

# EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY

## Finishing Well—Doing What’s Best in the Challenges of Ministry

### A Treasure Worth Guarding

#### 1 Timothy 6:20–21



### LET’S BEGIN HERE

On more than one occasion, Paul admonished Timothy to stand sentry at the strongbox of the faith, to defend the treasure vouchsafed to him (1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:14). Timothy was to guard the gospel with his life. But he didn’t stand this post alone; Paul and the apostles stood with him—as do all Christians who protect the truth of God’s Word, from the first century to the twenty-first century. In fact, everyone who ministers, whether as a vocation or as a volunteer, is commanded to “guard what has been entrusted” (1 Timothy 6:20); it’s an essential part of ministry.



### LET’S DIG DEEPER

#### 1. A General Overview of the Undertone

If we read all six chapters of 1 Timothy in one uninterrupted sitting, we’ll hear the letter’s unmistakable tone of urgency. False teachers—those “advocates [of] a different doctrine,” “doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1; 6:3)—had infiltrated the church at Ephesus. And Paul, as though ringing a warning bell, urged Timothy, time and again, to weed them out, root and all.



## Quotable

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*In every generation  
the battle for  
truth wages on.  
Let’s remain in  
the right corner.*

— Charles R. Swindoll

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#### 2. A Calm Appraisal of Intense Imperatives (1 Timothy 6:20–21)

Paul usually closed his letters with a personal greeting, bearing a tone of cheerfulness. Not so in 1 Timothy. From beginning to end, Paul urged his young protégé to keep first things first—to treat the essentials as all important and the extraneous as unimportant. And as long as false teachers lurked in the corridors of the church, Timothy was to keep an ever watchful eye on the treasure entrusted to him.

*Examining the Entrusted Treasure*

*Analyzing the Defensive Position*



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### LET’S LIVE IT

If Christians are to take seriously the command to guard the faith, then we need to keep the essentials essential and the nonessentials nonessential. That requires wisdom. We also need to speak the truth but in love. That requires grace. To help maintain a balanced approach, we should keep three things in mind.

First, *our message is fixed and inflexible, not our methods.*

Second, *our mandate is to defend, not offend.*

Third, *our manner is to be loving, not proving.*

Have you been in churches or in discussions with others where the inflexibility of the message and the flexibility of the method became reversed? Have you ever personally gotten the two mixed up? If yes, what was the result?

When you speak with others about the gospel or the faith in general, how do they react?



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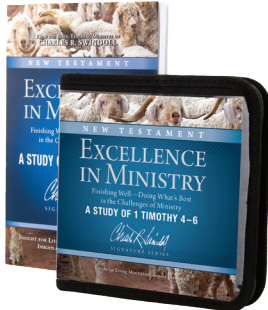
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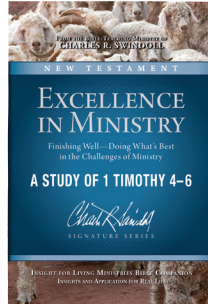
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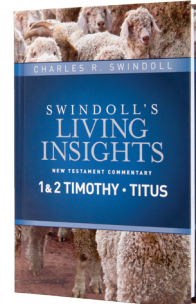
### Tools for Digging Deeper



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