

PAUL'S SWAN SONG

Every Pastor's Job Profile

2 Timothy 4:1–5

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

For Paul, the sun was setting on the battles of ministry: the shipwrecks, the infighting of church members, the beatings, the turncoat friends, the hours spent laboring over a sermon, the knees swollen from prayer, the sandals worn out from itinerant preaching, and the scars from shackles. But for Timothy, his ministry struggles lay just on the horizon.

Paul realized what was at stake. He knew Timothy would face temptation to “wing it” through a sermon rather than do the hard work of preparation, to tickle ears with stories rather than transform hearts with Scripture. He could foresee longtime friends abandoning Timothy. Perhaps even Timothy himself would think, “You know, it’s not worth it. I’m quitting.”

In this section of 2 Timothy, Paul pressed the sacredness and solemnity of Timothy’s calling. He delivered his message to Timothy as if it came from the throne room of the King of Kings. And, indeed, it did!



DIGGING DEEPER

Paul’s opening line reads like a preamble of a royal decree: “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 4:1 NASB). Paul could not have been more serious in delivering his charge to Timothy. What followed was the most important message Timothy would ever read.



Searching the Scriptures Study Method

Let’s study Paul’s charge to Timothy as Chuck Swindoll would study this passage during a week of sermon preparation using his *Searching the Scriptures* method. Use his weekly routine as a guide for your study today.

Sunday Evening

Sunday evening, after lunch and a long afternoon nap (often in front of a football game!), I cannot resist the urge to read the next passage [for Sunday’s sermon].¹

Quotable

*God isn’t looking
for perfect vessels;
He’s looking for
available vessels
He can fill.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Let's do just that (napping in front of a football game is optional)! Read 2 Timothy 4:1–5 slowly, taking in the message as if you were Timothy reading it for the first time.

I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching. For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths. But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you. (2 Timothy 4:1–5)

Monday

I'll devote some time during the day to reading the passage—always out loud—and to drafting a very rough outline.²

Read the passage aloud, and try dividing the verses into sections. Do you see any natural breaks? In this passage, you'll find Paul's preamble followed by a series of imperatives, a change to future tense, and then another series of imperatives. How would you outline these verses?

Tuesday

I begin with observation in the original language. . . . I pay attention to key terms and take note of the syntax.³

Modern Bible study tools make it easier to dig into the Greek. We've picked out some key terms in the chart below along with their Greek root words. You can find definitions of the words on pages 247–248 of Chuck's book, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, from the Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary series.



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An online source is <https://lumina.bible.org>. Find 2 Timothy 4 on the left panel, and select "Greek" on the right panel. Click each of the Greek words to reveal the definitions of the words in the box at the bottom of the screen. Double-click the word to select "Strong's Search," and see how the word is translated elsewhere in Scripture. Write down the most relevant definitions in the chart below.

Key Term	Definition
"Solemnly urge" (<i>diamarturomai</i>) 2 Timothy 4:1	
"Preach" (<i>kēryssō</i>) 4:2	
"Be prepared" (<i>ephistēmi</i>) 4:2	
"Patiently correct" (<i>elegchō</i>) 4:2	
"Rebuke" (<i>epitimaō</i>) 4:2	
"Encourage" (<i>parakaleō</i>) 4:2	

Tuesday (continued)

After I have observed the passage thoroughly, I begin the work of interpretation. What does the human author mean to communicate and for what purpose?⁴

Knowing the historical and biblical context of a passage helps illumine meaning. In previous studies, we examined Paul's situation on death row, Timothy's role as pastor, Nero's threats to extinguish Christianity's flame, and the false teachers' internal corruption of the church.



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2 Timothy 4:1–5

So often, we see Scripture through the lens of our own experiences, which can blur the true meaning. Instead, look at the passage from Paul's point of view. Seek to know Paul's meaning and how Timothy and other leaders would have understood his message.

Switch on your interpreter's headlamp, and explore the passage again looking for Paul's *original intent*. Whom might *Paul* have intended Timothy to “rebuke” (2 Timothy 4:2)? Why might *Paul* have been particularly concerned that people would “reject the truth and chase after myths” (4:4)? What might *Paul* have had in mind when he urged Timothy not to “be afraid of suffering for the Lord” (4:5)?

Record Paul's intended meaning of the passage. A helpful technique is to put the verses into your own words, as if you were Paul writing to Timothy.

Tuesday (continued)

I also want to do the work of correlation, which examines how the passage fits within the context of the book itself and within the Bible as a whole—especially in light of other passages that speak to the same issues.⁵

How do Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 1:3–7 add to the meaning of his commands and warnings in this passage?

Wednesday

Almost without exception, the application has solidified in my mind. . . . I will devote most of Wednesday to crafting [the introduction] very carefully. . . . I will complete the outline as it will appear in the worship folder for Sunday.⁶



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Chuck's outline of 2 Timothy 4:1–5 includes an introduction and four main points.

Introduction: The Minister's Call

I. A Passionate Charge (4:1)

II. Five Urgent Commands (4:2)

III. A Relevant Prediction (4:3–4)

IV. Some Essential Reminders (4:5)

How would you craft an outline based on your study?

Thursday through Saturday

I think of the applications in terms of how they relate to other people's lives, though sometimes my own. Illustrations often come from my own experiences, but I try to think of what individuals in the congregation need.⁷

We've followed Chuck through the process of observation, interpretation, and correlation. Let's take the final step of bringing our study home to where we live—application.

Bring It Home

Begin by writing at least three principles that emerge from your study. A principle is a universal statement of truth that applies at all times. One of Chuck's principles is this: *pastors must faithfully and consistently preach the Word of God*. What other principles can you find?



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You may not be a pastor like Timothy receiving a sacred and solemn charge from Paul, but still you can draw applications from our passage.

How has God gifted you? What ministry may God have called you to?

Think through Paul's list: be prepared, patiently correct, rebuke, encourage. Keep a clear mind, don't be afraid, work at telling others the Good News, and carry out the ministry God has given you. Which of Paul's commands and warnings apply the most to you, and how can you act on what you've learned?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for the good news You've given me to share in response to Your calling on my life. I believe in Jesus as my Savior, and I am willing to suffer for His sake if that is what You require. I stand on Your truth. I declare it to those who need to hear. May You be glorified as a result of my study and application of Your Word. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 11 (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2014), 208.
2. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 208.
3. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 208.
4. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 208.
5. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 209.
6. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 209.
7. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 210.



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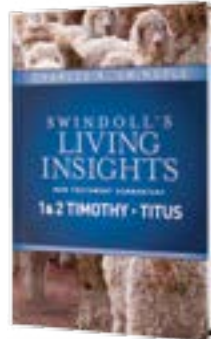
STUDY



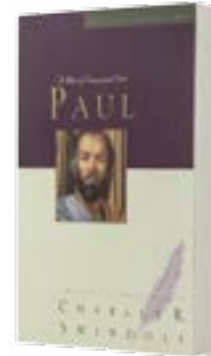
Tools for Digging Deeper



Paul's Swan Song:
A Study of 2 Timothy
by Charles R. Swindoll and
Insight for Living Ministries
CD series



Swindoll's Living Insights
New Testament Commentary
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For the 2017 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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