PAUL'S SWAN SONG
A Circle of Honor and Dishonor
2 Timothy 4:9–15

LET'S BEGIN HERE

Leadership isn't for the faint of heart—not because it's so demanding (though it is), but because it's so isolating. This was true of Paul. All his life, he had engaged in the nitty-gritty of ministry. But sitting in a dark dungeon awaiting death, loneliness crept into his lap and refused to leave. So Paul picked up his pen and wrote his friend. In his letter, he described his circle of honor and dishonor—those who had remained loyal and those who had done him harm. More painfully aware of his aloneness with each word, Paul pled for Timothy to come . . . and come quickly.

LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. An Urgent Plea (2 Timothy 4:9)

Paul faced his present circumstances with courage, his past with conviction, and his future with confidence (2 Timothy 4:6–8), but that didn't mean he was a spiritual Superman. He was a man. He needed companionship to soothe his soul, warmth to comfort his body, and Scripture to strengthen his resolve. So, in the loneliness of his dungeon cell, he begged Timothy to come . . . quickly.

2. Two Painful Memories (2 Timothy 4:10, 14–15)

Timothy had to hurry! Paul's death was imminent; winter was coming; and the memories of one who harmed him and hurt him were painful.

Demas who "deserted me" (2 Timothy 4:10)

Alexander who "did me much harm" (4:14–15)

Five Faithful Friends (2 Timothy 4:10–12)

Paul had been wounded by disloyal coworkers. But sandwiched between the description of these dishonorable men is a list of five faithful friends—four who were away and one who remained. These five made up the honorable portion of the apostle's circle.

Crescens who went to Galatia (2 Timothy 4:10)

Titus who went to Dalmatia (4:10)

Luke who remained in Rome (4:11)

Mark who was useful (2 Timothy 4:11)

Tychicus who went to Ephesus (4:12)

Three Practical Requests (2 Timothy 4:13)
Even with Luke, the Mamertine was a lonely place. Paul needed companions—especially Timothy and Mark. And the apostle needed two more things: a cloak to keep him warm and books to keep him occupied.

"Bring the cloak"

"Bring . . . the books, especially the parchments"

LET'S LIVE IT

Loneliness is a leader's constant companion. But loneliness isn't restricted to leadership—we've all known the longings of loneliness. During lonely times, keep these reminders in mind.

First, *when you're lonely, you need caring, close friends.*

At your loneliest, which friends do you want with you?

Second, *when you're hurt, you need loyal advocates.*

Who in your life is one "who sticks closer than a brother" or sister (Proverbs 18:24)?

Third, *when you're loved, you need to be grateful.*

Review the names you listed above. If you were to tell these people how much they mean to you, what would you say?

Fourth, *when you're needy, you need to admit it and ask for help.*

What needs do you have right now? Who will you ask for help, and when?
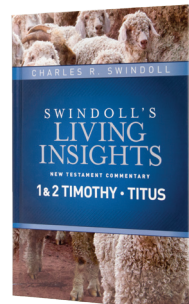
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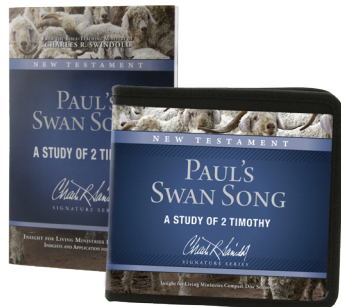
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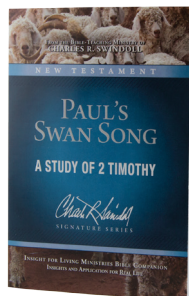
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