



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Teaching Title: Visible Faith

Key Scripture: James 2:14–26

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Romans 3

Tuesday: Genesis 22

Wednesday: Hebrews 11:1–12:3

Thursday: 1 John 3

Friday: Proverbs 21:15 & 29:7 & 31:9

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

Saving Faith

MEMORY VERSE:

James 2:17 NLT

So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

How do you know if your faith is genuine? Is your faith evident on the inside, or is it visible on the outside? James addresses these kinds of questions in James 2:14–26. Authentic, saving faith is not just a belief or a verbal confession, it must be demonstrated through action. Faith is visible and active in a person's life and bears fruit. For James, living faith is action-oriented, goes beyond belief, obeys when it's hard (as seen in Abraham), and is accessible to the willing, not just the morally perfect (as seen in Rahab). Faith that saves is faith that steps.

Questions:

Icebreaker: What's one thing you'll never do again?

1. Read James 2:14–26 together as a group. What does James mean when he says faith without works is "dead and useless" (v. 17)? How does that challenge common views of faith?
2. Why is James so blunt in his example of seeing someone hungry and doing nothing? What's he exposing about the human heart?
3. In James 2:18–20, we see two kinds of faith. How would you describe them? James writes, "Even the demons believe—and tremble." What does this reveal about the difference between mere belief and saving faith?
4. Read Galatians 2:16 and Ephesians 2:8–10. Both of these passages were written by the apostle Paul. Now read James 2:21–24. How do we reconcile James and Paul? Do they contradict each other, or complement each other? (See Digging Deeper)
5. Abraham's obedience came at great personal cost. Can you recall a time when God called you to obey

- even though it was scary or hard? What did you learn from that experience?
6. Why do you think James uses Rahab—a prostitute—as a model of saving faith? What does that say about who God chooses and uses?
 7. According to this passage, how can we evaluate whether our faith is “living” or “dead”?
 8. Is there an area in your life where you’re saying, “I believe,” but your actions aren’t lining up? What would “fruit” look like in that area?

Digging Deeper

Question 4—How do we reconcile Paul and James? Here is Pastor Neal’s view:

- Paul is talking about the root of salvation: we’re saved by grace through faith—period.
- James is talking about the fruit of salvation: if that faith is real, the kind of faith that saves, it will show up in our life—or it’s not real and doesn’t save!

Here is a helpful synopsis by New Testament scholar Doug Moo:

“Clearly we have here a passage that lies at the very heart of James’ concern. He is deeply troubled by an attitude towards ‘faith’ that sees it mainly as a verbal profession—such as the confession that ‘God is one’ (v. 19). This is a faith that is ‘apart from’ works (v. 20, 26), and James views this faith as ‘dead’ (v. 17-26), ‘barren’ (v. 20); it does not have the power to save (v. 14) or to justify (v. 24). James assumes the necessity of faith. He claims to have faith (v. 18). But the faith he has, ‘real faith,’ ‘has works’ (v. 14, 17), is ‘completed by works’ (v. 22), is ‘active along with works’ (v. 22). It is the kind of faith exhibited both by the revered ‘father of faith,’ Abraham (v. 21-23), and Rahab, the immoral outcast (v. 25). It is absolutely vital to understand that the main point of this argument, expressed three times (v. 17, 20, and 26), is not that works must be added to faith but that genuine faith includes works. This is its very nature...Properly interpreted, Paul and James are united in their understanding of faith and works and their relationship to justification.”

—Douglas J. Moo. *Tyndale New Testament Commentary: James*. Page 99