

A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft

10376 – “How Hard You Try”

2 Timothy 4:5

October 19, 2026

Gym class can be a pretty unfair place in school. You've got your natural athletes, your average athletes, and your basic klutzes, like me, who are all lumped together in the same class. It's tough to get a decent grade if the teacher compares your performances. The natural athletes, of course, are going to play better, score higher, run farther than many others who are trying just as hard. And many a good student has had his grade point dragged down. Not because of a C effort in gym, but because of a C result.

I guess we could debate about what's fair, but I for one appreciate the breed of physical education teacher that my son had, and he said this about him, “Dad, you know, he grades you not on how well you finish, but on how hard you try.” Well, you know, I know someone else who grades that way.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **“How Hard You Try.”**

The Apostle Paul is, as we get to the end of 2 Timothy, a man about to receive his report card, and he's about to graduate. This is the last letter he will write in his many letters of the New Testament, writing to his dear son in the faith, Timothy. Looking at his present situation, he doesn't look very successful. He's a prisoner in Caesar's prison, he's facing execution, there are no awards being given, there's no applause, he's very alone and he really has nothing on earth to look forward to. He is apparently a victim, not a victor. Maybe you know someone like that right now. Maybe it's someone like you. He is looking forward, though, to God's grades and God's rewards.

Listen to what he says in 2 Timothy chapter 4, beginning at verse 5, “Discharge all the duties of your ministry, for I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith, and now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that day.” I love this! He's looking for the Lord's awards.

We know Paul's result. We look back on the tremendous results of his life. But where he was in that prison, he didn't have much to show for his efforts there. It could be you right now. This word, “having fought a good fight” is the word for wrestling in the Olympics, and from that word we get our word agonize. He has agonized; he has agonizingly fought a good fight. It means he's fought with good technique. He doesn't say, “I won!” He says, “I have fought well.” Winning wasn't the issue. Paul knew the issue was what kind of a fight he gave. Paul knows that his Lord rewards the effort, not the

result, and so does your Lord. That's why His welcoming words are, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Not successful, faithful servant.

Maybe you've have been in a dark, discouraging time. You've worked hard, you've served faithfully, you've witnessed sincerely, you've lived Christ in front of the people you love, and there just seems to be very little to show for it. The results aren't there. And maybe you feel like you've failed. Maybe others even think you've failed.

But the question is, "Did you fight the good fight? Did you discharge your duties?" Maybe not perfectly, but faithfully, wholeheartedly. Well, then, I think you can expect A's from the only person who really matters; the One who made you; the One who paid for you with His life.

You see, the awards of God are based on how hard you try.

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