

Joyful Life Bible Studies

JAMES 2:14-20

Lesson 9

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Review James 2:1-13. Share a practical way you put the *royal law* into practice this week.
 - a. In what way have these verses affected your attitudes and actions toward the following:
 - (1.) the *poor*
 - (2.) the *rich*
 - (3.) *thy neighbor*
2. Mark the paragraph divisions as follows and give each a brief title.
 - a. James 2:14-17
 - b. James 2:18
 - c. James 2:19,20
3. Boldly print James 2:20b as a title to this week's study. See also verses 17,26. Selah
 - a. Preview the lesson by thinking about this statement in light of the question of James 2:14c. Write that question here in anticipation of what the answer will work in your life.
4. Some people *say* they are Christians but their *works* do not substantiate their claim. It is important that each of us know our faith is *genuine*. Certainly we don't want to be deceived about this extremely vital issue. The difference between *professing* faith and *authentic* saving faith can be recognized through understanding this passage in James. As you begin this lesson write a prayer asking the Lord to give you an understanding of James' message and the application of obedience in your own life.

*But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.*

James 1:22

SECOND DAY: Read James 2:14

1. James is discussing two types of *faith* in verses 14-20: professing *faith* and genuine *faith*. What does the man of verse 14 *say* he has?

a. This man professes (declares) to have *faith*. State what he *does not have*.

(1.) *Works* in the Biblical context is defined as acts or deeds. List some synonyms for *works*.

b. James 2:14 asks the question: *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?* How would you answer his question?

(1.) Just professing to be a Christian isn't enough to produce salvation. What did Jesus say must accompany our profession of faith to prove we have *faith* that *saves*? Matthew 7:21

Challenge: One of the dictionary definitions of *works* is: *performance of moral or religious acts resulting from salvation*. Do you think *works* is limited to doing for the Lord and others, or do you think it also refers to our behavior, our lifestyle? Why or why not?

2. *Such persons claim they know God, but from seeing the way they act, one knows they don't. They are rotten and disobedient, worthless, so far as doing anything good is concerned.* Titus 1:16 TLB
What do you think is the danger of such a false profession to the:

a. testimony of Christ

b. testimony of the Church

c. person making the claim

d. What can be done to counteract these problems?

3. Paul in Ephesians 2:8,9 clearly states that salvation is not obtained through works. James clearly states that works will accompany salvation. These two writers do not contradict one another but their writings complement each other. Paul identified the *root* of genuine faith - belief in Jesus Christ; James identified the *fruit* of genuine faith - love and works. What did Paul say in Ephesians 2:(8,9)10 about *works* and the believer?

4. *Can faith save him?* (James 2:14) is referring to this man's kind of *faith*, not true *faith* in Christ which produces a transformed life and out of which flows good *works*. It is not what we say we have, it is what we do that proves our *faith*. James is not referring to Christians who are deficient or weak in *works* but to one who has no *works* whatsoever from his life. How would you explain the relationship between *faith* and *works* to one who *says* he/she has *faith* but has no *works*?

Good works are the result of true faith!
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THIRD DAY: Read James 2:15-17

1. James gives an illustration of *faith without works* in James 2:15,16. Summarize this example.
 - a. Pleasant words are said to this needy soul but what is missing?
 - b. State the main point of these verses.
2. How does I John 3:(16)17,18 amplify the teaching of James 2:15,16?
3. Read Luke 10:30-37. Indicate any additional insights to the message of James 2:15,16 concerning *faith* and *works*.
 - a. *Genuine faith produces acts of love by meeting the need of the moment.* Share a present day illustration of how we might follow the good Samaritan's example.
 - b. *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.* Galatians 5:6b NIV Recall James 2:8 and do a self-evaluation based on these verses. Talk to the Lord about your test results.
4. What is wrong with the *faith* in James 2:17?
 - a. Explain why it is *dead*.

5. Consider needy people around you in light of verse 17. If you encountered a brother or sister in the plight of verse 15 or with some other need, what would you want to do? Be specific.

*Faith alone saves
but the faith that saves is not alone.*

J. Calvin

FOURTH DAY: Read James 2:18

1. *But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.* James 2:18 NIV How did James say faith could be seen?
2. Record the instructions we are given concerning *works* in the following scriptures:
 - a. Matthew 5:16

(1.) Who will be glorified by our *good works*?
 - b. Colossians 1:10
 - c. Titus 2:7
 - d. Titus 2:14
 - e. Titus 3:8
 - f. Hebrews 10:24
 - g. Share a few practical ways you can do this.

Challenge: How is I Corinthians 13:1-3 foundational to *works*?

3. Throughout the letter of James, hypocrisy in the lives of its readers (*hearers*) is exposed. How does the lack of *good works* in one professing *faith* reveal hypocrisy?
 - a. Define the word hypocrisy.

- b. Look in the *mirror* of James 1:23-25 and share any relationship you see to being *doers of the work* and having *genuine faith* that produces *good works*.
4. Although *faith* is not tangible it is real and can be seen by others when practiced through *works*. The Greek word for *shew* in James 2:18 means to bring to light, exhibit, display; to prove. *Faith* dwells within the heart where only God can see. When there is *genuine faith* there should be an outward expression of that *faith*. Describe some evidences that validate *genuine faith* through the life of someone you know.

*Nothing validates the claims of Christ
like a transformed life.*

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FIFTH DAY: Read James 2:19,20

1. James 2:19 points to Deuteronomy 6:4 *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD*. Because the Jews believed that there is one God, James commended them. However, to make his point that just believing in God is not enough, who else did James say believed?
 - a. What else does this verse say the *devils* (demons) do?
 - b. Why is fear the result of this kind of belief?
2. The demons have intellectual belief. If you were asked to explain the difference between intellectual *faith* (belief) and saving *faith* (belief) to someone who *believes* there is a God, how would you respond?
3. According to James 2:20 what does the *vain* (foolish) *man* need to know?

Challenge: Using a Bible dictionary define the word *dead* as it is used in James 2:20.

- a. You will recall that in this chapter *faith without works is dead* appears three times (verses 17,20,26). State what this phrase means in your own words.
 - b. Briefly summarize why James calls this kind of *faith* (intellectual belief only) *dead*.
4. Do you know someone who only has an *intellectual belief* in God and not a *saving faith*? If you do, stop and pray now for that one's salvation.

SIXTH DAY: Review James 2:14-20

1. How have you been instructed or challenged through this week's lesson?
2. Summarize what you learned this week about the following kinds of *faith*:
 - a. professing *faith*
 - b. intellectual *faith*
 - c. saving *faith*

Personal: With these three types of *faith* in mind, prayerfully examine your *faith*. Ask the Lord to help you make any changes that might be needed.

3. It has been said that saving *faith* starts in the head (James 1:18) proceeds to the heart (James 1:21) and works its way out through the hands by *good works* (James 2:14-20). What opportunities have you had this week to put this into practice?
4. In relationship to James 2:14-20 do an acrostic or acronym for the word *faith*:
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T
H

*Look all around you, find someone in need,
Help somebody today!
Tho' it be little - a neighborly deed -
Help somebody today!*

C.H. Gabriel