

# PAUL'S SWAN SONG

## Tender Words from a Mentor

2 Timothy 1:1–7



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Step back in time to AD 67 to the bustling pagan port city of Ephesus, and enter the home of Timothy, who was the pastor of a church that Paul had helped establish. At the door appears a courier who had journeyed for weeks across perilous seas to deliver a letter to Timothy from Paul—the letter preserved in the New Testament as 2 Timothy.

Imagine with Chuck Swindoll how this letter impacted Timothy:

A scroll bearing Paul's seal! Timothy surely felt a rush of excitement. He had known the apostle for nearly twenty years, traveling with him, binding his wounds after more than one stoning or beating, marveling at his miracles, memorizing the sermons he gave in each new city, and observing his leadership.

[Timothy] had no doubt heard of Paul's arrest. Certainly, the letter gave him an overwhelming sense of relief. Paul was alive and well enough to write—or at least dictate his thoughts to Luke. Timothy hastily broke the seal and stared silently at the first line.<sup>1</sup>

*Paulus*, the first line began in Greek. To the Roman elite, the name belonged to a man who was a ringleader of a dangerous sect and an enemy of the state; but to Timothy, the name belonged to his spiritual father and mentor, a man he had known and loved since his youth.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Paul's relationship with Timothy goes back to Paul's earliest days as a missionary. Paul and Barnabas visited Timothy's hometown of Lystra on Paul's first journey around AD 47. Young Timothy may have become a Christian at that time. Using our *Searching the Scriptures* tools, let's put together a timeline of Paul and Timothy's relationship over the 20 years that followed.

## Quotable

*Pressure is not necessarily an enemy; it's a tool. If used correctly, it brings to light grace, mercy, and peace as it presses us nearer the heart of God.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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### Searching the Scriptures Study Tool

One tool you can use to learn more about Paul and Timothy is a Bible dictionary, such as *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger. We also recommend Chuck Swindoll's *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, from the Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary series, as well as a set of Bible maps to follow Paul's journeys with Timothy. These and other Bible study resources can be obtained in the Insight for Living Ministries Web store.

Read the information in Chuck's commentary under the headings, "A True Child in the Faith" and "Remain on at Ephesus" on pages 8–11. For an online resource, go to <https://lumina.bible.org> and read Constable's Notes on 1 Timothy 1, the historical background section in the introduction. From what you learn in these sources, jot down some notes in the following blanks. Be certain to read the verses with each prompt and follow the exciting action on your Bible maps!

*Paul began his mentoring relationship with Timothy in Lystra (Acts 16:1–3). Describe Timothy's spiritual heritage (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15) and his reputation among the believers at Lystra.*

*Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:3; 17:14–15; 18:1–5). Locate Macedonia on your Bible map, specifically, the cities of Thessalonica, Philippi, and Troas. Describe Timothy's key role in helping Paul and the churches in Macedonia, in particular, the church at Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:1–6).*

*Timothy joined Paul on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:21–22; 20:1–5). Timothy was with Paul in Ephesus when Paul sent him back to Macedonia. Where did Paul meet up with Timothy, and who else was with them? Timothy most likely had helped train these leaders.*



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*Timothy accompanied Paul in Rome during Paul's first imprisonment (Acts 28:30–31; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1). Timothy was with Paul in Rome during his two-year house arrest, AD 60–62. At some point, Paul sent Timothy to Philippi. Read Philippians 2:19–22. Describe Paul's high regard of Timothy during these years.*

*Paul assigned Timothy to be pastor at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). Released from his first imprisonment about AD 63, Paul spent two years touring the churches in Asia and Macedonia and handing off leadership to trusted pastors. He sent Titus to pastor the church in Crete (Titus 1:5) and Timothy to pastor the church at Ephesus—the most influential church in Asia. During this time, Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, with valuable instructions on church leadership that we still follow today. What were some of the challenges Timothy faced as pastor in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3–4, 18–20; 4:1–2; 5:8; 6:3–5)?*

*Paul was arrested and imprisoned in Rome to await his execution (2 Timothy 1:11–12; 4:6). While in prison, Paul penned his second letter to Timothy, his last words to his most trusted and loyal partner in ministry.*

Reflect on what you've learned from this timeline of events; write down some of the reasons why you think Paul was so attached to Timothy and Timothy to Paul.



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### Blessings of Grace, Mercy, and Peace

Paul and Timothy had fought side-by-side in the trenches of ministry for years, suffering and rejoicing together with each setback and success. As a father nearing the end of his life, Paul blessed his spiritual son of whom he was so proud:

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about *the life he has promised* through faith in Christ Jesus. I am writing to Timothy, my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you *grace, mercy, and peace*. (2 Timothy 1:1–2, emphasis added)

*Grace. Mercy. Peace.* These three blessings of the promised “life” in Christ sustained Paul in his imprisonment, and he passed them on to Timothy and to us. Chuck Swindoll elaborates their meaning:

When you're called of God by the will of God, your message isn't about yourself. It is about grace, God's gift to the worthless. It is about mercy, God's ministry to the helpless. It is about peace, God's love to the restless.

### Application

What hardships are you experiencing? Don't view these pressures as your enemy but as means to press you close to the heart of God where you can draw upon His grace, mercy, and peace—grace to empower you, mercy to console you, and peace to give you rest. In what ways do these three blessings sustain you in your hardship today?

### The Heart of a Mentor

God's grace, mercy, and peace generated what Paul needed to survive in prison—namely, the characteristics of *gratitude, worship, and a clear conscience*.

- “Timothy, I thank God for you . . .” (2 Timothy 1:3). Instead of weighing himself down with self-pity, Paul used the counterweight of *gratitude* to tip the scales of his *perspective* away from himself toward God and Timothy.



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- “. . . the God I serve . . .” (2 Timothy 1:3). *Serve* is a word used of priests worshiping in the temple. *Worship* lifted Paul’s *focus* beyond his prison walls to God’s heavenly sanctuary.
- “. . . with a clear conscience” (1:3). His perspective shifted and his focus lifted, Paul could encourage Timothy with a conscience clear of doubt or fear.

#### **Application**

God can generate these qualities in you as well. With which of these do you need the Lord’s help: gratitude, worship, or a clear conscience?

#### **The Refreshing Power of Encouragement**

As you read 2 Timothy 1:3–7, can you pick out the encouraging statements? Use your cursor or pen to highlight the ones you find.

Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again. I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:3–7)

Let’s focus on four statements. After each, write a guideline you can follow when you encourage and mentor another person.

“I constantly remember you in my prayers” (1:3).



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“I long to see you again” (1:4).

“I remember your genuine faith” (1:5).

“I know that same faith [of Lois and Eunice] continues strong in you” (1:5).

Only after Paul encourages Timothy does he exhort him: “Fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you” (1:6). And then, he encourages him again, reminding Timothy of God’s resources available to him: “power, love, and self-discipline” (1:7).



### Bring It Home

Are you a mentor—perhaps as a parent, friend, employer, or coach? What principle from our study can you put into practice right away? If you’re a pastor who oversees associates, what things are you doing to encourage and develop your ministry team? What more could you do based on what you’ve discovered from this study?



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# PAUL'S SWAN SONG

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Are you in need of mentoring? Imagine Paul as your mentor. What encouragement or exhortation do you read most clearly in Paul's words?

Close in prayer with Paul's blessing ringing in your ear. May grace, mercy, and peace sustain you as the pressures of life press you nearer to the heart of God.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for the tenderness of this aging apostle's words to Timothy and to me. May his attitude, perspective, and focus find their way into my life. Open doors for me to share what I've received, to encourage another person with the power of Paul's refreshing words. And may he or she truly experience the "promised life" of grace, mercy, and peace through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

#### Endnote

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2014), 165.



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**Tender Words from a Mentor**  
*2 Timothy 1:1–7*

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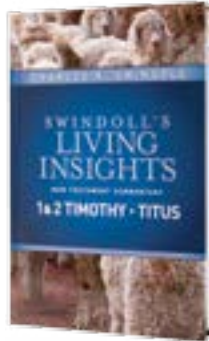
STUDY



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**  
*Insights on*  
*1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
hardcover book



**Paul: A Man of Grace  
and Grit**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
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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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