Overcoming Hardness

2Ti 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

1. The ministry of the Word is a spiritual warfare
   1. for his continual conflicts with the world, the devil, and the flesh,
   2. hardships and difficulties

1Ti 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

Taken from home and friends; exposed to cold, heat, storms, fatiguing marches; sustained on coarse fare, almost destitute of food, they are often compelled to endure as much as the human frame can bear, and often, indeed, sink under their burdens and die. If, for reward or their country's sake, they are willing to do this, the soldier of the cross should be willing to do it for his Saviour's sake, and for the good of the human race. Hence, let no man seek the office of the ministry as a place of ease. Let no one' come into it merely to enjoy himself. Let no one enter it who is not prepared to lead a soldier's life, and to welcome hard, ship and trial as his portion. He would make a bad soldier, who, at his enlistment, should make it a condition that he should be permitted to sleep on a bed of down, and always be well clothed and fed, and never exposed to peril, or compelled to pursue a wearisome march. Yet do not some men enter the ministry, making these the conditions? And would they enter the ministry on any other terms?

Ro 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; {to retain: or, to acknowledge} {a reprobate...: or, a mind void of judgment or, an unapproving mind}

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

2Ti 2:4 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.

2Ti 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

1. The ministry of the word is a spiritual race
   1. Run lawfully

1Co 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2Ti 2:6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

1. The ministry of the word is a spiritual harvest
   1. labouring first - No man may look for the harvest, unless he first take pains to plow and sow his ground.

The husbandman must first till his ground before he can expect a crop; and he must till it according to the proper rules of agriculture, else he cannot have a crop.

Lu 14:15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

2Ti 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

Job 38:38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together? 38:25-41 God questioned Job to show him his ignorance; now God shows his weakness. He ought not to arraign the Divine counsels; it is but little he knows and little he can do, therefore he ought not to oppose the ways of Providence. See the all-sufficiency of the Divine Providence; it has wherewithal to satisfy the desire of every living thing. And he that takes care of the young ravens, certainly will not be wanting to his people. This being but one instance of the Divine compassion out of many, gives us occasion to think how much good our God does, every day, beyond what we are aware of. Every view we take of his infinite perfections, should remind us of his right to our love, the evil of sinning against him, and our need of his mercy and salvation. Ro 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

oriental **ruby** - 90 parts of alumine, 7 of silex, and 1.2 of oxide of iron

precious opal - 90 parts of silex and 19 of water

**lapis lazuli**- semiprecious stone 46 parts of silex, 14 of alumine, 28 of carbonate of lime, 6.5 of sulphate of lime, 3 of oxide of iron, and 2 of water

How do these solids and fluids of such differing natures grow into hardness, and form these curious gems? A Diamond is the hardest substance known to man, and is renowned for its beauty and strength. Though [diamonds](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/diamonds/) are expensive, this precious stone is a favorite. Diamonds are also used for industrial purposes and idolatrous practices.

Jer 17:1 ¶ The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;

God intended to be inscribed very differently, namely, with His truths

Pr 3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart

2Co 3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Ps 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Take another example from that beautiful precious stone, the emerald.

glucine 13, silex 64.5, alumine 16, lime 1.6, and oxide of chrome 3.25. Now how can these dusts, utterly worthless in themselves, grow into hardness, combine, and form one of the most beautiful, and, next to the diamond, the most precious, of all the gems?

The almighty and infinitely wise God has done this in a way only known to and comprehensible by himself.

Mt 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. Mr 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Ro 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. {blindness: or, hardness } Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Ps 81:12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. {unto...: or, to the hardness of their hearts, or, imagination}

Mr 3:5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

Ro 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

2Ti 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Ro 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Eph 6:13 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. {having overcome all}

2Pe 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 1John 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. Re 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

2Ti 2:3 Thou therefore **endure hardness**, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 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.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

2Ti 2:3 Thou therefore **endure hardness**, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

to undergo hardship:--be afflicted, endure afflictions (hardness), suffer trouble.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

James 5:10 **Take**, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for **an example of suffering affliction, and of patience**.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. 12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

* The best remedy against all hardness, sufferings and afflictions is prayer
  + Christ endured Heb. 12:3; John 15:20; Gal. 6:9
  + Christ conquered Rom.8:37
  + Christ overcame Jn. 16:33

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Ro 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Re 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.