

# PAUL'S SWAN SONG

Christian Leadership 101

2 Timothy 2:20–26



## LET'S BEGIN HERE

The world is in crisis because leadership is in crisis. The crisis of leadership, however, is not one of competency but of character. And since people in positions of power are most often judged by their competency and not by their character, it shouldn't surprise us that scandals and legal battles often embroil our leaders. Character is no longer king; our culture champions competency. Scripture, however, champions character. So, for those of us who wish to lead in a Christian manner, character must always trump competency. That's the message of the last seven verses of 2 Timothy 2.



## LET'S DIG DEEPER

### 1. An Understanding of the Context

Paul was a master wordsmith, hammering out analogies to help Timothy understand the responsibilities of those who lead in Christ's church—not just the *what* (competency) but also the *why* (character) of leadership. Chapter 2 of 2 Timothy is filled with such analogies.



## Quotable

*Occasionally, competence is more important than character. But not when it comes to leadership.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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### *2 Timothy 2:20–26*

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#### 2. Vessels in a Large House (2 Timothy 2:20–22)

Paul's analogies of the good soldier, competitive athlete, hardworking farmer, and approved workman all related to Timothy's role as a leader. In 2 Timothy 2:19, Paul applied a different analogy to focus on what God was (and is) doing—building “the firm foundation” of His church. Paul then expanded that architectural metaphor in verses 20–22, refocusing his attention back on Timothy.

#### 3. Servants of the Lord (2 Timothy 2:23–26)

Though he remained focused on Timothy, Paul changed the metaphor in 2 Timothy 2:23–26 from an honorable vessel in God's house to a gentle servant in God's house.



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## LET'S LIVE IT

Wrestling with false teachers according to their methods is like wrestling with a hog. You both get muddy, but the hog likes it. To stay out of the mud, we need to ask and answer three hard questions about our character.

First, *Am I a vessel of honor or dishonor?*

Second, *Do I stop quarrels or start quarrels?*

Third, *Will I model gentleness or harshness when called upon to confront or correct others?*

In your life right now, would you say you're a vessel of honor or dishonor? Check the one that applies.

Honor: \_\_\_\_\_

Dishonor: \_\_\_\_\_

If you're a vessel of dishonor, what do you need to do to "cleanse" yourself? (Hint: see 1 John 1:9 for where to start.)

If you're a vessel of honor, what are you doing to keep yourself clean?

When wronged, what is your natural reaction? Does your reaction square with 2 Timothy 2:24 and 1 Peter 2:21–23? If not, what do you need to do to become more Christlike in this regard?



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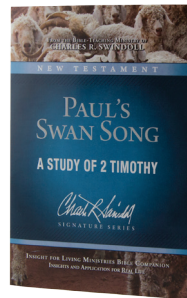
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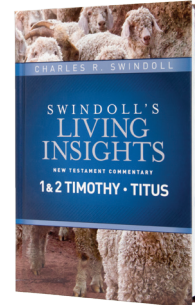
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