



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Someone once said that faith is like calories: you can't see them, but you always notice their results. That is the major theme resonating through James' letter—*results!* Faith produces works. And nowhere is that theme more passionately argued than in James 2:14–26. Let's take a closer look.



Getting Started: Faith Takes Action

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.

Take a few minutes to read through all of chapters 1 and 2 of James to ensure continuity in your mind as you begin. Remember: At times it's helpful to read the same passage in multiple versions for comparison.



Helpful Hint

Remember: *Observation* is a critical beginning technique you will want to use to put together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. Paying particular attention to James 2:14–26, make some initial observations about what you see—for instance, *are there any repeated words? Did James use any connecting words that offer clues into what he was emphasizing?* Take some time to make notes on a separate sheet of paper about what you discover.

Quotable

James is not the kind of book that you can read and sleep through. You either slam it shut or you leave it open and you look at it with a great concern about how you're living your life.

— Charles R. Swindoll



 **Your Turn in the Scriptures**

James began this section of his letter with a couple of questions:

What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? (James 2:14, emphasis added)

In typical form, James headed straight to the point by forthrightly demanding that his readers examine the vitality of their faith.

Read through James 2:15–20. As you do, pay close attention to the progression of James' argument. Scroll through the passage verse by verse. What did James list as strong indicators of an active faith?

Verses 15–16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Correlation is the Bible-study technique that draws upon related Scriptures to discover insight and depth into the meaning of the passage you're studying.



JAMES
Hands-On Christianity
You Can't Have One without the Other
James 2:14–26

Read the following New Testament passages. For each one, make some notes on how each correlates with what is being taught in James 2:14–26.

Luke 10:25–37

1 John 3:17–18

One very effective means for strengthening a biblical point in preaching and teaching is to offer examples of people who've actually lived out the principle in life. It answers an inevitable question: *What does that look like?*

James answered that question by highlighting two contrasting individuals in Old Testament history: Abraham, the father of faith, and Rahab, the prostitute from Jericho. James recounted specific examples of faith in action from Abraham's and Rahab's lives. Take a few minutes to read James 2:21–25 and answer the following questions.

What two events in Abraham's life did James highlight as examples of faith in action?

In what ways are the two events alike? How are they different?

According to James, how did Rahab demonstrate an active faith?



Why do you think James used these two individuals to illustrate his point? Be as specific as possible in your response.

How would you use these two stories and this passage from James 2 to encourage someone struggling to believe that God could actually use his or her faith to accomplish something significant? What would you say?

Read through the sample e-mail below. Imagine you just received this note from a struggling friend. Based on what you've discovered from James 2:14–26, write out a brief but encouraging response.

To: you@faiththatworks.org
From: judy@canGodreallyuseme.com
Subject: Need some help

Hey, you! I really want to make my life useful to the Lord. But with my past and my lack of biblical knowledge, I really don't think He can use me. Do you have any thoughts?

Reply:

To: judy@canGodreallyuseme.com
From: you@faiththatworks.org
Subject: re: Need some help





A FINAL PRAYER

Lord, I'm sorry my faith has seemed lifeless. Thank you for this powerful reminder that my faith without action is dead. Stir in me a willingness to live out all that I believe, and use me by Your Spirit to bring glory to Your name. Through Christ, I pray, amen.



JAMES Hands-On Christianity

Prejudice Is a Sin

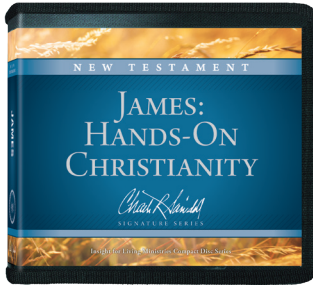
James 2:1–13

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

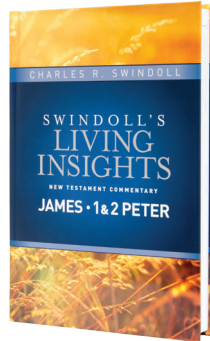
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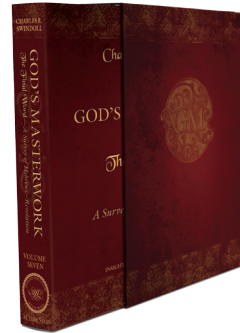
Tools for Digging Deeper



**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
Survey of Hebrews—Revelation**
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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. It was released as a Message Mate through Insight for Living Ministries.



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