

EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY

Starting Strong—Doing What’s Right in the Work of Ministry

A Hope, a House, a Hymn
1 Timothy 3:14–16



LET’S BEGIN HERE

We could consider 1 Timothy *the* handbook on biblical ministry within the church. The first half focuses on the *work* of ministry—the service. The second half focuses on the *workman* who performs ministry—the servant. The interlude between these two halves (1 Timothy 3:14–16) focuses on the *why* of ministry—the soul. Without soul the service the servant performs is sterile. The ministry may be theologically and biblically correct, but it’s all head and no heart. Fortunately, as we’ll see in this message, Paul’s was anything but a heartless or soulless ministry.



LET’S DIG DEEPER

1. Instruction: A Needed Change

Paul was as imperfect as they come. He was, he said, chief among sinners (1 Timothy 1:15 KJV). And to the Roman believers, Paul said he was a “wretched man” (Romans 7:24). We don’t often get such transparency from Paul, but his imperfections give us hope that God might use us in spite our own imperfections.



Quotable

Our conduct must be based on scriptural principles, not on what we want or think is best. We can’t assume they are the same.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. Transition: A Helpful Summary (1 Timothy 3:14–16)

Paul is often seen in Scripture as an all-business-all-the-time sort of guy. And for much of his letter to Timothy, he was. But occasionally we see glimpses of the apostle’s softer side, like we do in the transition between the two halves of 1 Timothy. Still committed to the church and theology, Paul was also committed to Timothy.

Personal Desire (1 Timothy 3:14)

Ecclesiastical Behavior (3:15)

Theological Confession (3:16)



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LET’S LIVE IT

God’s people aren’t perfect, of course. But we are redeemed and called to live in light of “the mystery of godliness” that we confess. To that end, as followers of Christ, our reaction to Paul’s interlude should be a practical response.

Our conduct must be based on scriptural principles, not on what we desire.

Our churches are to confirm and model the truth, not invent our own message.

Our confession must revolve around the Lord Jesus Christ, not around ourselves or anyone else.

Evaluate your life. How much of your life—your marriage, parenting, friendships, profession, thoughts, and habits—is based on biblical principles (that is, controlled by the Bible)?



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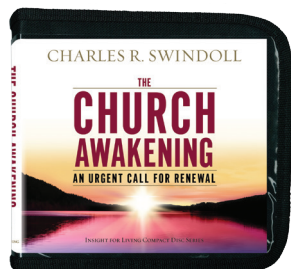
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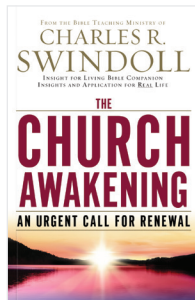
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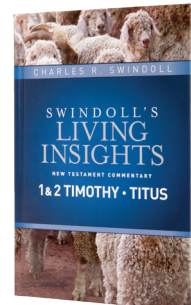
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