

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

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Study Guide

# Faith Does

Thomas Slager  
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## Major Points

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- 1 Biblical belief (immuna/faith) is not mere acknowledgment but a deep trust in God that produces action — faith does.**  
*James 1:1*
- 2 James was transformed from a cynical skeptic of his brother Jesus to a fully devoted servant after encountering the risen Christ.**  
*1 Corinthians 15:7*
- 3 True faith is demonstrated through servant-hearted humility — James identified himself as a servant, not as the brother of God.**  
*Philippians 2:7*
- 4 The book of James is not about religious rule-keeping but about loving Jesus and letting genuine faith produce action — even unto death.**  
*James 1:1*

## Key Quotes

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*“Real belief is a deep trust in God that does something.*

at 3:50

*“If you believe the speed limit was 45, then you would go 45. If you believed it, you'd actually do it.*

at 5:38

*“He's gone from knowing about him. To really knowing who Christ really is.*

at 29:30

*“Would we as a church. Would we remember who we are? We are God's children. Not because of anything we've done. Only because of what Christ and Christ alone has done.*

at 34:22

## Discussion Questions

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1. Pastor Slager described the Hebrew word 'emunah' as meaning a deep trust in God that does something. How does that definition challenge the way you normally think about belief or faith? Can you think of an area in your life where you 'believe' something but your actions don't match?

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2. We saw that James went from being completely cynical about Jesus to becoming a devoted servant and pillar of the early church. What do you think that private encounter with the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7) must have been like for James, and how does that transformation encourage you?

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3. Pastor Slager made the distinction between knowing about Jesus and really knowing Jesus. How would you honestly evaluate where you fall on that spectrum right now, and what might it look like to move deeper into truly knowing him?

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4. James could have introduced himself as 'brother of God' to gain credibility, but instead he called himself a 'servant.' Why do you think he chose that word, and what does servant-hearted humility look like practically in your everyday life — at work, at home, or in your community?

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5. The sermon ended with the reminder that the religious leaders who were obsessed with 'doing the right thing' were the very ones who killed James. How do we guard against a faith that becomes about performance and rule-keeping rather than genuine love for Jesus that naturally produces action?

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## Word Studies

אֱמוּנָה  
**emunah**

*Hebrew*

Firmness, faithfulness, or steadfast fidelity — conveying not mere intellectual assent but an active, reliable trust that manifests in conduct.

δοῦλος  
**doulos**

*Greek*

A bondservant or slave — one who has surrendered personal autonomy and is wholly devoted to serving a master.

ἑκένωσεν

**ekenōsen**

*Greek*

To empty or pour out oneself — describing Christ's voluntary self-renunciation of divine prerogatives in taking on human nature.

## Cross References

### **Habakkuk 2:4**

The foundational Old Testament text declaring 'the righteous shall live by his faith (emunah)' — the very Hebrew concept Pastor Slager built the sermon around, showing that genuine faith produces a faithful way of life.

### **Hebrews 11:1**

Defines faith as 'assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen,' complementing James's portrait of faith that acts by showing that biblical faith has substance and conviction, not mere acknowledgment.

### **Genesis 15:6**

Abraham 'believed in Yahweh, and he credited it to him for righteousness' — an OT foundation for how genuine belief (emunah) is credited as righteousness and later produces obedient action (offering Isaac), a key example James himself will use.

### **Isaiah 53:3**

The Suffering Servant was 'despised and rejected by men,' paralleling Jesus being dishonored by his own family and hometown, and connecting the Messiah's rejection to the prophetic witness of the Old Testament.

### **Psalms 51:10-12**

David's plea for a clean heart and renewed spirit mirrors James's transformation from cynicism to devoted servanthood, illustrating how God creates new hearts in those who turn to him — the OT counterpart to 2 Corinthians 5:17.

## Further Reading

- **The Letter of James (Pillar New Testament Commentary)**  
*by Douglas J. Moo*
- **The Cost of Discipleship**  
*by Dietrich Bonhoeffer*
- **James: A 12-Week Study (Knowing the Bible)**  
*by Greg Gilbert*

## Scripture References

REFERENCE	TYPE	TIME	CONTEXT
James 1:1	Read Aloud	8:17	<i>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Chri...</i>
Mark 6:1-6	Read Aloud	11:10	<i>He went away from there and came to his hometown, ...</i>
John 7:5	Read Aloud	13:58	<i>For not even his brothers believed in him.</i>
Mark 3:13-21	Read Aloud	15:35	<i>And he went up on the mountain and called to him t...</i>
1 Corinthians 15:3-8	Read Aloud	18:54	<i>For I delivered to you as of first importance what...</i>
2 Corinthians 5:17	Referenced	23:11	<i>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new crea...</i>
Galatians 1:19	Referenced	24:25	<i>But of the other apostles I saw no one, except Jam...</i>
Galatians 2:9	Referenced	26:52	<i>and when they perceived the grace that was given t...</i>
Philippians 2:7	Referenced	35:05	<i>but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,...</i>
1 Corinthians 11:23-26	Referenced	36:58	<i>For I received from the Lord that which also I del...</i>
Acts 1:8-14	Referenced	25:08	<i>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit ha...</i>
Acts 12:17	Referenced	26:03	<i>But he, beckoning to them with his hand to be sile...</i>
Galatians 1:17-19	Referenced	26:07	<i>nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apo...</i>
2 Corinthians 12:2-4	Referenced	26:28	<i>I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whethe...</i>
John 21:15-17	Referenced	27:27	<i>So when they had eaten their breakfast, Jesus said...</i>
Matthew 4:5-7	Referenced	32:02	<i>Then the devil took him into the holy city. He set...</i>
Philippians 2:5-8	Referenced	35:05	<i>Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ J...</i>
Romans 10:9	Referenced	35:48	<i>that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesu...</i>