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## “Faith and Works”

**Weekly Bible Study Schedule**  
**Tuesday, February 26, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #5**  
(hot breakfast provided)  
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**non-denominational**

Faith which does not bring forth works is not the faith by which we are justified. It is a false image of faith. James combats the idea that religious knowledge is enough. The justified by faith shows the effects of works. The focus of James is on true and living faith.

The Apostle Paul has said: *For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. Romans 2:13*

Paul and James are not in conflict. Paul says by faith alone you are saved. James says, works gives evidence of effective faith.

Paul and James were having different concerns, different backgrounds, and different audiences with different problems. Faith is just as important to James as it is with Paul.

James condemns hypocritical faith – it does not result in righteous living.

**2:14 – What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say (claim) you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?**

Key word is “if you say...” In other words, if you claim to have faith. James challenges followers of Jesus about a non-working faith, an ineffective faith. There were poor people in the church that lacked clothing, that

consistently lacked food, and yet, “Shalom” was offered. Grace and peace. Stay warm and eat well. To neglect the poor is ineffective faith; it is a way of greeting and leaving.

It is a specific kind of faith – one that fails to live out the royal law of love. So, of what kind of faith does James speak? Faith alone saves people from sin, and into a personal relationship with Jesus. One can claim a faith all they want but if one's faith has no fruit it is ineffective.

Remember the subject in James 1:22–27, he points out that the practice of true religion is more than mental ascent of religious motion. Faith does not prosper without living a righteous life.

### **2:15–17 – What good does that do?**

A literary device is used, rhetoric. Ask a question not wanting an answer. No good at all.

**2:18 – “How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”**

James explains the question, with “Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works.”

**2:19–20 – Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How**



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### **foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?**

The Jewish Christian believes in monotheism. The Judeo-Christian world-view believes in monotheism.

The highly regarded creed of Judaism from the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4):

*“Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.”*

James shifts to illustrate his point. He offers two examples of authentic faith.

#### **2:21-24 – Abraham**

*Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God. So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.*

God gives a one-time directive to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his son (Genesis 15, 22). Abrahams, Isaac, and God's response is what defines faith.

*Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. “This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will*

*certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.*

But delivered Abraham, Isaac, his son, and provided a ram.

Do you claim faith? What does it look like?

#### **Joshua 1:1-5 – Rahab**

Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. She was justified by God by her deed to rescue the Israelite spies. She acted in faith to the God of Israel. His salvation was because of her faith; her faith was seen because of her deeds.

*Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at Acacia Grove. He instructed them, “Scout out the land on the other side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho.” So the two men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there that night. But someone told the king of Jericho, “Some Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” So the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab: “Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land.” Rahab had hidden the two men.*

He simply sets forth Abraham and Rahab as examples of righteous people who were proven and acknowledged by God as righteous through their deeds of faith.



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Missouri

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