Nov 8, 2026

Grace Group Discussion Guide

“An Athlete’s Discipline and the Farmer’s Dedication”
2 Timothy 2:5-7
Scott Ardavanis

Big Idea: Gospel suffering, like the discipline of an athlete and the dedication of a farmer, requires perseverance and a willingness to live with a view of the reward to come.

Questions

An Athlete’s Discipline (5)

1. Do you view your Christian life as an athlete competing for a prize? What does it look like to pursue Christ with that kind of commitment? What practical step biblically can you take this week to run intentionally the race you have been called to compete in?

2. What areas of your Christian life require greater discipline (prayer, Bible study, holiness, service, evangelism, or perseverance)? What specific changes can you take this week to be more disciplined and grow in these areas?

3. How can we avoid the legalistic trap of just “trying harder” or “mustering more strength”? How does dependence on God's grace motivate rather than discourage our efforts?

4. Athletes benefit from coaches and training partners. Who is helping train you to strengthen your walk with Christ? What can you do this week to be more purposeful in your training? Is there someone you could seek out and meet with for encouragement and accountability?

A Farmer’s Dedication (6, 7)

5. Read Proverbs 20:4.
   The farmer must work diligently in the proper season if he expects a harvest. Where are you tempted toward spiritual laziness or procrastination? What does faithful, consistent labor look like in your current season of life?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 15:10.
   Paul worked harder than the other apostles, yet recognized that it was God's grace working through him. How can we avoid the temptation to “sit in God’s grace” and not be diligent to work hard for Christ?

7. Read Revelation 22:10.
   How should the certainty of Christ's soon return and his promised reward influence the way you spend your time, use your gifts, and serve others? What are you “doing” today for the “soon returning” King?

8. Farming requires long seasons of labor before the harvest becomes visible which can lead to discouragement. Do you ever feel like your gospel labor is in vain? What biblical truths help us remain faithful when results are slow or unseen and what can we do to fight against discouragement?

9. Read 2 Timothy 2:7 and Proverbs 2:6.
   How can we grow in thinking with understanding? What role should prayer, meditation, and obedience play in gaining a clearer biblical understanding?

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 4:7, 8

Outreach Prayer Requests – Prison Ministry

Our church sends men into Pleasant Valley State Prison three times a week to lead Bible studies. There are also men and women who go into the Tulare County Jail to do ministry one-on-one which may include evangelism, prayer, or sharing scripture with inmates at their cell doors. Here are some ways you can be praying for these ministries:

1. Pray for the clearance process for new GCV volunteers in the Tulare County system. The process has become longer and more intensive. Pray that our volunteers would complete security screenings as quickly as possible.

2. Pray for the effectiveness of the volunteers, that the Lord would give them the exact words and scripture as needed to evangelize and disciple the incarcerated men and women.

3. On October 18 the GCV team held worship service at Pleasant Valley yards 4 and 5. There were many new faces at those services. Praise the Lord for the teaching of his word. Pray for eyes to be opened, conviction of sin, and hearts softened to the gospel.

4. Praise the Lord that each Tuesday night for the last several months we've held Bible studies in both the men's and women's jails. We are currently studying through Romans. Pray for the Word of God to convict, strengthen, or encourage where needed. Pray for these men and women to grow in their faith and/or hearts to be softened to the gospel.

5. Praise the Lord that Jacob Stanziole, member of GCV, was hired as the chaplain in the Tulare County Jails. Pray for him to have fruitful conversations and for the men and women he talks with to have hearts softened to the good news.

6. Pray for the mid-week services on Wednesday evenings led by Scott Bucher and Jeremy Thomas. Pray for the seminary students who have the opportunity to join them and preach in the coming month.