

# HOPE AGAIN: When Life Hurts and Dreams Fade

## STUDY ONE

### Hope Beyond Failure: The Broken Man Behind the Book

*Selections from 1 Peter*

*God chose Peter to write a couple of letters that would later be included in the canon of Scripture. And you know the last person who would have guessed that? Peter. He would have been shocked.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**H**AVE you ever made a *big* mistake? The kind that creates the feeling of instant regret that remains for years. Even the slightest thought of your mistake tightens your chest and upsets your stomach as your conscience says, *You are a failure.*

How can we find hope again after we've failed, after we've hurt those we hold dearest, after we feel like God will forever be ashamed of us, or after we've caused what seems like irreparable damage in our life or in another's?

These are the kinds of questions that followed the apostle Peter throughout his life. Peter is famous for his boldness in proclaiming the gospel. But this strong "Rock" of the faith often proved brittle. He demonstrated a lack of self-control. He was often swayed by public opinion. He occasionally ignored Jesus' words. And he ultimately denied his master and left Jesus to die alone.

Yes, Peter was no stranger to failure, but he also had an intimate understanding of hope. He knew that, in Jesus Christ, he could find hope . . . life-changing, life-giving hope . . . again and again. The letter of 1 Peter, the focus of this *Searching the Scriptures* series, is a testament to the truth that *anyone* can find everlasting hope amid even the worst kinds of failure.



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### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Do the feelings of regret linger in your mind or heart today? The good news of the gospel is that God offers forgiveness for even the worst kinds of mistakes. Like pure water from a fresh spring, His Spirit can cleanse your conscience. Offer this prayer as you prepare your heart to study God's Word today.

*Father, I confess that I have failed countless times in my life. Sometimes, intentionally. Other times, unintentionally. Please forgive me of them all. I embrace the grace that is mine in Jesus Christ. Use Your Word to instill an eternal sense of hope in my soul today. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

As more and more people converted to Christianity in the decades following Jesus' resurrection, the Roman Empire turned up the heat of persecution on those who considered themselves citizens of a greater kingdom—the kingdom of God. This persecution disrupted the life of many Christians, forcing them to scatter throughout the empire.

Due to these circumstances, Peter wrote his first letter to “God's chosen people . . . living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (*1 Peter 1:1*). Read *1 Peter 1:6–7* and summarize the essential message Peter wanted to communicate through this letter.

Peter wrote to his struggling brothers and sisters in Christ to show them how they could discover the joy available in Christ even when experiencing the worst kinds of suffering. He wanted them to find everlasting hope when life hurt the most. The message he shared nearly 2,000 years ago was a beacon of light that still beckons us toward trust and hope in Christ today.











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Selections from 1 Peter

**Application: One Letter of Hope**

In his reflections on 1 Peter and the life of its author, Pastor Chuck Swindoll developed this timeless principle:

*One letter of hope brings more encouragement than a thousand thoughts never expressed.*

Take some time now to read the *full letter of 1 Peter*. As you read, think about the author’s life and how his dark moments of failure ultimately equipped him to write a letter shining with the hope of Christ. Feel free to use Pastor Chuck’s chart to guide you as you move through the letter.

FIRST PETER

	<b>Our Living Hope and Holy Life</b>	<b>Our Submission and God’s Honor</b>	<b>Our Suffering and Christ’s Suffering</b>	
Salutation (1:1–2)	“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3) . . . for the hope we claim (1:3–12) . . . by our walk of holiness (1:13–25) . . . for our new identity in Christ (2:1–12)	“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake” (2:13) . . . to the government (2:13–17) . . . at work (2:18–20) . . . like Christ (2:21–25) . . . in the home (3:1–7)	“Since Christ has suffered” (4:1) Keep a good conscience (3:16) Share the sufferings and rejoice (4:13) Commit yourselves to God (4:19) Be humble (5:6) Cast your anxiety on God (5:7)	Conclusion (5:12–14)
	CHAPTERS 1:3–2:12	CHAPTERS 2:13–3:7	CHAPTERS 3:8–5:11	
<b>Emphasis</b>	Informing	Exhorting	Encouraging	
<b>Grace</b>	. . . to go on	. . . to live faithfully	. . . to stand firm	
<b>Hope</b>	A <i>living</i> hope through Christ’s resurrection (1:3)	A <i>righteous</i> hope through personal submission (2:15)	A <i>trusting</i> hope through faith (4:19)	
<b>Theme</b>	Holy living in a hostile world; hope in the midst of suffering			
<b>Key Verses</b>	1:3–5, 13–16; 2:21; 4:12–13, 19; 5:10–11			
<b>Christ in 1 Peter</b>	Jesus is the living stone rejected by men, who has become the Cornerstone of the church and the Shepherd of our souls (2:4–10, 25).			

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In what ways does this letter of hope encourage you today? Who in your life could benefit from this encouragement as well?

What parallels do you see between your own life and the life of Peter? How do the lessons his life teaches inspire you to follow Jesus more closely?

Let's wrap it up with this encouraging reflection from Pastor Chuck:

The good news is that failure is never final. No failure, no denial, no sin can trump the grace of God that restores the repentant rebel. Peter's life illustrates this beautifully.<sup>2</sup>



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, I confess that I often am like Peter at his worse moments, demonstrating a lack of faith in You. Thank You for using Peter's example to show me that I can find eternal hope in you even despite my nastiest failures. Transform me and use me like Peter—as a bold witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. It's in His hopeful name I pray. Amen.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 13 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 143, 145.





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SEARCHING  
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SCRIPTURES

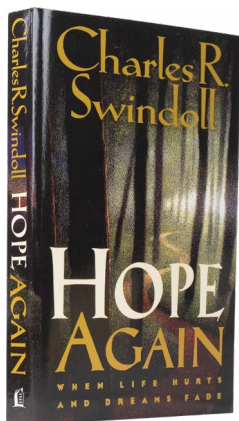
STUDY

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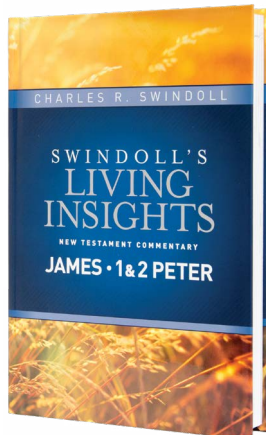
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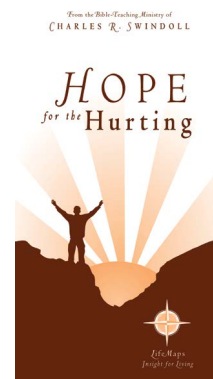
### Tools for Digging Deeper



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



Hope for the Hurting  
by Charles R. Swindoll and  
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For the 2023 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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