

PAUL'S SWAN SONG

Two Eternal Investments

2 Timothy 1:13–18



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Retain the standard. Guard the treasure. These two phrases—the linchpin of Chuck Swindoll's message titled “Two Eternal Investments”—distill 2 Timothy 1:13–18 and capture Paul's priorities and the mantle of faith that he wished to pass on to his protégé, Timothy. What are the two eternal investments? The Word of God and people.

“The standard” to uphold is the instruction, teaching, and mentoring standard set by the apostle Paul—wholesome, healthy, orthodox. “The treasure” that needs to be guarded is the Word of God itself. This treasure should be taught with clarity, respect, accuracy, and passion. The Word should be unadulterated and undiluted.

When Paul lived out this twofold investment strategy, it didn't lead to earthly riches. Rather, he experienced a strong emotional reaction from the people he shepherded. Some—like Phygelus and Hermogenes—abandoned Paul. Thankfully, others—like Onesiphorus—sought after and refreshed the apostle during his imprisonment.

Today, let's spend some time on two reflection exercises: first, we will strategize creative ways to invest in the eternal. Next, we will take time to honor and pray for those who have set the spiritual standard for us and have refreshed us in our time of need. This is the work of *application*, the Bible study method where we allow God's Word to speak to, develop, or change areas of our lives or call us to action.



DIGGING DEEPER

Retain the Standard of Sound Words

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, someone in your life has “retained the standard” by passing on to you the eternal inheritance bought by the blood of Jesus and sealed for you through the Holy Spirit. In a day where people spend so much time chasing treasures they can't take with them, it is an extraordinary gift to be invited into the kingdom of God.

Quotable

*God's eternal truths
are claimed by
faith and modeled
in love.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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We are God's chosen invitations, sent to a world desperate to experience the love of God and the truth of His Word. We are tasked with the hospitality that invites and encourages and instructs fellow believers. For us to retain the standard of sound words, we must *speak*. This means two things: we can't live a walled-off, individualistic life, and we need to get comfortable with encouraging and mentoring other people

Searching the Scriptures Tip

Commentaries—good ones—are like pocket professors: they offer facets of knowledge to assist readers in magnifying aspects of the biblical text, including historical context, canonical principles, language helps, and the Protestant tradition of interpreting a given passage.

A great resource to augment your study of 2 Timothy is Chuck Swindoll's *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* from Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary. This book is packed with the theological depth and practical application you've come to expect from Chuck Swindoll. Here is an excerpt that offers a practical application for 2 Timothy 1:13–18:

. . . *invest yourself in Christian relationships*. All of Paul's letters begin and end with personal greetings. Taken all together, the names he counts among his friends and fellow-servants add up to a very long list. So, when it became dangerous to remain Paul's friend and many deserted him, he still had several men he could count on. Luke, Mark, Timothy, and Onesiphorus were unafraid to risk their lives to give him aid in person. . . . The truth is, nearly everything worthwhile involves a trade-off. And so it is with friendships. Cultivating meaningful Christian relationships requires a significant investment. So, what are you willing to do in order to cultivate a meaningful friendship? Start with a phone call—you probably know who—and have your calendar handy as you dial.¹

Read Matthew 28:18–20. Paraphrase, and describe in your own words what it means to “disciple” others.

Read John 15:4–5. In your own words, explain where the power to retain the standard comes from.



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Read and paraphrase Hebrews 13:1–3.

Take time to pray and answer the question from Chuck's commentary: "what are you willing to do in order to cultivate a meaningful friendship?"

Some examples include:

- Calling to check in with a friend you have lost touch with
- Babysitting for a couple to give them a date night
- Scheduling a phone reminder to pray for individuals in your small group
- Hosting a monthly dinner party
- Mentoring a college student in your church community

List some of your ideas—make them specific and actionable.

Guard the Treasure

The Bible tells humanity the story of God's pursuing love, His awesome holiness, and His relentless faithfulness. It is an umbilical cord of sorts, a conduit of nourishment that sustains us, sourced straight from the Lord. The Word is our gateway to worship the living God, through Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit. While we sojourn in this fallen world, the Bible is our life map. And instead of X marking the spot to the treasure, the cross of Christ and the empty tomb mark the treasure of the gospel, offering eternal life. Oh, how priceless is this timeless, indestructible Spirit-guaranteed treasure! It's surely worth guarding.



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Read Isaiah 40:7–8, and paraphrase it below.

Read Matthew 6:19–21. What's your response to this passage?

Read and describe what Paul's words mean in terms of guarding treasure.

Read Matthew 7:24–27. To what did Jesus compare His teaching, which we can also call the Word?

Read Paul's farewell to the Ephesian leaders in Acts 20:28–38. Afterward, compare it with the emotions and priorities of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:13–18.



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List some ways that you can guard the treasure of the Word. Here are some examples:

- Take a week to meditate on portions of Psalm 119.
- Download a Bible verse memorization app.
- Join your church's Bible study.
- Take a free online class (Dallas Theological Seminary offers them [here](#)).

Those Who Refresh Us

When he heard that Paul was locked in the Mamertine dungeon, Onesiphorus wasn't afraid of public ridicule or of being arrested (2 Timothy 1:16). In fact, Onesiphorus traveled to Rome and, with extraordinary diligence, looked for his friend (1:17). Pastor R. Kent Hughes described the search:

There are many reasons why it was difficult for the Asian Onesiphorus to locate Paul. . . . Part of the city had been destroyed when Nero burned it. For some time the location of Paul's imprisonment had been kept from the Christians. Also, believers in Rome had been reduced in numbers due to persecution and flight, and not all were eager to reveal to a stranger that they had any doings with Paul.

But Onesiphorus "searched hard," treading the serpentine passages of Rome, knocking at doors, asking in his provincial accent about Paul. Doors slammed shut, disapproving eyes watched as he continued his search, but he refused to desist. He was asking dangerous questions. The lesser devoted would have made no search at all. Others would have cooled their consciences with minimal effort—"He simply couldn't be found!" But not this man.²

And when Onesiphorus found Paul, oh, the joy! (1:17). Returning day after day, Onesiphorus provided for Paul's needs. No wonder Paul prayed twice for his faithful friend: once for his family (1:16) and once for the man himself (1:18).

In his message, Chuck says, "Pause for a moment at this point of 'retaining the standard.' By God's grace, each one of us has known other individuals who have been our Pauls. . . . Every once in a while, it's nice just to pause from the pace of life and reflect back on that individual or those few individuals who invested the truth in you."



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Take time to remember now.

From whom did you first hear the gospel?

Who has been most instrumental in the development of your spiritual life? If you could, what would you say to that individual?

Can you think of a person who went out of his or her way to support you? Name that person, and describe that experience.

Take time to write a letter to someone in your life who acted as a Paul or an Onesiphorus to you. Encourage this person, thank him or her—and e-mail or, better yet, snail-mail your words of thanks to him or her!



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, let me be the person who brings refreshment to the vulnerable and the tired. Empower me through Your Spirit to prioritize Your Word and Your people. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, Ill: Tyndale, 2014), 187, 188.
2. R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2000), 188.



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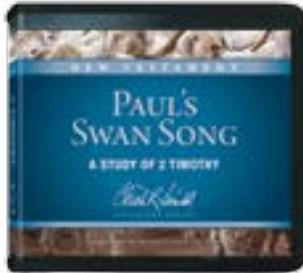
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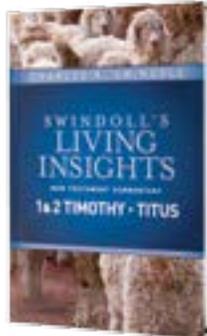
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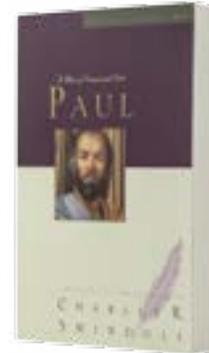
Tools for Digging Deeper



Paul's Swan Song:
A Study of 2 Timothy
by Charles R. Swindoll and
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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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