



LET'S BEGIN HERE

From the beginning, conflicts have been part of the human experience. Starting in a field with Cain and Abel, the sons of the first parents, all the way to our present day, the arc of human history is more easily marked by rocky paths of conflicts than by accomplishments. And nowhere has that been more true than in the body of Christ. Not surprisingly, when James determined to write to early Christians about a *hands-on Christianity*, he inserted some pointed lessons on the source of and solution to conflicts. Let's take a closer look at what he wrote and learn some valuable lessons of our own.



Getting Started: What You Need Is Wisdom

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 through 4 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.

Quotable

*Like a parent
stepping into the
middle of a sibling
squabble, James
asked his readers,
“What started
all of this?”
Why are conflicts
so common?
James has answers.*

— Charles R. Swindoll





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 4:1–10, 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.



Your Turn in the Scriptures

In typical form, James got right to the point when he asked: “*What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?*” (James 4:1a, emphasis added).

James used two different words in this question. First, *quarrels*, followed by *conflicts*. Locate the section in your biblical commentary that covers James 4:1 and see what you can learn about the distinction between these two words. What stands out to you? How would you summarize the difference in your own words (page 88)?

Describe a situation where you have experienced a conflict either between larger groups or between two individuals. What do you feel was the root cause of the fighting?

James followed his initial question with a second one: “*Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?*” (James 4:1b, emphasis added). What do you think James meant by “pleasures” as a source of the conflicts?



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What did James mean by “members”? How might you discover what his precise intention was in this phrase?

James proposed that there are two primary causes of fighting, both among larger groups and among individuals. Let’s take a closer look at each cause.

First Cause: Inner Desire (4:1–3)

How do we know that one root cause of conflict is a sinful, inner desire?

Read James 4:1–3. Write down the words or expressions you see that indicate James had inner desires on his mind as a source of conflict.

Take a close look at James 4:3 where James described the problem of wrong motives. What concern did he express about this aspect of our inner lives?



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Second Cause: Worldliness (4:4–6)

In these next three verses, James indicated three additional reasons we find ourselves in conflict with others. For each one, explain what you believe to have been James' meaning, and then write down some correlating passages in the Bible where the principle is on display or supported.

Friendship with the world . . . (4:4a)

What does that mean? _____

Examples in Scripture: _____

Hostility toward God . . . (4:4a)

What does that mean? _____

Examples in Scripture: _____

Arrogance toward others . . . (4:6b)

What does that mean? _____

Examples in Scripture: _____



Now, using your skills of *observation*, *interpretation*, *correlation*, and *application*, take some time to study James 4:5–10. In this section, James offered some powerful principles for solving deep, personal conflicts. Make sure to use your commentary, Bible dictionary, concordance, and any other resource you have available to gather your notes. Spend as much time as you are able in your study of the passage. Then, prepare a twenty-minute lesson on *God's Game Plan for Resolving Conflict*. Use the prompts below, if you prefer, to help organize your thoughts.

God's greater grace explained (James 4:6)

He _____ the proud.

He _____ to the humble.

Seven commands:

Submit to _____ (4:7)

Resist the _____ (4:7)

Draw near to _____ (4:8)

Cleanse your _____ (4:8)

Purify your _____ (4:8)

Turn your joy into _____ (4:9)

Humble _____ (4:10)



Take some time to write down a few ideas about how you might summarize what you have discovered in a brief but personal lesson on resolving conflicts. Briefly describe a personal story that you could share to illustrate how James' teaching on conflict resolution actually proved successful.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, You demonstrated to us the perfect resolution to our conflict with You when You sent Your own Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be a substitute for our sin. Thank You for providing a living example of genuine humility, submission, and obedience. Create in me a deep and lasting desire to humble myself before You and to live in full surrender to Him. Amen.

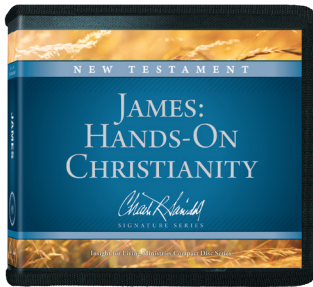


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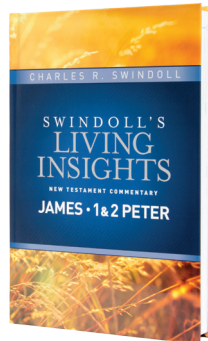
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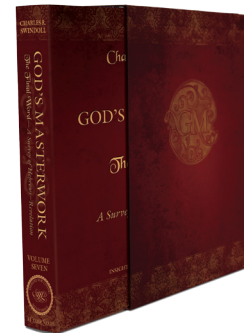
Tools for Digging Deeper



**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
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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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