

# STRAIGHT TALK FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS

## STUDY ONE

### The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

*Whatever the setting of your ministry leadership, stay at it faithfully doing what you do. Through hardship. Through criticism. Through hate mail. Through boredom. Through sickness. Through ingratitude. Through sacrifice. It's all part of the role of a steward and an under-rower. It's part of being faithful. That's what's in front of us. That's our calling, so settle it in your mind. This is our future. This is what we do.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**T**HOSE who say yes to ministry find no exemption pass waiting on their desk signed by the hand of temptation. In fact, temptation makes vocational ministers its special target, hoping to bring down their lives and ministries with such subtle sins as greed and envy. For this reason, God reminds us to “guard [our] heart[s] above all else” (Proverbs 4:23)—to watch closely what is attracting and motivating us—as the fight against temptation’s schemes will continue until we draw our final breath.

The apostle Paul knew this . . . perhaps better than anyone else. Throughout his writing, he addresses the topic of faithfulness in ministry. What faithfulness looks like. Why it is important. How to maintain it.

In his message, Chuck Swindoll directs us to one of those passages in 1 Corinthians 4 where the apostle Paul mused over the nature of his ministry. From it, Chuck encourages us to embrace the godly mind-set assumed by the apostle and to focus our heart on the eternal benefits of gospel ministry—two effective shields against temptation’s arrows.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before you peruse the secret mysteries of the Most High, pray that your Father would open your eyes to see and soften your heart to receive His Word that you may have the mind of Christ who desired one thing: the Father's glory. Record your prayer below.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In his book *The Quest for Character*, Chuck describes the tenacity of our foe: greed.

*Nobody ever withstood greed without a fight that is both relentless and fierce. The god Fortune dies a slow, painful death.<sup>1</sup>*

We do not defeat greed by fighting it head-on. It will beat us. Rather, as ministers of the gospel, we fight it indirectly by turning our mind from what is tempting us and placing our thoughts upon God. Integral to this practice, then, is taking frequent swims in the bottomless pool of Scripture. In these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, we engage the Bible just like Chuck does, using four steps:

- 1) Observation: We read what the text says.
- 2) Interpretation: We seek to understand what the text means.
- 3) Correlation: We compare our biblical passage with other biblical passages.
- 4) Application: We incorporate the truths of our passage into our lives.



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

Chuck wants us to remember that we study the Bible not only to sustain ourselves but others too.

The Word of God is the only thing that will feed starving, otherwise empty souls. The nourishment that we glean as we observe, interpret, correlate, and apply is not merely for ourselves. Our calling is to serve the hungry “the bread of life”—Jesus Himself (John 6:35).<sup>2</sup>

Keep that in mind as you complete these studies because you will never know when the time will come for you to share what God has taught you from His inspired Word.



### Observation: Paul Defends His Ministry

In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul wrote about his relationship with the Corinthian church. Some had doubted his apostleship and connection to them, so Paul had to authenticate both. We learn much about ministry as the apostle described his work. Begin by reading *1 Corinthians 4* with that context in mind. Jot down a few initial observations you see concerning his ministry.

How did Paul describe his identity, and what responsibility accompanied that role (1 Corinthians 4:1–2)?



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

According to 1 Corinthians 4:3–5, did Paul believe himself to be faithful in his role? Did it matter what he believed about himself? Why or why not?

According to 4:6–8, what toxic mind-set did Paul want the Corinthian believers to drop?

*The apostle speaks against boasting. It has no place in our lives. No place whatsoever. Not even little subtle hints toward ourselves. Little self-serving remarks in the few unguarded moments where we take the credit. None of that. Inappropriate. Out of place. Not good.*  
—Chuck Swindoll

How did Paul describe his apostolic ministry in 4:9–14?



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

How did Paul connect his apostleship to the Corinthians in 4:15, and, according to 4:16, how did he want them to respond?

What did Paul do to help the Corinthians obey his command to imitate him (1 Corinthians 4:17)?

What two options did Paul give for the manner in which he could arrive and why (4:18–21)?

Paul's immense love for the Corinthians, his sharp rebukes to correct them, his sacrificial service among them—it all flowed from his apostolic identity: “servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (4:1 NASB).



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*



### Interpretation: Who We Are Fosters What We Do

During interpretation, we will focus only upon 1 Corinthians 4:1–2. The Corinthians still assumed a notion of authority not aligned with God’s kingdom values, so Paul used mundane language to convey the life of a ministry leader. Do not forget to grab your commentaries and other Bible study tools. Perhaps you will want to use the resources on [NET Bible](#) to aid your interpretation. Godly men and women over the centuries have spent countless hours studying our Divine Book to make its meaning plain for us all.

In what two ways did Paul want the Corinthians to view his and Apollos’ ministry (1 Corinthians 4:1)? What did these terms mean in Paul’s context, and how might their meaning affect the way in which ministry leaders view themselves today? Consult Barclay’s online [Study Bible](#) if your resources do not address this topic.

Paul said that he must be “faithful” (NLT) or “trustworthy” (NASB) in 1 Corinthians 4:2. Of this verse, commentator Thomas Constable wrote:

The most important quality in a steward is that he manage his master’s affairs so the desires of his lord materialize (cf. Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 16:1–13; 19:11–27; 1 Pet. 4:10). He must be faithful to his master’s trust. For Paul this meant remaining faithful to the gospel as he had received it and preached it (cf. 15:1–11).<sup>3</sup>

Why is this need for faithfulness important for us today as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God? How might greed hinder our faithfulness?



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

Paul returned to the subject of his apostleship in 1 Corinthians 9. The Corinthians owed their new lives to the gospel efforts of the apostle. Paul easily could have received their financial aid for this work, but he did not.

*If you support others who preach to you, shouldn't we have an even greater right to be supported? But we have never used this right. We would rather put up with anything than be an obstacle to the Good News about Christ. (1 Corinthians 9:12)*

No one could claim that greed compelled Paul's gospel preaching. He fought the war on greed. He kept the mind of a servant and steward.

*I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified. (9:27)*



### Correlation: The Greed of Gehazi

Some in the biblical record did not see greed's deadly consequences. We read of such a person in 2 Kings 5:20–27. Earlier in chapter five, Elisha had just healed Naaman of leprosy. When Naaman offered payment to Elisha, he refused. Then Gehazi began to speculate about all the benefits of Naaman's lucrative offer.

See for yourself how greed can sway the hearts and minds of those in the Lord's work. Read [2 Kings 5:20–27](#).

How did greed materialize in the life of Gehazi, according to this passage?



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

What other sins did greed lead Gehazi to commit?

*See, when you'll lie to yourself and when you'll lie to someone else, you'll have no problem lying to your master. —Chuck Swindoll*

What did Elisha mean with his rebuke in 2 Kings 5:26?

How might maintaining an eternal perspective help us fight the battle against greed?

*Be sure, your sins will find you out. You mess secretly with pornography, it is going to catch up with you. It isn't a secret. And if you are doing that, it is only a matter of time. So . . . deal with why you're doing it, and stop it. Don't live a lie. Don't cultivate a habit that will ruin the very ministry seminary is preparing you for. Don't go there. Tell yourself the truth. —Chuck Swindoll*



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*



### Application: Serving Faithfully Every Day

Take a moment to consider your temptations—perhaps it is greed, perhaps not. Like Chuck said, “Tell yourself the truth.” Record below those areas of weakness.

What do you do to battle this weakness? If you have not fully mastered it, is there something you need to change in your routine to achieve greater control over it?

What does it look like in your life to embrace the role of a servant of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1)? At work? At home? At school? Every person you encounter holds eternal importance in the eyes of Jesus. You never know what small act of service or small word of encouragement will be used by God to draw such a person into His adopted family.



## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*

Lastly, plan one way this week you can encourage the pastor or pastors in your church. It does not have to be complicated or extravagant. Just something small. Record your plan below.

Finding our boast in Christ diminishes the power of greed. You have been given the very secrets of God. What more do you need? All the riches of the world last but for a moment, but Christ dispenses eternal hope and peace, joy and purpose, a new family and a new name.

*God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. Therefore, as the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD." (1 Corinthians 1:30–31)*



### A FINAL PRAYER

Record a prayer below, making your boast in God for His work on your behalf through Jesus our Lord.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *The Quest for Character* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 22.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 231.
3. Thomas L. Constable, Note on 1 Corinthians 4:2, *Constable's Notes*, <https://netbible.org/bible/1+Corinthians+4>.

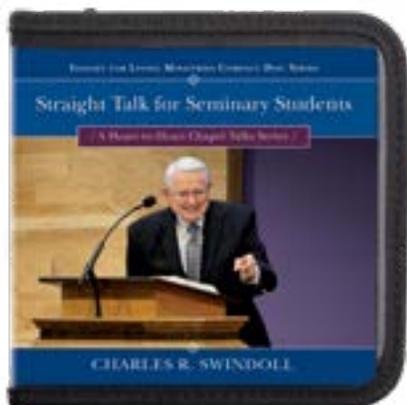


## The Subtle Temptation of Greed

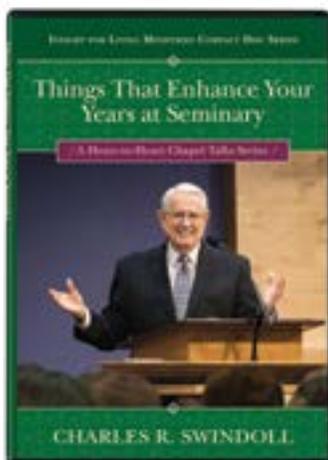
*Selections from 1 Corinthians 4*



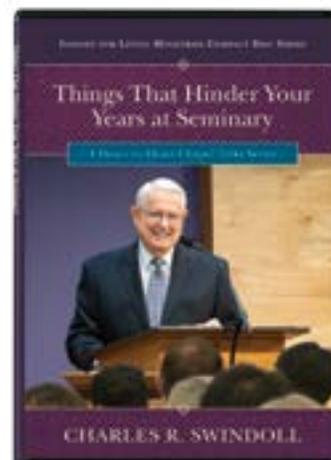
### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Straight Talk for Seminary Students**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Enhance Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Hinder Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



# STRAIGHT TALK FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS

## STUDY TWO

### Accurately Handling the Word

*2 Timothy 2:15–19*

*Be an expositor. Don't be an entertainer. They're a dime a dozen. Everybody wants to build a quick little church by being an entertainer. So, they'll out-entertain the guy down the street and use all the gimmicks to bring in the people. You faithfully deliver the Word of God.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**W**HETHER we serve as a full-time teaching pastor or part-time Sunday school teacher, whether we instruct in a seminary classroom or meet one-on-one with new believers, all Christians do well to learn the skill of exposition.

Exposition is the bridge across which we carry the gospel message to others. For this reason, the apostle Paul urged his trusted friend Timothy to “be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who *correctly explains the word of truth*” (2 Timothy 2:15, emphasis added).

Paul's admonition is not only for the preacher. It is for all who have received the gospel light of God's glory, which shines brightly the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Accurately handling God's Word allows His light, shining in us, to shine through us to those who desperately need it. Who knows how God will use you as you pass along His Word to someone today!



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you open the Scriptures, ask the Lord to open your eyes to the truths He longs to reveal to you. Also, ask Him to guard you against false teachers who twist the Scriptures to manipulate others. Take a moment to record a prayer below.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, we build the foundation necessary for exposition.

Exposition helps us serve others the spiritual meal we have prepared for ourselves. Through exposition, we can explain the meaning and purpose of any given biblical passage. Chuck wrote that exposition contains three characteristics:

- 1) The biblical passage is carefully observed, clearly understood, and interestingly explained.
- 2) The biblical passage remains the central focus of your message or point.
- 3) The biblical passage is illustrated and applied according to today's real-world needs.<sup>1</sup>

Exposition is a practice as equally important today as it was in the day of Moses, Solomon, Ezra, and the first-century apostles. Paul told us why in 2 Timothy 2:15–19.



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



### Observation: Be Diligent

Paul thought carefully about his letter to Timothy, which we call 2 Timothy. Paul, imprisoned in Rome, could sense death approaching, so he cared about how faithfully the truth would be passed from him to Timothy and from Timothy to others. That is why he wrote *2 Timothy 2:15–19*. Using two of your preferred translations, observe this passage and record your notes below.

What practices did Paul want Timothy to pursue (2 Timothy 2:15)?

*I'm not surprised that he starts out with, "Be diligent." Boy, if there's a profession in the world where you can be lazy, it's ministry. Be diligent. —Chuck Swindoll*

What practices did Paul want Timothy to avoid and why (2:16–18)?



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19

Why did Paul mention Hymenaeus and Philetus, and what error did they commit (2 Timothy 2:17–18)?

What is Paul's logical connection between verse 15 and verse 19?

What is the logical connection between verses 16–18 and verse 19?

In his commentary on 2 Timothy, Chuck urges us all to walk in the same steps of Paul and Timothy because we encounter the same assault on truth today as they did two thousand years ago:

The apostle lamented the very same challenges less than one generation after the Lord commissioned His apostles to evangelize the world. Technology has amplified the voices of religious profiteers—duplicating and disseminating their lies with greater speed and efficiency—but little else has changed. Their perversions and methods remain the same. So, as the light began to fade in Paul's dungeon, the apostle wrote his timid friend in Ephesus, encouraging him to expose and confront peddlers of apostasy. Two thousand years later, his words continue to inspire and equip all defenders of truth.<sup>2</sup>



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



### Interpretation: Present Yourself Approved to God

Now, put 2 Timothy 2:15–19 in your own words. Rewriting verses proves to be one of the most illuminating exercises of Bible study. It requires you to do background research in a Bible dictionary, commentaries, varying translations, and online tools like the NET Bible and Dr. Constable's free *notes* on each book of the Bible. After giving the passage a thorough study, you can unfold its meaning in your own way.

Do that now for each verse below. Take it one thought at a time. Answer the following questions: "What does this mean?" "What does this idea look like in real life?" and "Why does this matter?" Then write out your own interpretive translation.

2 Timothy 2:15

*So, the clear picture is: be a diligent workman, make certain that you yourself are authentic—tried and true—and as you handle the Word, handle it accurately. I love that: accurately handling the Word of truth. —Chuck Swindoll*

2 Timothy 2:16



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19

---

2 Timothy 2:17

2 Timothy 2:18

2 Timothy 2:19

*You accurately handle the Word when you cut a straight line, as best as you're able to do in the time you have, between what God has written, what it meant to the people to whom He wrote it, and now what it means to us who live today. Let me tell you something. You do that faithfully and regularly, people will love you for it. They are starving for it, and they don't get it most places. —Chuck Swindoll*



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



### Correlation: Bring Out the Book

Accurate and clear exposition of Scripture has anchored God's people to His plan for their lives since the earliest days. Nehemiah 8 records a scene in which the exiled Jews, who had returned to their homeland, gathered to worship and hear Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Levites teach them the Scriptures.

We will study this passage in correlation as it helps us know how to respond rightly to God's spoken Word.

Read *Nehemiah 8*. What did Ezra and the Levites do for the Israelites gathered about them?

How did the Israelites initially respond to Ezra and the Levites' exposition of God's Word? How did Nehemiah encourage them to respond?

What a privilege and gift to have God's Word! Do not let your copy collect dust; don't attempt to preserve its mint condition. Wear it out that you may have the mind of Christ as His Word dwells in you richly.

*So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's words and understood them. (Nehemiah 8:12)*



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



### Application: Being a People of the Book

For this study's application, we will focus only upon strengthening God's Word in the church. Consider the ways in which God's Word is preached and taught in the local church where you serve as a member. Now consider one habit you can establish that will enhance the ministry of the Word among your fellowship. It could be a monthly note of encouragement to Sunday school teachers, giving a donation for your pastor to build his library, joining a Bible study group, or serving as a teacher in the children's ministry. Think it over carefully and pick something that you can do consistently. Write out your plan below.

*I didn't set out to write books. I didn't set out to go on the radio. I set out to go into the Word of God and to be a workman who presented myself, approved to God, accurately handling the Word of truth. That's it. That's the goal. —Chuck Swindoll*



## Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, You sent Your Son to live among us. He taught us Your Word and He finished His task. Help me to abide in Your Word that I, too, might finish the task You have given me. I take comfort in Jesus' promise that He will not lose one of those whom You have given Him. How I adore You for that. I commit my life into Your hands—every minute of it—and ask that You glorify Yourself through all that I am. In Jesus' name, amen.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 191.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 200.

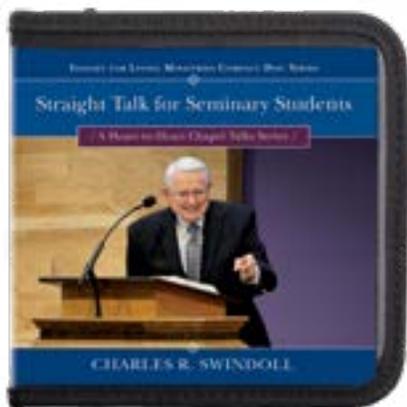


### Accurately Handling the Word

2 Timothy 2:15–19



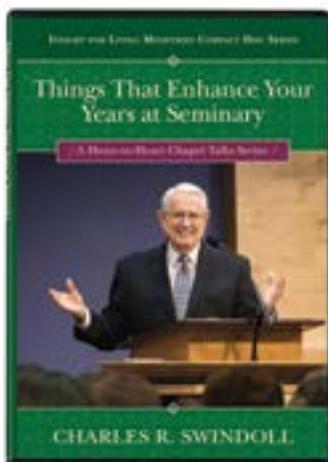
#### Tools for Digging Deeper



#### Straight Talk for Seminary Students

by Charles R. Swindoll

CD series

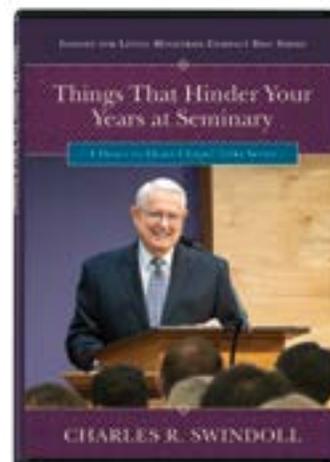


#### Things That Enhance Your

Years at Seminary

by Charles R. Swindoll

CD series



#### Things That Hinder Your

Years at Seminary

by Charles R. Swindoll

CD series

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



Copyright © 2018, 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

# STRAIGHT TALK FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS

## STUDY THREE

### Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

*I think an attitude of gratitude is one of the most contagious of all attitudes we can sustain. Being around a person who is grateful and frequently uses those two marvelous words, “Thank you,” often is just good therapy.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**H**AVE you noticed the happiness of grateful people compared to the unappreciative? Gratitude and happiness seem to stick together, like two tight-stitched friends. Where we find one, we find the other. Those who speak the language of gratitude will regularly find happiness. But what can fuel our gratitude?

Let it be your connection with Christ, our closest of friends. Because of Him, we can speak with a grateful heart. “Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love?” asked the apostle Paul (Romans 8:35). Nope . . . *Nothing!* Jesus has secured us a future with Him after this vale of tears, and, no matter the calamities we face, Christ promises He is with us through it all. It’s that Spirit-driven, eternal union with Christ, which begins in the present, that empowers us to follow Paul’s otherwise impossible appeal, “Be thankful in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

In his sermon on 1 Thessalonians 5:12–18, Chuck Swindoll calls to our attention that imperative to be thankful. Chuck encourages all of us—particularly those in ministry—to sustain an attitude of gratitude. In doing so, you will see how, in fact, Jesus uses it to sustain you.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

1 Thessalonians 5:12–18



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before excavating the divine treasure that enriches our souls, take a moment to complete the list below, very specifically naming what you are most grateful for.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Next write a prayer asking our Father for the Spirit's aid during this study.

*At the risk of being simplistic in my analysis, I think a major reason for ingratitude is pride. Proud people don't say, "Thank you." They don't think, Thank you. Pride is, of course, filled with self, and when that is true, we hold back our thanks because we're so self-important.*  
—Chuck Swindoll



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Just after Paul, Silas, and Timothy brought the gospel to Thessalonica, the storm of persecution drove them out (Acts 17:1–10). However, the spiritual seed they had planted produced a church thriving in faith, hope, and love. Only months after fleeing, Timothy returned to Thessalonica, witnessed how the church had grown, and returned with a promising report to Paul and Silas in Corinth. This prompted them to write what we know as 1 Thessalonians.



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11, Paul detailed their new hope based on Christ’s resurrection and His second coming. Paul then articulated in 1 Thessalonians 5:12–18 how this unshakable future transforms our present lives.<sup>1</sup>



### Observation: Rejoice Always

In light of the context mentioned above, observe *1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*. After slowly reading the passage multiple times in various translations, list your top observation from each verse below.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

1 Thessalonians 5:13

1 Thessalonians 5:14

1 Thessalonians 5:15

1 Thessalonians 5:16



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

1 Thessalonians 5:12–18

*“Rejoice always.” There’s the shortest verse. Shortest in all the Bible, but what a grand command. I want to be around people like that. I want to be around those who are finding joy in life in spite of their circumstances. —Chuck Swindoll*

1 Thessalonians 5:17

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Why rejoice? Paul gave us the answer in 1 Thessalonians 5:9–10:

*For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever.*

All these commands flow from one radical event: in Jesus Christ, God came to rescue us, securing our deliverance from judgment and safeguarding our eternal joy.



### Interpretation: God’s Will for You

After we absorb what the text says, we then must interpret it. This gives us an understanding of the author’s intention, how the first readers would have understood the text, and the biblical truths which surpass the bounds of time.

For this portion, remember to consult your resources. Chuck recommends you add at least one resource to your library a month—like a commentary, atlas, or Bible dictionary. Also, you can access excellent free help at [NETBible.org](http://NETBible.org).



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

### Our Spiritual Leaders—1 Thessalonians 5:12–13

Why would Paul's commands in these verses remain vital for this new Thessalonian church's continued growth?

What did the Thessalonian church risk by not living peacefully and by not honoring their spiritual leaders?

Research and explain the three functions of the spiritual leaders mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:12.

How might these verses have encouraged the spiritual leaders even though the verses were directed to the congregation?



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

What part would gratitude play in following the commands described in 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13?

*It is very easy to overestimate the importance of our own achievements in comparison to what we owe others. —Chuck Swindoll*

### Our Fellow Believers—1 Thessalonians 5:14–15

Whom did Paul address in this section, and what three character traits did he emphasize?

Why did Paul add the fourth command, to be patient, after the first three commands in 1 Thessalonians 5:14?

According to verse 15, what must Christians avoid, and what must they pursue? Why?



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

How might gratitude fuel our obedience to the commands in 1 Thessalonians 5:14–15?

### Our Saving Lord—1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Paul turned the church's attention from their relationship with each other to their relationship with God.

In what way are Paul's three commands related in this passage?

*Pray in that kind of consistency. Pray continually, constantly. Prayer on your heart. Prayer on your lips. Prayer for specific individuals. Specific needs. —Chuck Swindoll*

Distinguish between Paul's command to rejoice and his command to give thanks. How do these commands differ as they relate to Jesus, His works, and His provision?

Why would these commands be especially important for those in Christian leadership?



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

1 Thessalonians 5:12–18



### Correlation: All These Things Will Be Added to You

Sometimes, our needs or concerns overshadow the good things God has given us, blinding us to the many reasons we have for thanking Him. Jesus understood how this plagued many, so He addressed this pervasive problem in our broken world through a teaching we call the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5–7. As our Creator, He knows our needs before we ask them.

Take a moment to read and reflect upon [Matthew 6:25–34](#). Such a new way of thinking! So radically different from the punch-and-claw, fret-and-fear way of this world. How does this teaching from Jesus support our goal of maintaining an attitude of gratitude?

*Thank You, Lord, for Your sovereign control over our lives. All the details and every circumstance, thank You. Thank You that none of it is accidental, that all of it will work together for good. Thank You for Your holy character and for Your standard, in spite of our selfishness and sinfulness. —Chuck Swindoll*



### Application: Living above Our Circumstances

The commands of 1 Thessalonians 5:12–18 need little exposition to understand the plain meaning and, therefore, the plain application. All serve as timeless principles to pursue from morning to evening, day to day. For this portion of our study, zero in on one principle from each of the three sections of our text and then specify how you will apply it.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13

In what ways are you strong and in what ways are you weak in following these commands?



## **Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude**

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

---

Pick one command you would like to grow in and record how you can specifically implement the principle week to week.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:14–15**

In what ways are you strong and in what ways are you weak in following these commands?

Pick one command you would like to grow in and record how you can specifically implement the principle week to week.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18**

In what ways are you strong and in what ways are you weak in following these commands?



## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

*1 Thessalonians 5:12–18*

Pick one command you would like to grow in and record how you can specifically implement the principle week to week.

When we see the bigger picture of God's plan for us through Jesus Christ, we can't help but give thanks. God has given us so many blessings through Christ. Yet, they present only a foretaste of what we look forward to when He returns!



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for Your Word that shines in my life like a lamp in a dark room. It cleans my thoughts, restores my heart, and clarifies my purpose. Give me strength to live above my circumstances that I may give thanks in every situation. In the strong name of Jesus, amen.*

#### ENDNOTE

1. See Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 3–10.

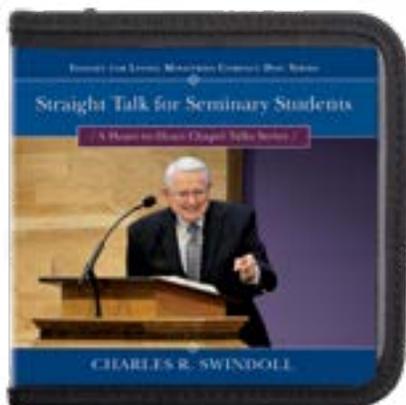


## Sustaining an Attitude of Gratitude

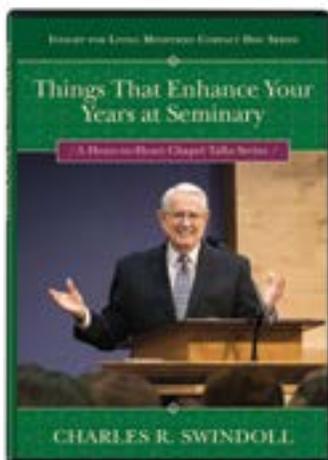
1 Thessalonians 5:12–18



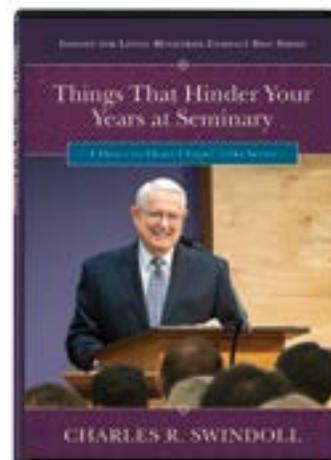
### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Straight Talk for Seminary Students**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Enhance Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Hinder Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



# STRAIGHT TALK FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS

## STUDY FOUR

### The Value of Knowing the Scoop

*1 Peter 3:8–16*

*When you learn the truths of the Scriptures, it does something to your inner constitution. It gives you emotional guts so you're not afraid to trust God and to walk through tough situations.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**T**HE Bible knows nothing of knowledge for theory's sake. Scripture never presents stories simply to entertain and impress, nor does it offer ideas merely to advise and suggest.

God's Word sweeps away each vacuous myth about some capricious god, all vaporous hypotheses about human origins, and every vain remedy to this world's dilemmas. It dishes out for us divine truth we can hold, eternal words we can stand on, a God we can know—a God who, in fact, walked among us and who loves us, hears us, and addresses our deepest concerns and needs.

*How invaluable!*

In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, Chuck Swindoll takes us to 1 Peter 3:8–16 that builds toward a literary crescendo: always be ready to explain your hope as a believer. Spiritual knowledge ranks higher than all other knowledge in this world. The supremacy of Scripture is the basis for Peter's directive and the reason Chuck emphasizes the value of knowing the scoop. As we will see, such a command proves to be as important today as when Peter first penned it—and not for seminarians only but for the entire household of faith.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

*1 Peter 3:8–16*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Chuck believes spiritual ignorance must be consciously and continuously assaulted. He has devoted his ministry to helping others learn the Bible that they might know God's unique purpose for their lives on earth and have a thriving relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Any time we seek to grow spiritually, we must do so in prayer lest this newfound truth remain only a theoretical truth and lead to indifference or pride. We will do that now before we dive into 1 Peter 3:8–16. Ask God to anchor His Word in your heart, shape your perspective, and provide newfound strength to do His will.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Begin your study by paying close attention to what the text says. Observation is step number one of Chuck's four-step Bible study method. We carefully tune in to every word in a passage and how those words fit together. This helps us avoid making Scripture say what it does not say, what we wish it to say, or what someone else incorrectly claims it says.



#### **Observation: Worship Christ as Lord of Your Life**

Take a few moments and slowly read *1 Peter 3:8–16*.



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

1 Peter 3:8–16

### The Life of Faith in the Sight of God

What five qualities did Peter want all Christians to pursue according to 1 Peter 3:8?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

What commands did Peter give in the first two sentences of 3:9 (NLT)?

What command did Peter give in the third sentence of 3:9, and what logic accompanied this command in the fourth sentence (NLT)?

How do verses 3:9 and 3:10 relate? What promise does 3:10 provide with its commands?



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

1 Peter 3:8–16

*Criticism is a constant diet of everyone in ministry, and some of it is deserved. Knowing how to handle it when it's deserved is one thing. Knowing how to handle it when it's not deserved is something else. It takes wisdom to decipher both. —Chuck Swindoll*

List the four imperative verbs in 1 Peter 3:11?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

How did Peter, in 3:11, develop his commands from 3:9?

What is the logical connection between 3:11 and 3:12?

After 3:12, Peter shifted the topic from our life of faith in the sight of God to the life of faith before non-Christians in the community.



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

*1 Peter 3:8–16*

### The Life of Faith in the Sight of Non-Believers

What clue in 1 Peter 3:13 reveals Peter's shift in topic so readers might think about how non-Christians view the lives of Christians?

How does 3:14 connect to 3:9–12?

According to 3:14, how did Peter want his readers to view their unjust suffering, and how did he want them to respond?

How does 3:15 logically follow 3:14?



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

1 Peter 3:8–16

*First Peter 3:15: “Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,” You’re my Lord. You’re the One I want to please. You’re my Master. I’m just a shepherd. I’m just a voice. You’re the Word. So, I bow before You, Lord, and I wait upon You to guide me in this situation. —Chuck Swindoll*

According to 1 Peter 3:15–16, what did Peter say will keep a believer’s conscience clear?

According to 3:16, what did Peter say will bring shame to those who persecute believers?

How rewarding to read the Bible slowly and reflectively! Did you grasp Peter’s theological rationale? Sure, some of his directions prove tough to follow. Actually, impossible in our own strength and nonsensical in our power-hungry world. But we depend upon Jesus who fortifies our faith and illumines our minds with an eternal perspective.



### Interpretation: Always Be Ready

During interpretation, we come to an understanding of what the text means. We dig in to the ancient culture, historical context, and theological truth. Be sure to have your Bible study resources available.

*Research* the historical context of 1 Peter and record how this informs why he wrote what we find in 1 Peter 3:8–16. Also, you can read the article in *The Swindoll Study Bible* titled “Asia Minor” found near the beginning of Chuck’s comments on 1 Peter.



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

*1 Peter 3:8–16*

### Know What You Believe and Why

Peter supplied four promises to accompany his commands in 1 Peter 3:8–16. These promises are found in 3:9, 3:10, 3:12, and 3:14. Summarize these promises and explain how a knowledge of them proves valuable for Christians.

According to the context of 3:15, why would someone ask a Christian about his or her hope, and why should Christians always be ready to explain their hope?

*The great tendency is to be ugly in return for evil, but you disarm those who do evil against you with kindness and biblical truth. —Chuck Swindoll*



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

*1 Peter 3:8–16*

### Practice

Imagine you have been wronged by a friend or family member. Your resistance to retaliate makes him or her curious. You have prayed for this person's heart to soften. The next time you talk to this friend or family member, he or she asks, "Now, why did you choose to become a Christian?" Write below how you would answer, highlighting the hope you have and how it strengthens you to repay good for evil.



### Correlation: I Decided to Know Nothing except Christ Crucified

As Corinth thrived in culture, commerce, and education, Paul arrived on the scene with a new message to exchange the empty promises of human achievements with divine wisdom and hope. Some believed his message. After Paul left Corinth, he wrote to the church recounting how he had ministered the gospel of God among them.

In *1 Corinthians 1:18–2:16*, Paul wrote an extended discussion on the value of knowing Jesus and how the gospel is foolishness to some and a stumbling block to others. Take a moment now to read the passage. Do not worry about catching every detail or defining all the vocabulary. Simply note the importance of spiritual knowledge and what Paul has to say about it.

*But never stop studying. Make certain that you have that Bible open and you have your heart set on gleaning from it truth to live by—truth to guide your ministry.*  
—Chuck Swindoll



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

1 Peter 3:8–16



### Application: Watching Out for the Dangers of Knowledge

Chuck provided a few principles for us to remember so that we might rightly use the spiritual knowledge we gain. Having spiritual knowledge does not automatically make us more mature or bring us closer to God. That is why Chuck wants us—seminary students, pastors, and new and old Christians alike—to internalize and act upon what we learn.

#### Principle One

*Knowledge can be dangerous when it lacks scriptural support.* So many spiritual books and sermons offer clever, thought-provoking advice but without basis in God's Word. How can you ensure the spiritual knowledge you receive is founded upon the Bible?

#### Principle Two

*Knowledge can be dangerous when it becomes an end in itself.* How easy this can be for seminary students who swim, day and night, in the pool of divine truth. Chuck tells us to remember that God's Word always moves us to obedience in faith, action in love, and joy in hope. What a priceless treasure! Detail a simple plan to guard against making spiritual knowledge an end in itself.



## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

1 Peter 3:8–16

### Principle Three

*Knowledge is dangerous when not balanced with grace and love.* Some use knowledge like a sledgehammer that destroys rather than a balm that heals or a light that guides. Is there a specific person who comes to mind for whom you might need to use your knowledge of Scripture in a “gentle and respectful way” (1 Peter 3:16)? If so, record how you can do this.

God gives us no theories or fanciful stories. Every single person comes into this world with a problem too deep to be entertained away or solved by human ingenuity. That is why God Himself came wrapped in human flesh, to give us the “words of eternal life” (John 6:68 NASB). Cherish them. He cherishes you.



### A FINAL PRAYER

Record below a prayer in response to what you have learned through this study.

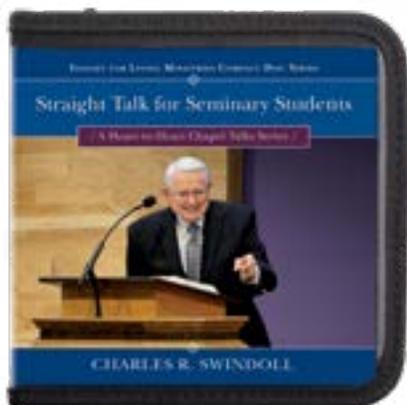


## The Value of Knowing the Scoop

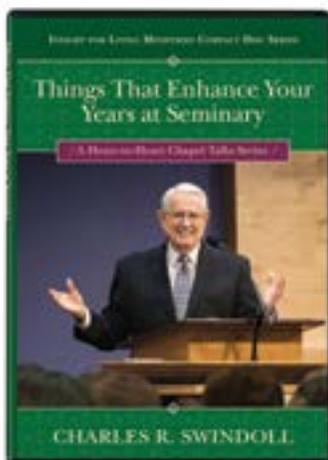
1 Peter 3:8–16



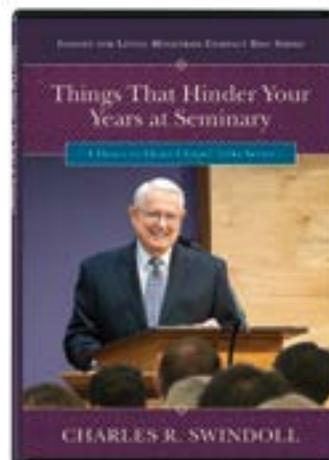
### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Straight Talk for Seminary Students**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Enhance Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Hinder Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



# STRAIGHT TALK FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS

## STUDY FIVE

### Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*

*Teach the truth and love the people. Frankly, it's a lot easier to just teach the truth, but to love means you give something of yourself away. Give it away. Give it away, for goodness sake. Chances are really good they will have never seen anything like it.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**I**t is not biting our lip when we feel like cursing. Nor is it ordering tea when our friends are drinking cocktails. Our avoidance of sin or even of the appearance of sin often displays our piety. But Jesus never intended clean living to be the only mark of Christians nor the most significant.

Rather, Jesus said the world will better recognize His disciples by what they do rather than what they avoid (John 13:35). That is why the core quality of those who follow Jesus is the four-letter word that described Jesus Himself: *love*. Love displays our holiness. Love marks the Christian. Love attracts people to Jesus.

For this reason, Chuck Swindoll takes us to John 13 in which Jesus did not merely command His disciples to love but gave them an example of love to follow. As we will see, God conceals no secrets for a successful ministry or a thriving church.

*The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. (1 Timothy 1:5)*



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before entering that remarkable scene in John 13, take a moment to quiet your heart and focus your mind upon God. Let the prayer below guide you as you draw near to Him through His Word.

*Father, Your Word is such a treasure worth infinitely more than the purest gold and the highest acclaim. Root it in my heart as I set aside this time to learn more about You through the teaching of Your Son Jesus Christ, the Son of Man who came to serve us and give Himself as a ransom for many. For His glory, amen.*



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In these studies, we use Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method so we can rightly understand and apply God's Word. This method incorporates four steps to help us create our own spiritual meals.

1. *Observation*: We read what the text says, perceiving how each word fits in sentences, how each sentence fits in paragraphs, and how each paragraph fits in the book.
2. *Interpretation*: We understand what the text means, delving into word studies, ancient culture, history, and theology.
3. *Correlation*: We compare the passage with other biblical passages that address similar topics whether they be historical, theological, or applicational.
4. *Application*: We integrate into our lives biblical truths and principles, obeying Jesus' commands, believing Jesus' promises, and walking with Jesus always.

*Jesus' disciples never knew a time when He didn't love them. He loved them to the extent of His ability to love—which is infinite. Incredible thought. —Chuck Swindoll*



## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*



### Observation: He Loved Them to the Very End

During observation, we will focus on *John 13*. As you read through the chapter, notice the people it mentions—Jesus, the disciples, Judas, and Peter—and what it says about them. Take notes as you do.

This chapter also mentions another person: God the Father. According to 13:1–3, 13:17–20, and 13:31–33, what did Jesus say about the Father?

How did Jesus demonstrate His love for the disciples in this chapter?

*Jesus loved the disciples with everything that was in Him. It was an unconditional, concentrated, consistent love that He had for each one of them. —Chuck Swindoll*



## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*



### Interpretation: An Example I Leave with You

Interpretation helps us understand the significance of the passage for those who first read it as well as for those of us living thousands of years later. We ask, “What did the author intend to communicate when he first wrote it?” Theological truth transcends the bounds of time because our God is an eternal God whose character never changes.

Remember to use your Bible study resources during interpretation. For helpful online commentaries, consult [Constable’s Notes](#) and [Barclay’s Daily Study Bible](#). If you do not have Chuck’s study Bible, we recommend you purchase a [copy](#) for your library.

Thinking about John 13, research and record below the cultural significance of washing someone’s feet in the ancient Near East. Contrast this action with the titles Jesus ascribed to Himself in this chapter: Teacher, Master, and Messiah.

In what sense is Jesus’ command to “love each other,” (John 13:34) a new command to first-century hearers, and why would it serve as the primary vehicle for demonstrating the identity of Jesus’ followers?



## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*

*One of the greatest of all defenses of the faith is love of the brothers and sisters in the family of faith. Now, I want to challenge you in this area because I think if you attempt to minister without love, then you're going to hit bottom really quickly, and you'll learn to fake it. You can even get good at that. But if you really want to serve flocks that God sends you to, and people God has you touch, and individuals who come across your path; love is the ticket. —Chuck Swindoll*

In what way does Jesus' washing the disciples' feet anticipate the action and significance of His death on a cross?



### Correlation: Without Love, I Am Nothing

Just as John 13 functions as the “love” chapter of the four gospels, the apostle Paul is known for having a “love” chapter in his thirteen letters: 1 Corinthians 13. This chapter complements our study of John 13 by highlighting the qualities that emanate from this noblest of all virtues.

Read through this short [chapter](#) on love. What other Christian acts and virtues did Paul compare with love, and why did he say love is the superior virtue?



## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*

Name one characteristic about love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 that caught your attention in a fresh way. Why did it do so?

*You, with verbal eloquence and with prophetic utterance and with remarkable faith and with compassionate benevolence—all the great things that are so impressive—I simply plead with you to remember that the commandment is to love one another.*  
—Chuck Swindoll



### Application: Giving Thought to How You Love

Without applying what God has taught us, we make our Bible study fruitless and unproductive so that it is merely a mental exercise to stimulate our curiosity instead of transform our lives. Paul said, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB).

To facilitate our application, Chuck provides an acronym, *LOVE*, which has served him well during his ministry.

1. **Listen:** When you love others, you care about what they have to say and listen intently to them.
2. **Overlook:** Everyone you love will hurt, offend, or irritate you. God extends to you forgiveness that you, too, might be forgiving . . . such a powerful way to share the divine love you have tasted.
3. **Value:** Those you love will know you love them when you value them, treat them with respect, consider their words, and tend to their needs. Let your loved ones be the experts. Give up always doing what you want to do. Go to their favorite restaurant. Pursue their joy as you would your own.
4. **Express:** Love cannot be known, or at least not shown, without giving it away. *Agape* love is the selfless, servant-hearted love demonstrated by Jesus washing His disciples’ feet and, ultimately, by His sacrificial death on a Roman cross. He is our life, so we don’t have to consume ourselves with our needs and wants.



## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*

As you reflected on the acronym above, did a person come to mind whom you can love better? If so, who is that person and how can you better love him or her?

We are called to love one another—especially those in the body of Christ, the church. How can you better love the church in which you worship and serve? Is there a simple way you can encourage the elders and staff to persevere in their vital labor of gospel ministry? Jot down your ideas and put one into practice this week.

*I asked Dr. Toussaint, “What’s the secret? You’ve ministered all over the world and you’ve touched lives, and everybody loves you, and you just have a way with people.” He smiled and said, “Well, I can boil it down to two simple statements.” He said, “Chuck, teach the truth and love the people.” Teach the truth and love the people. —Chuck Swindoll*

Success in ministry does not require a PhD in theology nor a bank full of cash. A thriving church does not require the mayor’s favor nor acres upon acres of space. God made it simple. Teach the truth. Love the people. That is our calling. That is our privilege.



## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

*John 13*



### A FINAL PRAYER

End this study by recording your prayer below, thanking our Father for the many ways He serves us and for the gift of His Son.

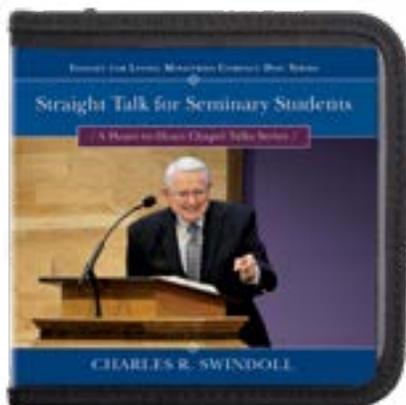


## Ministry Is a Four-Letter Word

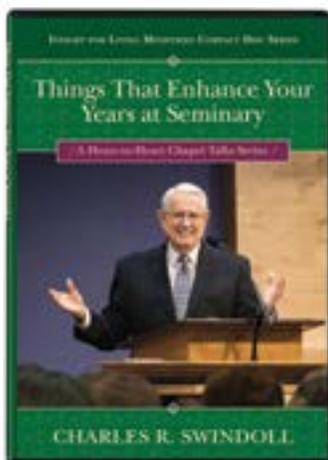
John 13



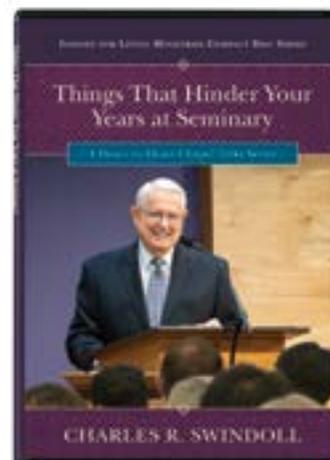
### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Straight Talk for Seminary Students**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Enhance Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Hinder Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



# STRAIGHT TALK FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS

## STUDY SIX

### Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*

*“Preach the Word.” Our goal isn’t to study the Word, it’s to preach the Word. It takes study to preach it well, but the goal is to deliver the goods. . . . I’m going to tell you from years of experience, congregations will love you for your hard work in this study. But they’ll appreciate the fact that you give attention to the delivery of the message and delivering it well. Saying it carefully. Articulating it with the right words. Preach the Word.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**T**HE esteemed professor from Dallas Theological Seminary, the late Howard Hendricks, got it right when he said, “It is not too difficult to be relevant if you don’t care about being biblical, but to be biblical AND relevant—that’s the goal!”<sup>1</sup>

That’s the goal of a seminary, the goal of the church, and the goal of the Christian. But this goal can be achieved only when the Holy Spirit animates divine truth in flesh and blood causing new life to blossom no matter the culture or context. Then God’s people shed old, unfruitful habits and toss out lifeless religiosity to give the gospel of Jesus a fresh expression, in word and deed throughout society. Jesus did not want traditions, however noble or profitable some may be, to hold priority over His message.

He said so Himself in Matthew 9:14–17. That short passage will be the focus of this *Searching the Scriptures* study, which Chuck Swindoll uses to provide seven habits of highly effective seminaries—principles to help Christian organizations remain biblical and relevant.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2019 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

Matthew 9:14–17



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before studying Matthew 9:14–17, pray for the Spirit to guide you in this study. Make Psalm 119:14–16 your own confession and petition so that His Word grips your mind and steers your heart.

*I have rejoiced in your laws  
as much as in riches.  
I will study your commandments  
and reflect on your ways.  
I will delight in your decrees  
and not forget your word. (Psalm 119:14–16)*



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In word and deed, Jesus did not follow the Jewish traditions of His day. His actions confused some. Others hated Him for breaking the mold. But Jesus knew excessive hand washing will not make you pure (Luke 11:38). God does not approve when you rebuff your parents to give to Him (Matthew 15:5). Eloquent prayers before a mass of faces will not place the Divine in your debt (6:5).

Why did Jesus create such a religious ruckus? In Matthew 9:14–17, Jesus explained His reasons.



### Observation: Why Don't They Fast?

Begin observation by slowly reading Matthew 9:14–17.

Who approached Jesus, and what confused them about Jesus' practices?

Jesus answered their question by referencing three norms from their daily lives to describe the reasons His disciples did what they did.



## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*

### Matthew 9:15—Bridegroom

The \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ while celebrating with the \_\_\_\_\_.

But the wedding guests will \_\_\_\_\_ when the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ from them.

### Matthew 9:16—Clothing

No one patches \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.

Why?

### Matthew 9:17—Wineskins

No one puts \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_.

Why?

Instead, people put \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_.

Wedding guests, a bridegroom, clothing, and wine. The main point of Jesus' teaching comes into view as we step back from examining the details of these metaphors and take in the bigger picture. Every Bible study requires both "close-up" observation and "wide-angle" interpretation. No rushing in our reading. No contriving words not present nor importing alien ideas. How exciting it is, after diligent study, to have those light-bulb moments as the Holy Spirit grows us into the image of the Son!



## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*



### Interpretation: New Wine Goes into New Wineskins

After carefully observing what the text says, we study to gain a clear understanding of what it means. This passage requires that we understand Jesus' culture. Be sure to consult your commentaries. We recommend *Constable's Notes* and *William Barclay's Daily Study Bible*.

Jesus' imagery contains symbols that reflect His main point.

In Matthew 9:15, the wedding guests and groom represent whom? How does this image answer the question from John's disciples?

In Matthew 9:16–17, Jesus explained the reasoning for His answer in 9:15. What do the new patch and the new wine represent? What do the old clothing and the old wineskins represent?

What then is the theological point in Jesus' statement: "New wine is stored in new wineskins" (Matthew 9:17)?



## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*

Jesus ushered in a new time of God's activity requiring both Jews and non-Jews to encounter God afresh and walk with Him in a new way—by faith in the Son of God and in the power of the Spirit.



### Correlation: Following the Truth of the Gospel Message

After Jesus died and resurrected, the apostles still had to shed their old ways of living to keep in step with the truth of the gospel. Paul's narrative in *Galatians 2:11–21* gives us a peek into one such moment when Peter reverted to following Jewish tradition, invoking a sharp rebuke by Paul.

What did Peter do which did not follow the gospel (Galatians 2:11–13)?

Summarize what Paul said to Peter when he rebuked him (2:14–16)?

What additional reasoning did Paul give to the Galatians for his rebuke to Peter (2:17–21)?



## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*

List two or three ways the truth of Galatians 2:11–21 might alter a tradition or habit either in your personal life or in your church.

*My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*  
(Galatians 2:20)

### **Application: Same Message, Fresh Methods**

The gospel of Jesus Christ compels us all not to equate old, unhelpful practices with the life-giving content of His message. This rings true in the lives of individuals, big churches, small churches, and even educational institutions. In his sermon, “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries,” Chuck applies the truth of Matthew 9:14–17 for the students and faculty at his alma mater, Dallas Theological Seminary. Regarding seminary, he says:

- 1) *Highly effective seminaries stay focused on what’s essential.* They don’t swerve left or right but stay focused on the message and the mission.
- 2) *Highly effective seminaries exist for students.* Just as pastors serve the flock, so professors serve the students. Not vice versa.
- 3) *Highly effective seminaries have great-hearted board members.* The-sky-is-falling naysayers and doubters have no place on the board. Rather, the school needs passionate, visionary partners to govern the school.
- 4) *Highly effective seminaries prefer quality to quantity.* The lives of students matter more than the number of students. Character trumps bodies.
- 5) *Highly effective seminaries select and maintain an outstanding faculty.* Seminaries need sharp-thinking, clear-teaching professors—surgeons of the heart and experts of their discipline.



## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*

- 6) *Highly effective seminaries attract and cultivate students who remain enthusiastic about God's work.* These students have tasted the joy of learning and relish the role of a servant leader.
- 7) *Highly effective seminaries have dreams that are greater than their memories.* These seminaries spend more time focusing on the striped asphalt ahead of them rather than admiring what's in the rearview mirror.

Are you thinking about seminary? Know someone who is? Perhaps you want to start supporting a seminary or seminarian but are not sure where to begin. Chuck's years in the president's chair taught him to look for the seven traits listed above.

Now it is your turn to apply to your life the truth of Matthew 9:14–17. Consider ways your routine of relating with God or engaging in God's work might need a fresh change. It might be something drastic, such as Peter's situation in Galatians 2:11–21, or it could be a small habit that hinders your spiritual growth or outreach. Think it over and record what God's Spirit brings to mind.

To be both biblical and relevant, faithful to God's Word, and helpful to our contemporary audience—that is our goal in gospel ministry. We don't change our methods because change is fun. We do so to be effective and timely as we share a timeless message.

*This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15)*



## Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

*Matthew 9:14–17*



### A FINAL PRAYER

End this study with a prayer asking God to keep you both biblical and relevant as you make His message known in your sphere of life.

#### ENDNOTE

1. Howard G. Hendricks, as quoted by Michael S. Lawson and Carisa Ash, "Howard G. Hendricks," Database: Christian Educators of the 20th Century, <https://www.biola.edu/talbot/ce20/database/howard-g-hendricks>.

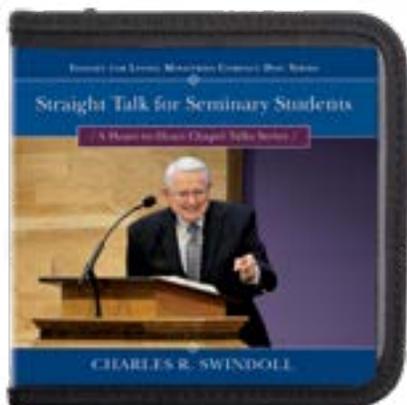


Seven Habits of Highly Effective Seminaries

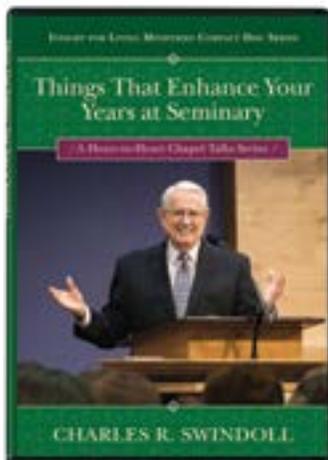
Matthew 9:14–17



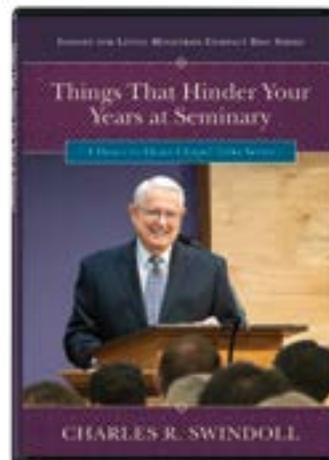
Tools for Digging Deeper



**Straight Talk for Seminary Students**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Enhance Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Things That Hinder Your  
Years at Seminary**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series

For these and related resources, visit [www.insightworld.org/store](http://www.insightworld.org/store)  
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

