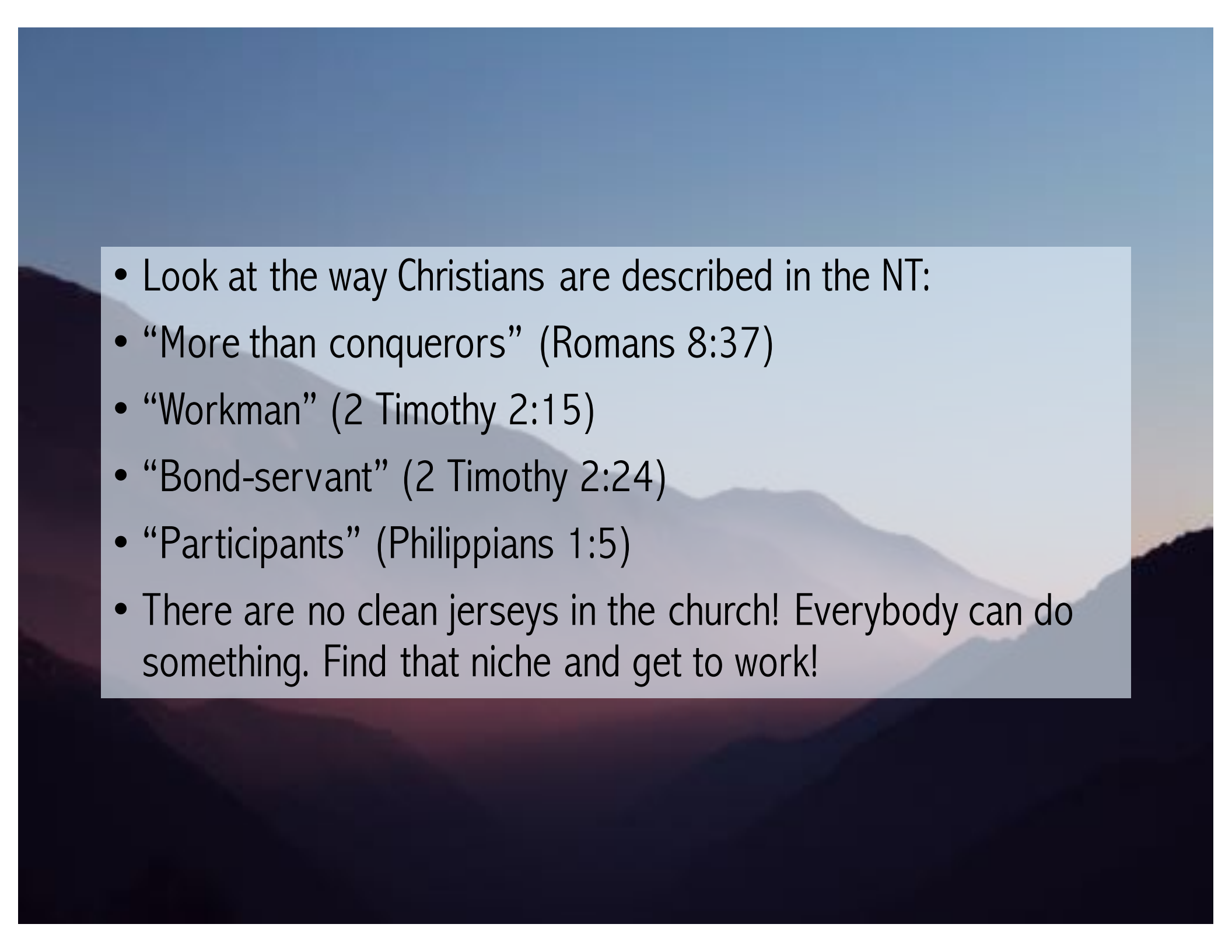


A landscape photograph of mountains at sunset or sunrise. The sky is a gradient of blue and orange. The mountains are silhouetted against the light. The word "SPENT" is overlaid in large, semi-transparent white letters.

SPENT

SPENT

- Perhaps Paul serves as an extreme example, but he frequently commented on how spent and exhausted he was. He was rugged, determined, and challenge-oriented, but his work as an apostle took a physical and emotional toll. Notice several statements made in 2 Corinthians (12:14-15, 4:7-11, 11:16-28). “Spent” is an apt term!
- There are other terms that give a sense of how Paul viewed his work. “Boxing”, “running”, “compete”, and “buffet” in 1 Cor. 9:24-27. “Work”, “soldier”, “vine-keeper”, “shepherd”, “ox threshing” in 1 Cor. 9:6-11. “Workers” in 2 Cor. 1:24. It’s the same language applied to Christians in general in 2 Timothy 2:3-6.

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- Look at the way Christians are described in the NT:
 - “More than conquerors” (Romans 8:37)
 - “Workman” (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - “Bond-servant” (2 Timothy 2:24)
 - “Participants” (Philippians 1:5)
 - There are no clean jerseys in the church! Everybody can do something. Find that niche and get to work!



2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8



WORKER MENTALITY

When Paul became a Christian, that wasn't the beginning of his drive and work ethic. Even as an enemy, he was fully committed — he had singlemindedness, intensity, and vigor (Philippians 3:5-6, Galatians 1:13-14).

TOO SPENT TO BE ANY GOOD?

- Do we become useless when it seems like the greater part of our life's energy has been spent?
- Proverbs 20:29 – Embrace your changing role (Psalm 71:17-18). Offer perspective that is inaccessible to others. You've been young and now you're old (Psalm 37:25, 23-26). Accept that your role in the Kingdom is changing, but not diminished.
- Elderly Christians are a tangible link to the past (our history and heritage). They remind us that true and honorable things have always been that way.
- Our elderly members are to be honored, but a big part of honoring them is not patronizing them. Respect them like a father or mother (1 Tim. 5:1-2). View them as teachers (Titus 2:1ff). Make it a “joy” for them to be what this stage of life calls them to be (Heb. 13:17).

FOLLOW-THROUGH

- We've already noted how Paul viewed the end of his life like a finish line. He crossed it having given everything he had. Being fully committed to the cause of Christ left him fully spent.
- The Bible is littered with tragic examples of people who started well, but were derailed because of apathy, discouragement, distraction, etc. Remember Joash, who was faithful as long as Jehoiada the priest was alive (2 Chron. 24:2, 15-22). He did not take the old priest's guidance and wisdom to heart, and stumbled before the finish line.
- A lot of it depends on *focus*. We tend to accomplish the things we actually want to do. Hobbies go by the wayside. Working for a paycheck sustains us only so long. Be heavenward-focused. Actually WANT heaven, ponder it, dwell upon it (Col. 3:1 ff).