

PAUL'S SWAN SONG
Traveling a Rough and Rugged Road
2 Timothy 2:1–13



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Some things are easy to hear, bringing comfort and encouragement to smooth life's rough edges. Other things are difficult to hear, telling of pains to endure and troubles to face. We grin at the one and grimace at the other. But if we're honest, we know that growth comes through overcoming difficulties—by trudging down the rock-strewn, overgrown, untrodden path that takes us to vistas unseen. When Paul laid out a path of suffering for his protégé, Timothy, the young pastor may have grimaced. But Paul promised more than pain. The path, should Timothy choose it, would take him to heights unknown—to glory after death and to greater maturity in life. The same awaits us, if we choose the rough and rugged road of Christ.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. When Preparing for the Difficult Journey (2 Timothy 2:1–2)

God didn't promise to keep us *from* suffering (John 17:15–16); He promised to sustain us *through* suffering (Romans 8:28–39). Hardship is useful in the hands of God. "The extreme greatness of Christianity lies in the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy for suffering," Simone Weil wrote, "but a supernatural use for it."¹ One of those supernatural uses is to lead us to greater maturity.

What We Must Pack in Our Luggage (2 Timothy 2:1)

How We Can Help Others Prepare for the Trip (2:2)



Quotable

*To make the
journey of the
Christian life
easier, pack your
bags with grace
and invite others to
travel with you.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. When Traveling on the Rough and Rugged Road (2 Timothy 2:3–6, 8–10)

Being strong in grace and enlisting others makes the difficult journey easier, but we must still make the journey. To aid Timothy, Paul encouraged his young protégé to consider the suffering of others and remember the promises of God.

Stay Focused like a Soldier (2 Timothy 2:3–4)

Be Obedient like an Athlete (2:5)

Work Hard like a Farmer (2:6)

Suffer Hardship like Christ and Paul (2:8–10)



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LET'S LIVE IT

The way of faith isn't easy; it's narrow and strewn with obstacles. And though the rough and rugged road is meant to mature us, it's often tempting to take the first exit and walk a while on the well-trodden path of the world. How can we stay on the right road when it seems unbearable to take another step? Paul offered two suggestions.

First, *pause and take a moment to reflect on the truths of Scripture* (2 Timothy 2:7).

What do you normally do, or what questions do you normally ask, whenever you're suffering or it seems God has left you?

What did Paul advise in 2 Timothy 2:7? Why?

Second, *hold fast to the promises of Scripture* (2:11–13).

Read these passages and record God's promises to you.
Matthew 6:30–33

Matthew 11:28–29



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2 Timothy 2:1–13

John 10:27–29

John 14:2–3

Romans 8:11

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 1:5

1 John 1:9

ENDNOTE

1. Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), 81.



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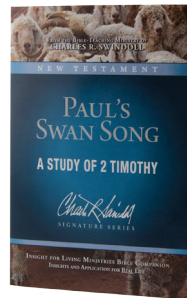
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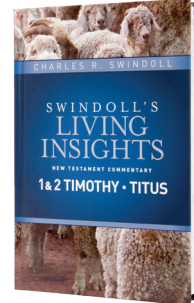
Tools for Digging Deeper



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