

TRYING TIMES

2 Timothy 2:1-7 (NIV)

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 **servicing 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.

Introduction

No matter who might have won the presidential election, we would still be facing tough times in the world in which we will. There is the economy, unemployment, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Pres. Obama—nutjob, and the list goes on and on. No one has any quick fixes. When we add to this the war on Christianity taking place around the world and the moral decline of America, we must come to terms with the fact that these are trying times for those who follow Jesus Christ.

I. TRYING TIMES CALL FOR A SOLDIER'S COMMITMENT.

- A. A good soldier doesn't turn back because of hardship.
- B. A good soldier doesn't become entangled with those things that do not concern him.

II. TRYING TIMES CALL FOR AN ATHLETE'S INTEGRITY.

- A. An athlete runs for a prize.
- B. An athlete is careful not to be disqualified.

2 Timothy 3 (NIV)

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. **2** People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, **4** treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— **5** having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

III. TRYING TIMES CALLS FOR THE PATIENCE OF A FARMER.

- A. There is much work and waiting between planting and harvesting.
- B. The whole purpose of the farmer is to see a harvest.

CONCLUSION

In the summer of 1968, the Summer Olympics were held in Mexico City. Runners ran an event called “the Marathon”, which was a 26-mile race. The race was finished—the gold, silver, and bronze medals were given out and national anthems played.

But, the sports announcers discovered the marathon race was not over—there was still one runner on the course running for the finish line. Early in the race, this runner had been injured in a nasty fall. He was bleeding, his muscles were cramping, and he was suffering from dehydration—but he kept on running!

This runner would not stop—he would not quit until he crossed the finish line. He was from the African nation of Tanzania and hours later—after all the ceremony was over—he finished the race!

The television cameras were on him and the crowd stood and cheered him as he entered the stadium and finished that last lap of the race. Reporters asked him, “Why didn’t you just quit and seek medical care?”

The runner replied, “My country did not send me 5,000 miles just to start a marathon. They sent me here to finish the marathon!”