting gospel of salvation, and to open their deaf ears to hear and their blind eyes to see the salvation of God. If such are our sympathies toward the world of sinners which God so loved, then we are able to appreciate to some extent the privileges of our high calling, when, as joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom and power, we shall be able to put into actual execution all our benevolent desires for the uplifting and healing of our sin-sick world.

Any who have ever experienced the joy of converting even one sinner from the error of his ways, or of establishing the feet of one of Christ's little ones, may have some idea of the joy that will attend the ministry of the saints when they are fully endued with divine power for the great work of their Millennial reign; for they will not be hampered as now, but every effort put forth will be a success.

The privilege of such a blessed work, even aside from the precious thought of association with Christ and of our blessed relationship to the Father, is a wonderful inspiration to every benevolent heart which, even now, would fain take upon itself the burdens which it sees oppressing others whom they love and pity.

But though inspired with such a hope of benevolent service for the whole world in God's appointed time, and of blessed association with Christ in it, we must remember that we have yet to "strive" for the prize of our high calling; and not only so, but we must strive "lawfully." We must run our race, not only with diligence, energy, patience and perseverance, but we must run according to the prescribed rules, as otherwise our labor will be in vain. First of all we must enter into this course by the "strait gate"--by a full consecration of our all to the Lord, after exercising faith in the precious blood of Christ as our ransom price. If we do not enter by this door, we are not counted in the race for the prize, no matter how zealously we run. This is the first rule for those who would so run as to obtain. "Enter ye at the strait gate;...because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Having so entered, the Apostle now urges that we be filled with the Spirit of Christ, that we may not be led by the desires of the flesh away from God and from the course which he has marked out. Then the body, the human nature, must be kept under the control of the new mind, the spirit of Christ in us. Its ambitions and hopes and desires must be kept down; and the only way to do this is to keep filled with the spirit. "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh."--Gal. 5:16.

If we are *filled* with the spirit--with the same mind that was in Jesus Christ--we will act from the same motives: it will be our meat and drink to do the Father's will. We will engage in his work because we love to do it, even aside from the inspiring prize at the end of our course. Christ was so full of sympathy with humanity, and so thoroughly of one mind with the Father, that he could not do otherwise than to devote his life to the good of others. Yet in all his labors he strictly observed the divine plan. Though, like the Father, he loved the whole world, he did not go beyond Israel to bless the Gentiles with his ministry, because the appointed time for that work had not yet come.

^[1]He observed God's times and seasons and methods. He never recklessly exposed his life until from the prophets he recognized that his hour had come to be delivered into the hands of his enemies. He taught his disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles until the due time; and then he sent them forth. He did not make long prayers on the street corners to be heard of men, nor exhort the multitude with noisy harangue; as the prophet indicated, he did not lift up his voice nor cry aloud in the streets. (Isa. 42:2.) He chose God's methods which are rational and wise, and which are effective in selecting out from among men the class which he desires to be heirs of the promised Kingdom. Let those who would so run as to obtain the prize, mark these footprints of the Master, and be filled more and more with his spirit.

If so filled with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, we, like him, will desire to be as free as possible from entangling earthly affairs, and to have our time as free as possible for the Lord's service, and then to devote all energy, ability and effort to that service.

To have the mind of Christ is indeed the one requirement of lawful striving--a mind which humbly and faithfully submits itself to the will of God as expressed in his great plan of the ages, and which devotes all energy to the accomplishment of his will, because of an intelligent appreciation of the ends he has in view.

^[1] Aug. 7 Manna, 2 Tim. 2:5

(1 Cor 9:26-27 KJV) "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: {27} But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

R5777 Titled "OVERCOMING DESIRES FOR EARTHLY THINGS" "THE Apostle Paul is here using the illustration of a race-course... "I therefore so run, not as *uncertainly*," said St. Paul. He was *fully determined*. He had a *definite goal* in view, and meant to *win*. This is the only attitude, if we would gain the prize that God has offered us; and the whole matter is dependent upon our zeal, our faithfulness and our earnestness.

The Greek games had other exhibitions of strength and agility besides racing. There were contests with wild animals, in which a man would attempt to slay an animal. Then there were others between men, in which a man would attempt to deal his antagonist a vital blow, if possible, with his brass knuckles. In preparation for this contest, the con-

testants had a wind bag to practice on. But this was not the real battle, it was merely the preparation.

So the Apostle says that he was not using his strength merely in *practice*... He was fighting a real battle... The New Creature is in mortal combat with entrenched sin, and the cravings of the human nature...

VICTORY OR DEATH!...

It will be the death either of the New Creature or of the old creature. So far as our earthly interests are concerned, we sacrifice them fully--we exchange them for the opportunity of gaining glory, honor, immortality, joint-heirship with the Lord, participation in the Divine nature. So, as the Apostle suggests, we are not to be expending our strength merely on a bag of wind, but we are to fight to some purpose...

The Apostle Peter writes, "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness;...that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless!" (2 Peter 3:11,14.) With this anticipation, how serious life

should be!

The Christian who knows about these things of the future, and who lives in anticipation of them, has a joy and a peace of which the world knows nothing. One week of such living is worth more than an entire lifetime with only such things as the world has to offer...

We cannot afford one moment of carelessness. The man engaged in combat with the animal knows that the bruised and wounded animal seeks to kill him. So the Apostle tells us, the *old nature* strives to kill the *New Nature*. Therefore the New Nature must see to it that it uses all its strength to gain the victory. The Lord has promised us grace sufficient for every time of need. If we are overcome by the old nature, it will not be because we have not strength sufficient for the victory; for if we call upon the Lord, He will sustain us. But the Lord will test our loyalty, our faith, our strength of character, our alertness of mind. And the victory is sure, so long as our trust is in Him!"