

## November 30

**James 2:14-17 (NIV)** <sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

As the space race intensified, NASA was looking for the best and brightest minds to propel us ahead of the Russians. Mathematicians, engineers, data specialists, computer geniuses – all were in great demand. The vast workload also called for “secretaries” with a math background who could record the data and keep accurate records. Dorothy was one of those hired. She was a math teacher who made the decision to take what she thought would be a temporary job. Being an African American, her role was very limited as were her freedoms. Over time, she became the leader of her section. She soon learned that NASA had installed a new IBM computer system to perform complicated calculations; unfortunately, even the IBM experts could not get it to work correctly. Dorothy found some books on FORTRAN and began to teach herself and others that computer language. Over time, she studied and worked to become proficient enough to run the new computer. She became an expert programmer and played a pivotal role in NASA.

James tells us that faith without works is dead. He is not promoting a works-oriented, legalistic system, but he is warning us that faith, by its very nature, needs to be put into action. NASA had many educated men who were considered experts in the field of FORTRAN; however, their knowledge without works was not good enough. Instead, they needed someone like Dorothy Vaughan, who was not afraid to put her faith into action. The Lord expects us to do the same. We are to follow Jesus, and He wants us to act on our faith so that we can move forward. Can that be a little daunting? Yes, that is the definition of faith. Instead of relying on our abilities, we rely on the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus. When we step out in faith, our works will glorify Him, bless others, and move us forward.