

Faith without works is dead. It is as simple as that. End of discussion! I will show you my faith by my works. A real faith, a true faith, will be lived out each and everyday of your life. When someone lives out their faith, it will be noticed by the world. When those around you are asked, what would they say about your life? Would they say you live what you say you believe or would you be considered by them to be a hypocrite. The word “hypocrite” comes from a Greek word meaning an actor, someone who just plays a part or a role. Let that soak in as we continue our study of faith and works.

DAY ONE

There is another passage in Scripture that has to do with a believer living out what they say they believe. Today, you are going to spend time in the book of Matthew looking at Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

1. Read Matthew 5-7 at least two times. Let the words of Jesus wash over you as you sit at His feet, and allow Him to teach you as He taught the people 2,000 years ago. Write down your impressions of this sermon given by the greatest Teacher of all times. Don't write down all that He teaches (there isn't enough room), just your impressions, what may have struck you, questions that are brought to mind.

c. Romans 1:5; 16:25-26

d. Titus 2:14; 3:8

e. II Corinthians 13:5

4. Now let's return to James 2:19-26.

- a. James says that Abraham was justified by his works. Does he mean that Abraham was saved at that point in time because of his works? Do a word study on the word "justified" in an expository dictionary (or blueletterbible.org) and see whether "justified" always refers to the act of salvation. Record what you learn.

- b. In James 2:23, James quotes Genesis 15:6 just as Paul did in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6. His focus was that Scripture was fulfilled when Abraham offered up Isaac. He was not saying that righteousness was not reckoned to Abraham when he believed, but that there was a fulfillment of this reckoning was seen when Abraham's faith was made perfect (complete) as a result of offering up Isaac.

- c. Read Hebrews 11:17 and answer these questions.
 - 1) How did Abraham offer up Isaac?
 - 2) When did Abraham receive the promises - before Isaac was born or when he offered him up?
 - 3) Was Abraham saved before offering up Isaac?
 - 4) Do you think James knew and understood this?
 - 5) What was happening to Abraham when He was called to offer up Isaac? What was God testing? Who needed the proof?

5. In the midst of the portion of James there is an interesting verse stuck in here that seems out of place. Did you see it? Did you wonder why that was in the works and faith discussion? Let's take a minute to look at James 2:19.
 - a. James is challenging the Jews (his audience) on what they believe. What did every Jew know? They knew what they had been taught as a child. They knew the Shema! Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is One! These were the words that were to be on their heart and taught diligently to their children. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 carefully.
 - b. Do you think that James was referencing any of this when you compare this with James 2:14-26? If so, what?

6. James is challenging their own dead beliefs. Do you believe the Shema? Do you believe that God is one? Great. That is not enough! Even the demons believe that, and they shudder, but that doesn't mean they are saved! The demons recognized Jesus (Mark 1:23-24), and they also knew their fate (Matthew 8:28-29). Correct doctrine is not enough! Calling Him God or Lord is not enough! Saying that you believe is not enough! There must be a life of works that show the reality of your faith! Does your life show the reality of what you profess?

7. If someone asks you, "How can I know if I am saved?" what would your response be? Write it out, it will be good practice for you!

DAY FOUR

1. Today your assignment will be to see what your commentaries have to say about James 2:14-26. Record your insights below.

2. Continue to work on memorizing James.
3. Spend time in prayer and ask the Lord to help you apply all that you are learning in these lessons.

DAY FIVE

Today is going to be a day of review and reflection. Please don't skip this precious time with the Lord.

1. Read over James 1 and 2 several times. If there is anything in word usage or interpretation that you question, go back to your lessons and find your answers. If you still have questions write them below.
2. Are you seeing the flow of the book in these two chapters and how he connects the topics?
3. If you haven't had time to check what your commentary had to say about James 2, please do so now. It is just one more way to review and maybe catch more insight to add to what you already know. (There is space on the pages in the lessons to write your notes.)
4. Read the book of James and catch a glimpse of what still lies ahead in this study.
5. Review the parts of James you are memorizing.