



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 15: Faith You Can See

James 2:17–18 "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (ESV)

DEVOTIONAL

Of all the words in the Christian vocabulary, *faith* may be the one we most easily file under "mystical." We treat it as a religious sensation, something intangible we summon when we want to 'feel' spiritual. But Scripture treats faith as one of the most practical, down-to-earth things about us.

Consider how much faith you have already exercised today without once calling it that. You swung your legs out of bed and stood, trusting a floor you never inspected. You dropped into a chair and committed your entire weight to it before you had any proof it would hold. You pressed the brake pedal and trusted it to stop your vehicle. You took medicine trusting a pharmacist prepared it properly. Dozens, even hundreds of times a day, you believe something and instantly your body acts on it. That is the hidden law of all faith: belief always comes before behavior. No one lowers himself into a chair he is convinced will collapse. The sitting *is* the believing, made visible.

The Bible's own definition of faith is packed with these solid words. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). "Assurance" is the Greek *hypostasis* meaning the substance of something; "conviction" is *elenchos* implying evidence or proof. Faith, by definition, has substance and evidence built into it. Consider what the rest of chapter 11 states about that faith: by faith Abel offered, Noah built, Abraham went out not knowing where, Moses left Egypt. The great faith chapter is a gallery of visible action-oriented faith. Not one hero is remembered for what he merely affirmed, rather each is remembered for what his faith compelled him to do.

This is exactly James's point. "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James is not adding a second ingredient to grace, as though faith plus effort equals salvation. He is telling us what living faith always, inevitably does. A faith that produces nothing is not a weaker grade of faith; it is non-existent. "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead" (2:26). We are justified by grace alone through faith alone, never by our works. The Reformers said it best: we are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith that stays alone. R.C. Sproul often taught that genuine faith has three parts: *notitia*, knowing the content; *assensus*, agreeing it is true; and *fiducia*, personally trusting and resting your weight upon it. The demons of James 2:19 had the first two — they knew the facts, they assented, and they trembled. What they never had was *fiducia*, the conviction to trust. That trust is what actually sits down in the chair. Works are not the price of faith; they are its visible proof.

Which brings us home to the faithfulness this segment is about. We say we believe the Bible. But do we trust it the way we trust the chair or our breaks, leaning our full weight on it? Genuine faith in God's Word will always produce obedience to God's Word; that is simply belief becoming behavior. Where our lives show no obedience, we have not found a weak faith needing encouragement, we have found a dead faith needing repentance. Real faith is no mythical thing. It leans its whole weight on God, and then it rises and walks.

TAKE AWAY

You never lower yourself into a chair you believe will collapse, belief always becomes action. The proof of your faith in God's Word isn't what you affirm about it, but what you do with it. Does your faith move your feet?

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to make your faith the living, working kind — belief that leans its full weight on Him and then rises to obey.