

Sermon Discussion Questions: “Real Faith” - James 2:14-26
Real Faith: A Study of James

- **What words you think describe Christianity?**
 - What words would your unchurched friends or family use?
 - Have you ever had a conversation with someone where they said, “Christians are all a bunch of hypocrites”?
 - How did you respond?
- **Read James 2:14-26 aloud.**
 - What is James’s main point?
 - What verses clearly state this point?
- **Verses 14-17**
 - What stands out to you about this scenario that James paints?
 - How does the treatment of this poor person show a false faith?
 - What point is James trying to make with this hypothetical scenario?
- **Verses 18-19**
 - What do demons believe according to verse 19?
 - What is the difference between the demons’ “faith” and real faith?
- **Verses 20-24**
 - Explain James’s use of Abraham’s story in his argument.
 - How was Abraham’s faith connected to his works?
- **Read Romans 3:28 & James 2:24**
 - How are these two passages different?
 - While these passages may seem to conflict at first, they are in fact not contradictory. How can you explain this?
 - **HINT:** Here is an excerpt from the ESV Study Bible: “On the surface James may seem to contradict Paul. I.e. Paul denies that Abraham was “justified by works” (Rom. 4:2), arguing from Gen. 15:6 that Abraham’s *faith* “was counted to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). However, James’s assertion in [verse 21] (that “Abraham [was]... justified by work”) is based not on Gen. 15:6 but on Gen. 22:9-10, where (many years later) Abraham began to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Thus James apparently has a different sense of the word “justify” in view here, as evidenced by the different Scripture passages, and the different events in Abraham’s life, to which James and Paul refer. The primary way in which Paul uses the word “justify” emphasizes the sense of being *declared righteous by God through faith*, on the basis of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice (Rom. 3:24-26), whereas the primary way that James uses the word “justify” ... seems to emphasize the way in which *works demonstrate that someone has been justified*, as evidenced by the good works that the person does.”¹
- **Verses 25-26**
 - How does Rahab’s story (from Joshua 2) reiterate James’s main point?
- **Application & Reflection**
 - How does this passage challenge you?
 - What areas of your life are not consistent with your faith?
 - What will do you in response? How can your group help?

¹ *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016.