

# James 2:14-26 “Faith And Works”

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**subject: the relationship between faith and works**

**object: work for Christ from your faith in Christ**

## I. Faith is more than talk (v.14-17)

- Faith *peitho* which means to be convinced of- general intellectual or emotional sense
- Works- *ergon*- means “work”
- “Can faith save him?”- not questioning importance of faith but the assumption that true saving faith is merely intellectual or emotional
- v.15-16- James give illustration- words of compassion w/out acts of compassion
- People in need is something we can all relate to
- Called to encourage w/ words but it’s all over Scripture that we are to do good to one another as well (Gal 6:10)- James’ illustration should resonate
- Ultimate point- words and actions need to line up

- Take a min and ask yourself- do the words that come out of your mouth line up with your actions? what would others say?
- v.17- “dead”= *nekra*- lifeless like a dead body
- faith that isn’t displayed in action isn’t true, saving faith
- Faith more than a verbal expression of right beliefs, but a step further...

## II. Faith is more than correct belief (v.18-20)

- v.19- demons- shock value to mostly Jewish readers
- language in verse 9 re. oneness of God, ref. to the shema (Deut 6)
- demons are essentially orthodox in doctrine- Matt 8:29
- right doctrine is no proof of true faith
- deep, rich theology is *useless* (v.20) if it doesn’t translate to true worship
- Full Shema: **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”- Deut 6:4-5**
- Basis for Jesus Greatest Command (Matt 22:36-40)
- Jesus adds “mind” (sep of mind/heart a more Greek & Western concept)
- Tend to emphasize one to the exclusion of the others, but saving faith will be expressed holistically through a life transformed- connect back to v.18

- Maybe better question than are you being transformed is how much do you *desire* to be transformed?- in light of 'you can have/ be w/e you want' false cultural gospel
- Psychologist Jean Twenge- "...research shows that a majority of young adults believe something truly magnificent is going to happen to them.."
- People are starting to discover secularism's empty promises- it's pushing them back towards questioning, back towards hunger- we can meet them w/ gospel

### **III. Faith is demonstrated in Old Testament Examples (v.21-25)**

#### **A. The Example of Abraham (v.21-24)**

- Some difficult language that almost appears unbiblical, but look closer and you'll see it's harmonious w/ Gospel of Grace
- v.21- justification may not be in a salvific sense- Experience with Isaac on Mt. Moriah happened way after Abraham first put faith in God
- Further evidence- v.23 quotes Gen 15:6 to describe Abraham's righteousness, but the events on Mt. Moriah not until Gen. 22
- If you know the Gen 22, it's described as a "test"- in other words, Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac showed his faith genuine and his righteousness real

- v.22- “perfect”= “complete”- not that salvation was complete but that one who acts in accordance with the faith they proclaim leaves no doubt in themselves or anyone else
- v.23- a quote from Gen 15:6- emphasize “friend” of God (friend zone)

## **B. The Example of Rahab (v.25)**

- Again, shock value to a mostly Hebrew audience- contrast with Abraham — Abraham was the father of the faith; Rahab was a prostitute
- Context of Rahab (Josh 11)- James is not condoning her profession or her lying- Her righteous “work” was *believing* God is real and these were His messengers
- the ‘work of belief’ is one of the hardest works we can engage in- not possible w.out Holy Spirit, intentional discipline required of us to allow God to transform us from the inside out

in conclusion: holistically devote yourselves to Jesus in a way that consumes all of who you are- heart, soul, mind, word and action!