

# Faith that Works

## Fe que obra

**Why must we have faith that works?**

**¿Por qué debemos tener fe en que obra?**

1. Consider faith without \_\_\_\_\_.

Consideremos la fe sin \_\_\_\_\_.

James 2:14-17 (Santiago 2:14-17)

1 John 3:17-18 (2 Juan 3:17-18)

2. Consider the faith of \_\_\_\_\_.

Consideremos la fe de los \_\_\_\_\_.

James 2:19 (Santiago 2:19)

Philippians 2:12-13 (Filipenses 2:12-13)

3. Consider the faith of \_\_\_\_\_.

Consideremos la fe de \_\_\_\_\_.

James 2:21-23 (Santiago 2:21-23)

Hebrews 11:17-18 (Hebreos 11:17-18)

4. Consider the faith of \_\_\_\_\_.

Consideremos la fe de \_\_\_\_\_.

James 2:25 (Santiago 2:25)

Joshua 2:17-18 (Josué 2:17-18)

**Faith that Works**

**James 2:14-26**



# Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 4: June 1-8

James 2:14-26

In 1860, Charles Blondin stretched a long cable across the top of Niagara Falls. Without a safety net, he went across the tightrope multiple times, always with different theatrical variations: dancing, running, blindfolded, or walking on stilts. Large crowds of people would gather to watch his incredible stunts.

On one occasion, Blondin took a wheelbarrow full of bricks and amazed the crowd by pushing it effortlessly across the cable, from one side of the falls to the other. He then turned to the crowd and asked, “Now, how many of you believe that I could push a man across the cable in the wheelbarrow?”

Everyone cheered and held their hands up. They all believed he could do it! Then Blondin asked, “Who will be my first volunteer?”

As quickly as the hands went up, they all went back down. Not a single person would volunteer to ride in the wheelbarrow and trust his life to Blondin. In their minds, they believed Blondin could do it. But in their hearts, they were not ready to fully trust Blondin with their lives.

Do you fully trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Saving faith is not just believing some facts about Jesus. Saving faith is putting our trust completely in Jesus so that it changes our lives. Saving faith is living out our faith so that it can be seen in our actions. This is the point James makes in the second chapter of his book.

## Read James 2:14-26

1. What questions did James ask in verse 14? What are the implied answers to these questions?

Charles Swindoll notes,

The second question, “Can that faith save him?” refers to a certain quality of faith—that faith which produces no fruit. The implied answer, of course, is a resounding no! In fact, the form of the question in Greek shows that James is asking a rhetorical question that demands a negative answer. For the rest of the section, then, James digs deeper into this basic assertion that phony faith that produces no works is not genuine saving faith. (Swindoll, 56-57)

2. What illustration did James use to explain why our faith must have actions? (2:15-16)

Gary Holloway writes,

The very idea that anyone with an ounce of human kindness could turn away such needy people is beyond comprehension. What is more astounding is that they can turn them away while claiming to be people of faith. Turning a needy brother or sister away is the direct opposite of the practice of the first church in Jerusalem. “They shared everything they had” so “there were no needy persons among them” (Acts 4:32, 34). (Holloway, 65)

3. How did James describe faith without actions in verse 17?

Kent Hughes observes,

If we tend to talk about our faith in Christ and the truth of his Word, but do nothing, or very little, we may be in spiritual trouble. If we refuse to get our hands dirty, or if we are cheap and grudging with other people, we must take inventory of our souls. James says, “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead”—*nekros*, an ugly word. If we are “lite” on works, we may be in the clutches of Satan, the necromancer of lost souls. (Hughes, 99)

4. How can we show people what our faith looks like? (2:18)

5. Why do the demons shudder even though they believe in God? (2:19)

Holloway notes,

James may be fighting the same misunderstanding, that as long as one has an inward “faith,” then one is saved, no matter how one acts. But even the demons have such faith. They even recognize Jesus as God’s Son, when others do not believe in him (Mark 1:24; 5:7; Luke 4:34). No one believes such demonic faith can save. (Holloway, 69)

6. What did Abraham do to show his faith? (2:21-23)

7. What was the object of Abraham’s faith? (2:23)

8. How is a person justified before God? (2:24)

Some people think that this passage is a contradiction to what Paul wrote about faith and works in passages like Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:15-16, and Ephesians 2:8-9. However, we must remember that Paul and James were responding to two different problems. Paul was responding to Jewish Christians who were trying to earn their salvation by keeping the Law of Moses. James was responding to people who claimed to believe in Christ but refused to put their faith into action. Holloway comments,

James has a different purpose for writing about faith and works than Paul has in Galatians. His purpose is pastoral. He wants to convince Christians that half-hearted (“double-minded”) faith is no true faith at all. Such faith can only be claimed, not shown. Such faith is no good. It makes no difference in one’s life or in the lives of others. It cannot save. James condemns such “faith” as mere intellectual agreement to a set of doctrines without a change of life. (Holloway, 64)

9. How was Rahab’s faith seen in her actions? (2:25; Hebrews 11:31)
10. How are faith and deeds like the body and the spirit? (2:26)
11. What is the difference between a living faith and a dead faith?
12. What are some things we can do to keep our faith healthy and active?
13. How can we evaluate our faith in God? (See 2 Corinthians 13:5)
14. Why must we keep our faith healthy? (See Hebrews 3:12-13)
15. Which is easier for you—talking about your faith with others, or demonstrating your faith in your actions?
16. In what areas of your life do you want your faith to be more visible?
17. How will your actions demonstrate your faith in God this week?
18. How will your words demonstrate your faith in God this week?

#### **Sources cited:**

Holloway, Gary. *James & Jude*. College Press, 1996.  
Hughes, R. Kent. *James: Faith that Works*. Crossway, 2015.  
Swindoll, Charles. *Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter*. Tyndale, 2014.