



LET'S BEGIN HERE

A faith not expressed remains ceremonial at best—left to sit idly collecting the dust of life.

When James, the half-brother of Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem, wrote his letter to believers scattered across Europe, he wanted to make sure they understood that a faith without works “is dead” (James 2:17). A lifeless shell of knowledge or tradition will prove to be of no help to anyone desiring to live out his or her Christianity, especially in tough times.

That’s why James pulled no punches. From the beginning of his letter, he exhorted his readers to embrace a *hands-on Christianity* that includes both head knowledge as a foundation and some sturdy legs to stand on that could spring into *action* regardless of the circumstances.



Getting Started: An Overview of James

If you were to visit an unfamiliar city with a large metropolitan area such as Los Angeles or Dallas, maps and travel guides would be invaluable. Once you understood the big picture and got your bearings, finding your way through the city would become a bit easier.

When searching the Scriptures, a helpful first step is to gather resources that will guide you in your study. Make certain you have a Bible dictionary and a concordance handy, as well as a reliable commentary on the book of the Bible you’re studying. For this study of James, we recommend you get a copy of *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary: James, 1 & 2 Peter*. You’ll find a description of that and other resources on the last page of this study.

NOTE: From time to time throughout this study, you’ll notice bolded page numbers in parentheses next to a question or comment. These page numbers correspond to the section in *Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary: James, 1 & 2 Peter* where that particular point is discussed.

Quotable

Surprisingly, the greater part of the Bible is directed to the saint or the “Christian.” And it tells the believer how to walk with the God he or she has come to know.

— Charles R. Swindoll



Take a few minutes to get an overview of the book of James by reading through the resources you've gathered on James (**pages 4–5**). Also, study the chart provided at the end of this Message Mate. You may want to print the page that includes the chart so you can keep it for future reference.



Helpful Hint

Remember: *Observation* is a critical beginning technique you will want to use to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Take some time to make notes, either in the space below or on a separate sheet of paper, about what you see as major themes in James 1.



Your Turn in the Scriptures

Now take a few minutes to respond to the following questions using the study resources you have available.

Who was James? How did he describe himself?

To whom did James write? And why? (Turn to your commentary to find insight, or read through the notes in your study Bible.)

Look up the word *diaspora* in your Bible dictionary. How would you define this term in your own words?



James referred to “the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad” in James 1:1. How does your understanding of *diaspora* help you grasp the situation James’ readers were experiencing?

Will the *Real James* Please Stand!

If you scan the New Testament, you’ll discover several individuals identified by the name *James* (page 7):

- The father of Judas (not Iscariot) (see Luke 6:16)
- Son of Zebedee, brother of John (see Matthew 4:21)
- James the Less, son of Mary (see Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; Luke 24:10)
- Son of Joseph and Mary, half-brother of Jesus (see Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Jude 1:1)

Many scholars and Bible teachers agree that the author of the book of James was the half-brother of Jesus. Imagine growing up alongside the Creator of the universe, the Savior of the world! Jot down a few thoughts about what this may have been like for James.

Correlating James 1 with Mark 3:20–21 provides insight to James’ initial response to his older brother’s ministry. Read Mark 3:20–21. Now read a few verses before verse 20 and following verse 21.

What is the context of this passage? What were some of the people’s responses to Jesus?

How did Mark describe the reactions of Jesus’ family to His ministry?



Now read 1 Corinthians 15:3–11. What was Paul describing?

Notice Paul mentioned James in 1 Corinthians 15:7. How does this verse relate to what Mark described in Mark 3:20–21?

How did seeing Jesus alive after the resurrection transform James' response to Him?

Ultimately, James believed in Jesus after the resurrection. Faith moved James from unbelief to belief—from an inactive indifference to an active, vibrant, *hands-on* trust in Jesus.

Based on this study, write down three practical applications on the role of faith in changing a Christian's perspective on . . .

Prayer

Sharing his or her faith

Enduring adversity



OVERVIEW OF JAMES

Faith	When stretched, it doesn't break.	When pressed, it doesn't fail.	When expressed, it doesn't explode.	When distressed, it doesn't panic.
Deeds	Authentic stability	Authentic love	Authentic control and humility	Authentic patience
	<u>Greeting</u>	<u>Partiality and prejudice</u>	<u>The tongue</u>	<u>Money matters</u>
	<u>Trials</u>	<u>Indifference and mere intellectualism</u>	<u>The heart</u>	<u>Sickness</u>
	<u>Temptation</u>	<u>Obedience and action</u>	<u>The will</u>	<u>Carnality and correction</u>
	<u>Response to Scripture</u>			
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTERS 3–4	CHAPTER 5
Background	The difficulties of life caused the scattered saints to drift spiritually, leading to all forms of problems — unbridled speech, wrong attitudes, doubt, strife, carnality, shallow faith.			
Characteristics	“The Proverbs of the New Testament,” James contains many practical, straightforward exhortations. Emphasis is on importance of balancing right belief with right behavior. The book has many Old Testament word pictures and references.			
Theme	Real faith produces authentic deeds.			
Key Verse	2:17			
Christ in James	Jesus is the glorious Lord, who inspires true faith and authentic works (2:1, 14–26).			

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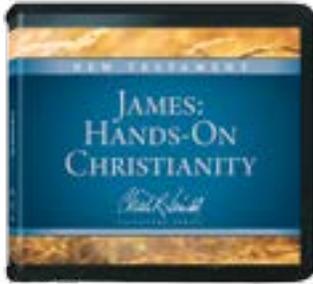
JAMES
Hands-On Christianity
A Case for Practical Christianity
James 1:1–12

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

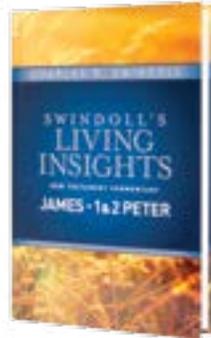
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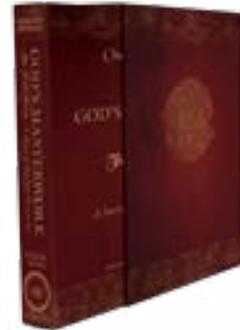
Tools for Digging Deeper



**James: Hands-On
Christianity**
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



**Swindoll's Living Insights
New Testament Commentary:
James, 1 & 2 Peter**
by Charles R. Swindoll
hardcover book



**God's Masterwork, Volume
Seven: The Final Word—A
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For the 2016 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by Mark Tobey in collaboration with Charles R. Swindoll based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts.



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