
Reflection

1. James teaches faith which does not translate into action is not the saving kind of faith that leads to salvation. How does his explanation differ from the heretical teaching: "faith *plus* works is required for salvation"?
2. The biblical concept of faith includes belief, trust, and submission. What attributes can you list about God that make total belief in him, total trust of him, and total submission to him a no-brainer?
3. What role can each of the following play in either developing a living faith (one with works) or a dead faith (one without works): personal expectations, church expectations, examples of faith, Bible study, true accountability, meaningful fellowship, encouragement, sin?
4. Who is someone in your life that you would do almost anything for? What is it about your relationship with this person that makes you feel this way? What kind of a relationship with God would make a person willing to do anything and everything for him? What kind of a relationship with God would make a person limit, even severely limit, what he/she does for him?

Action

1. Identify a person in whom you see a faith that works and write him/her a letter. In your letter, ask the person to write back his/her answers to the following two questions:
 - a. *What is it about your relationship with God that leads you to have such a vibrant and active faith accompanied by such faithful works?*
 - b. *What helped you get to know God this way so that you are so willing to live for him every day?*
2. Check your faith. Set aside time to assess the degree to which your belief in God is demonstrated in the way you live.

Pray – If studying in a group, pray for one another and for each other's spiritual growth throughout the coming week.

Living Faith [a study of James] – James the Just, a central leader in early church and the half-brother of Jesus, cares deeply for his Christian *brothers and sisters* and writes to them to encourage wise and faithful living. Bringing both a deep connection to Christianity's Hebrew roots and a solid recognition of the lordship of Jesus, James provides wise, practical, godly instruction on *living faith*—faith which is necessarily, consistently and broadly manifested in action. His teaching provides everyday ways we can apply our faith and thereby expect to grow.

Begin with Prayer – *Father, with an expectation that you will use this study to grow me/us more into the image of your Son, I/we open our hearts and minds to your Spirit. Amen.*

Follow Up on Show No Partiality – What thoughts, questions, actions, etc. resulted in your life this past week as a result of last week's sermon study?

The Sermon's Main Point – *Check Your Faith*

Faith that doesn't work doesn't work. In other words, faith that doesn't result in daily action that aligns with God's heart, is not really faith. That kind of faith doesn't save a person! The belief, trust, faith that is the pathway to righteousness is the faith that results in everyday works that glorify God.

Begin – Choose from the following questions to begin thinking about the study's topic.

1. In a life or death situation, would you rather have to trust your rescue to others or have others trust their rescue to you?
2. What platitudes annoy you the most?
3. For those who know you best (e.g. your kids, siblings, friends), what would they identify as an area of great integrity for you?
4. What have you found helpful in determining whether someone is telling the truth or a lie?
5. Who is someone you know whose values and choices you've come to respect and admire?

Living Faith [a study of James]

Check Your Faith

James 2:14-26

Grasping, Sharing, Learning and Appreciating

In our passage James is comparing two kinds of faith—one that doesn't result in actions that honor God and one that does. Examine the following passages, noting what each reveals about the connection between faith and actions:

1. James 2:14-26
2. Ephesians 2:8-10
3. Galatians 5:6
4. Matthew 25:31-46
5. 1 John 4:7-12
6. Matthew 7:24-27