

JAMES

Hands-On Christianity

How to Handle Straying Saints

James 5:19–20

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

You're on lifeguard duty during a placid day at the beach. As you gaze upon the shore, you spot a person caught in a rip tide, her head bobbing up momentarily before it is submerged again by torrents of water.

What do you do?

You plunge into the waves with skill, battle the current, and carry that flailing person to safety.

When someone is drowning, you immediately spring into action in order to rescue.

It's the same in the Christian life: We're a community of faith in the midst of a world adrift, and many find themselves in a helpless struggle against the rip tide of sin. When we see a believer getting carried away by the world, we pursue that person and help him or her to safety.



Love Covers; Love Rescues

When searching the Scriptures, a helpful first step is to gather resources that will guide you in your study. Make certain you have handy a Bible dictionary and a concordance, 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: You might 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 James 5. Read these verses carefully, as if it's the first time you've read them.

Quotable

*Your prompting
to speak,
encourage, or
help another
should always
be motivated by
a heart of love.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Helpful Hints

- Reading different Bible versions can help you to read the same passage with fresh perspective. If you don't have different versions handy, there are plenty of Web sites that can help you.
- 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 5:19–20, 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?* Write down your observations and discoveries.



Your Turn in the Scriptures

Using James 5:19–20, apply the primary approaches to studying the Scriptures—*observation*, *interpretation*, *correlation*, and *application*. Take some time first, however, to read any material you find in your commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and online tools that covers this section of James 5. *Pray* for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Jot notes in the margins of your Bible as you go or on a separate sheet of paper.

Observation: What do you see?

Use the space below to record your findings as you look closely at the text. Remember: Look for repeated words, commands, questions, emphatic statements, and images or figures of speech. Your notes can be specific and detailed as you examine the passage.

James 5:19–20

Interpretation: What does it mean?

Previously in James 5:13–18, James described prayer as not just an individual activity. Prayer involves a continual conversation with the Lord; confession of sin to other Christian brothers and sisters; and willingness to ask others for help.



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Here in James 5:19–20, James again stressed the need to be active in a believing community. If we aren't in relationships, how can we notice that a brother or sister is missing? To whom are we accountable? There is no restoration without relationship.

James 5:19–20

Can you be a saint—one whose faith is planted in Jesus—and still stray?

When a person turns a straying saint back to the truth, what two actions does he or she accomplish (5:20)?

Describe a time when someone brought you back to God's truth. What captivated you to listen and take heed?

Correlation: How does it compare?

Read the following passages, and write a note or two as to how they help confirm the meaning of James 5:19–20.

2 Samuel 12:1–15



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Proverbs 27:9

Matthew 7:1–5

Luke 19:10

Application: What difference does it make?

How do we help a brother or sister who has been tempted to wander from the faith?

- *Be filled with the Spirit.*
- *Possess a gentle attitude.*
- *Adopt an attitude of humility.*
- *Let love prompt your involvement.*

These attributes are critical to leading wandering Christians back to the truth, but they also serve as safeguards for our own walk with Christ.



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In the space below, write out a few specific personalized applications (responses) to what you have studied in James 5:19–20.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, help me to handle the log in my own eye before I call out brothers and sisters with specks in theirs. Give me the wisdom to pray for Your guidance in all of my circumstances. May Your Spirit form in me the gentleness and self-control to encourage others and be obedient to You. In the matchless name of Your Son, Jesus, amen.



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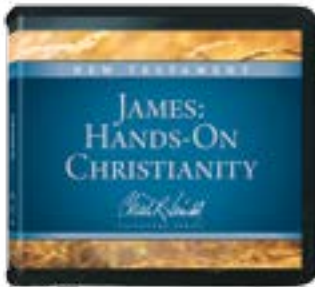
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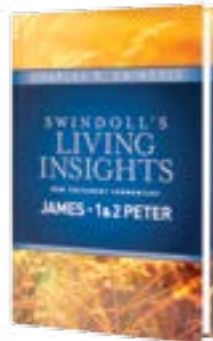
STUDY



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 2016–2017 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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