2 Timothy - Commentaries by James M. Freeman

Manners and Customs of the Bible, 877. Roman Military Discipline

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

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

The discipline of the Roman army was very severe. Every soldier was compelled to “endure hardness.” The weapons were heavy, and in addition to them the ordinary foot soldier was compelled to carry a saw, a basket, a pick-ax, an ax, a thong of leather, and a hook, together with three days’ rations. He was treated more like a beast of burden than a man. See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, book 3, chap. 5.

Manners and Customs of the Bible, 878. Singleness of Aim

2 Timothy 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.

The Roman soldier was expected to keep one thing in view, and only one the service of his commander. He was not allowed to marry, nor could he engage in agriculture, trade or manufactures. He was a soldier, and could not be anything else.

The figure is very suggestive of the singleness of aim which characterizes the true minister of Jesus Christ. He is not allowed to engage in any employment which will, by its entanglements, interfere with his usefulness. This is what Paul, in the text, designs to intimate to Timothy.