



THE BOOK OF JAMES

JAMES 2:14-26

SECTION THEME

In this section, James is going to address *faith* and *works*. Our works do not earn our salvation, but James argues that works ought to be present if faith is producing what it should.

GO DEEPER

Learn more about Abraham's faith in the following Bible passages.

Genesis 12:1-4; Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 4:1-3, 18-24; Hebrews 11:8-9, 17-19

How did Abraham act on his faith?

What exactly was Abraham believing in?

According to the passages in Romans and Hebrews, what are the implications for us? What can we learn about faith and works?

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, **16** be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **17** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." **19** You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. **20** But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; **23** and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. **24** You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. **25** In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? **26** For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

DIGGING IN

- **What's the answer to the question in verse 16? What good is it to offer good wishes but no practical help?**
- **In verse 18, we see two kinds of faith. How are they described?**
- **So the two kinds of faith are “with” and “without” works: a living faith and a dead faith.**
- **So then, verse 19 is referring to the “without works” kind of faith. What does it say about that kind of faith?**
- **Considering this is a Jewish audience, and they would have understood the text in Deuteronomy 6:4, why do you think James chooses the oneness of God as the example of basic faith, and not, say, the atoning death of Jesus?**
- **In James 2:20–24, there's reference to Abraham as proof of the point. What's the argument here? How does Abraham prove that “faith without works is useless**
- **Abraham did as instructed, but then God sent an angel to stop him. Abraham passed the test. How did these actions demonstrate Abraham's faith?**
- **James quotes a verse from Genesis (15:6). What does that say about Abraham's faith? What does it say about his works?**
- **How did Abraham's actions in Genesis 22 “fulfill” the statement of Genesis 15:6?**
- **Do you think it's significant that the faith of Genesis 15 came several chapters before the works of Genesis 22? Does faith generally come first?**
- **With the meaning of *pneuma* in mind, take another look at verse 26.**
- **How does that affect your understanding of that verse?**

5 MARKS FOCUS: GENEROUS LIVING

Consider the areas in life where you may be lacking compassion for others.

Pray for opportunities for you to show hospitable generosity in your serving and giving. It's one thing to set up those recurring offering amounts online. What's that next step to take that moves the dial in your life to give *sacrificially* instead of going through the motions?

USE THE 2 OF THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS IN YOUR WALK THIS WEEK:

Evaluation: Talk with God about your personal faith. Do you have “faith with works” or “faith without works”? Ask Him to give you the power you need to put your faith into action.

Research: James is very specific about the needs we should be responding to—the needs of widows and orphans, as well as those who need food or clothing. Where do these needs exist in your region? And what are the best ways to help such people? Join with some others in a research projects, and share your findings with this group, or your whole church.

Serving: Can you put yourself on a regular schedule of volunteering with some ministry or charity? Tutoring each week at the Trend House? Serving meals at our STOP ministry each week? Doing a work day once a quarter? Don't just think about doing these things. Plan something and do it.

Giving: All the ministry we do here at Central is dependent on generous living. We support and mobilize people locally and globally. Ask someone on staff this week how you can be involved in giving if you haven't done so already! You can also do so on our website or our mobile app.

A PEEK AT THE GREEK

In verse 26, “spirit” is a translation of the Greek word *pneuma*. This word refers to that which gives life to the body. In some places *pneuma* is translated “breath.”