

Lesson 190

TEXT 2 Corinthians 4:8-18; 11:24-28; 2 Timothy 4:6-8

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to relate that a crown of life awaits those who are faithful in the service of the Lord. To be faithful means to keep the faith, be worthy of trust, be honest, loyal, and dependable.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. — 2 Timothy 4:7

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. — 2 Timothy 4:7,8

ANSWER
TITLE: **Someone Faithful**

SEARCH
TITLE: **Paul**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Paul's father was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6) and a Roman citizen, as was Paul (Acts 22:25-28). The history of Paul's mother is unknown. Paul's sister lived in Jerusalem, and her son aided Paul while he was in jail (Acts 23:16).

Paul's elementary education was probably gained in Tarsus, but his formal education was completed in Jerusalem where he studied under the famous Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

Paul also learned the trade of tent making (Acts 18:3), which he practiced throughout most of his life.

Paul was originally named Saul, and was called Saul of Tarsus. After his missionary trip to Cyprus, he was known as Paul, which is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Saul.

YOUR OPENER

Paul

TEXT: 2 Corinthians 4:8-18; 11:24-28; 2 Timothy 4:6-8

KEY VERSE: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. — 2 Timothy 4:7,8

RESPONSES

1. Your students may list various things which trouble the Christian in our day. Some possibilities might be: physical afflictions, temporal reverses, false accusations. It might be interesting to list these ideas as they are offered, and then go back through your list discussing how overcoming each of them can help in gaining the crown of righteousness. The point to make is that all afflictions and persecutions are light when compared with the eternal reward.

2. Allow time for your students to respond. They will likely bring out that afflictions may cause us to pray more and trust the Lord more fully. Victory over an affliction will bring an increase in faith and confidence in God. His comfort and Spirit will draw us closer to Him in times of distress. Because of these afflictions we can see the advantage of leaving this world to be forever with the Lord and wear the crown of righteousness.

3. Your students' answers may vary, but they likely will conclude that it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Discuss with the students how, in the natural life, trouble brings distress, how being totally perplexed brings despair, etc. However, being faithful to the Lord gives us the hope of receiving a crown of righteousness, no matter how difficult the present circumstances. Paul found that this hope of eternal life gave him strength to endure to the end.

Paul the Apostle desired to win souls for the Kingdom of Christ and to attain the crown of righteousness. He was successful in both pursuits because he closely followed the Lord's instructions. We can also be a soul winner and receive a crown of righteousness if Paul's example becomes our pattern.

1. Paul suffered many trials and troubles, yet he termed them but "light afflictions." Name some of our light afflictions and explain how, in overcoming them, they help us to gain the crown of righteousness.

2. Why do you think God allows "afflictions" to come into the life of a Christian today?

3. In 2 Corinthians 4:8,9, a number of contrasts are listed. How can the second part of these contrasts be realized in our life on earth?

4. Verse 16 of our first text refers to the outward man's perishing. What will happen to the inward

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

man? Explain.

5. Paul's sufferings, as mentioned in our text, reveal the extent of his faithfulness. What does it mean to be faithful?

6. Paul likened his Christian life to a good fight. Explain what he meant.

7. A crown of righteousness has been laid up for Paul and for everyone else who loves Christ's appearing. How do people who are looking for Christ's appearing conduct themselves?

8. James 1:12 mentions another crown which can be won—the crown of life. What does one have to do in order to gain this reward? How did Paul fulfill this requirement in the things which he faced?

4. The inner man is renewed day by day. Stress the fact that God will give us grace for every trial that may come our way. Ask your students what they think is meant by the word *renewed*. The dictionary says that to be renewed is "to be filled with a fresh supply." Certainly that is what God does for those who trust in Him.

5. Allow your students to offer their definitions. With your help, they should determine that *faithfulness* means "to keep the faith, to be worthy of trust, to be honest, loyal, and dependable." Discuss why faithfulness is a necessity if we are to attain the crown of righteousness.

6. After listening to your students' explanations, bring out that in a fight, there must be opposing contestants. Paul's adversary was the devil, but through Christ he had won the victory in every trial. By following his example we, too, can have an assurance of victory.

7. Your students will, no doubt, offer a variety of answers concerning the conduct that is expected of Christians. In order to receive a crown of righteousness, the students should conclude that we must walk in the light, be unspotted from the world, faithful, loyal, and trustworthy, as well as obedient to the Word of God.

8. To gain this reward, one has to endure (withstand) temptation. Paul suffered many trials and tests during his Christian race. There may have been times he was tempted to give up, but he endured. Ask your class to define the word *endure*. Discussion should bring out that there are two meanings for this word: "to stand fast, bear or undergo," and "to put up with or tolerate." Help your students conclude that their attitude must be more than just to tolerate—they must have a determination to stand fast until the end.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What were some of the persecutions Paul had to endure and dangers he had to face for preaching about Jesus?

What was Paul's reaction or attitude toward the trials of his faith? Use a verse to support your answer.

Name some things that might discourage a Christian from keeping the faith.

How can we overcome discouragement?

From what source do you think Paul got his encouragement when he was undergoing severe persecution?

Paul said that he had "kept the faith." What do you think he meant by that?

Why do you think Paul remained faithful to his Christian faith even while being persecuted?

Can you remember a time when your parents rewarded you for good deeds? What did they do? How does God reward His children for their service to Him?

Have you ever been disappointed by a broken promise from your friends or parents? How are God's promises different?

In our ANSWER story, what was the challenge the Sunday school teacher gave to his class?

THINGS TO DO

Help your class make a list of things that might discourage the Christian from serving God. Next to these, write down some solutions and answers that Paul gave.

Bring a watch (or some other appropriate object) to class. Explain to your students that a watch such as this might be given to someone as a retirement gift for "years of faithful service" given to the company. Ask someone in your class to read the Scripture text in 2 Timothy 4:8 to see what Paul the Apostle expected to receive for his faithful service.

Answers for ANSWER

I Want To Be Faithful!

There is a crown of life for everyone who is faithful in the service of the Lord. Paul knew this was true even when he had many troubles. The words on the list below are from this week's Bible text. Find them in the wordfind and circle each of them.

	GOOD
<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT
<input type="checkbox"/>	LIFE
<input type="checkbox"/>	LORD
<input type="checkbox"/>	LOVE
<input type="checkbox"/>	PAUL
<input type="checkbox"/>	CROWN
<input type="checkbox"/>	FAITH
<input type="checkbox"/>	GLORY
<input type="checkbox"/>	GRACE
<input type="checkbox"/>	JESUS
<input type="checkbox"/>	RAISE
<input type="checkbox"/>	READY
<input type="checkbox"/>	BELIEVE
<input type="checkbox"/>	ETERNAL
<input type="checkbox"/>	RENEWED
<input type="checkbox"/>	FINISHED
<input type="checkbox"/>	RIGHTEOUS
<input type="checkbox"/>	THANKSGIVING



