



Practical Faith

A Study in the Book of James





Saving Faith vs. Dead Faith

James 2:14-26





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How can someone tell the difference between works done to earn salvation and works that are a result of salvation?





What does Paul mean by Faith? Works?

- The word Paul uses for faith is "pistis"
 - Three components
 - **Conviction** of truthfulness of God
 - **Reliance** upon Christ for salvation
 - **Constancy** in such profession
 - Consistency in living
- The word Paul uses for works means "labor", "an act", "deed"
 - Not as a singular act, but an ongoing pattern of behavior





■ James 2:14-17

(14) What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

(15) If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,

(16) and one of you says to them "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things they needed for the body, what good is that?

(17) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.





Time for a tough question

If you were on trial for being a Christian,
would there be enough evidence to
convict you?





Key Points

(14) **What good is it**, my brothers, if someone **says** he has faith, but does not have works? **Can that faith save him?**

James is referring to people who **claim** faith, however, they have no evidence of faith. As the prior slide asked, "where is the evidence"?

Actions speak louder than words

This also refers back to earlier in James 1:22: "But be **doers** of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."





If a believer is going through a season of few works, does that make their faith "dead" or just immature?





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(16) and one of you says to them, "**Go in peace, be warmed and filled,**" without giving them the things they needed for the body, what good is that?





Verses 15 & 16 give a scenario of ignoring someone's needs while offering spiritual well-wishes. In what ways do we fall into this trap?





If we have the capability or means to help those who need it, do we help, or offer "hopes and prayers"?

Jesus did not just pray for people to be healed; He healed them. In that same way, if we are able, our responsibility is to **actively** help people in need of help, community, and counseling. We all have spiritual gifts that God wants us to use to help others for His glory.





(17) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James is challenging the readers, and us, to essentially "show and prove" your faith by how you live your life. He is urging us to show evidence of God's saving grace that has given us salvation.





Culturally Convenient Christians

There has been a trend recently in which "famous" people are claiming faith in Christ, however, if you examine their lifestyle you see nothing has changed.

1 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come"

- Our lives should show radical change as a result of salvation and true, living faith.
 - I.e. We will have evidence beyond our words





Am I a culturally convenient Christian?

- If a close friend tells you they are seeking a divorce, do you sit with them and explain what the bible says, regardless of how they react to it?
- Are some sins ok, as long as they do not personally affect you?
- If your son/daughter/grandchild/friend decides to move in with their significant other prior to marriage, are you telling them what God's Word has to say on the subject, knowing it may strain the relationship?
- If we allow certain sins to occur to make our lives simpler or to maintain relationships, are we being obedient to God?





Am I a culturally convenient Christian?

John 14:15- "If you love me, you will keep my commandments"

John 14:21- "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him"

These are a few verses I have read frequently lately that have convicted me greatly. Jesus is not saying "those who keep my commandments when it's easy".





James 2:18

"But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith by apart from your works and I will show you my faith by my works"

According to James, faith will always be accompanied by works, but works are not always accompanied by faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing: it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast"





Belief vs. Faith

James 2:19 "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe- and shudder."

Belief is similar to "knowing about"

- You may know a lot about Jesus, but do you know Jesus? Do you study His Word daily? Are you trying to change your life to be more like Him?
- James is reminding us that even demons believe in God. Similarly, Satan knows full well about God and absolutely knows who Jesus is, yet that is not enough to save





Belief vs. Faith

- Faith- biblical faith is trust and commitment to God that results in a change in behavior
 - Saving, living faith will be accompanied by repentance, which is defined as a **heartfelt sorrow** for sin, a **renouncing** of it, and a **sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience** to Christ.
 - We cannot appease people. Instead we must strive to please God with our actions (works), not be saved, but because we are saved.





Abraham

(20) Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

(21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

(22) You see that faith was active along with his works, and his faith was completed by his works;

(23) and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"- and he was called a friend of God.





Hypothetical question- How many of you would be willing to sacrifice your only child?





Hypothetical question- How many of you would be willing to sacrifice your only child?

How about this one- how many of you would be willing to give up a lifestyle choice that was not in line with Jesus teaching?

Are we willing to have the faith that Abraham had, especially knowing that Jesus has come in the flesh and died to save us?





Rahab

(25) And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

(26) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead

Rahab's story is from Joshua 2. After she hid the spies she was asked if she saw them and lied to the King of Jericho, which would have been a very serious offense. She spoke to the spies later on, which showed the belief she had that prompted her action (works)





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(9) and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.

(10) For we have heard how the LORD dried up the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan.."

Rahab knew who God was and acted upon that knowledge in a way that was obedient





(26) For as the body apart from the **spirit** is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead

The word for spirit in Greek is pneuma- associated with breath. James is saying that just as the human body without breath (oxygen) it is dead.

In the same way, if faith is not working, it is also dead.

Our faith should be visible to all by our **actions** and an overflowing of what God has done, and is doing, in our hearts.





Closing application

How can we ensure our faith is alive and is therefore saving faith?

Questions to ask ourselves:

- Are we the same people in every room we walk into or do we change how we act depending on our audience or location?
- Do we work hard to eliminate sin from our lives and strive to live obediently to what Jesus has taught us?
- Are we actively taking God's Word out into the world?
- Are we reading his Word daily?





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