

JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS – JAMES 2:14-26

1. THE **PROBLEM: TWO VIEWS OF “JUSTIFICATION”**.
 - A. **PAUL** WROTE... **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)** For **by grace** you have been **saved through faith**; **and that not of yourselves**, it is **the gift of God**; **not as a result of works**, so that no one may boast.
 1. **Romans 3:28 (NASB)** For we maintain that a man is **justified by faith** apart from **works** of the Law.
 - B. **JAMES** WROTE... **James 2:21,24 (NASB)** Was not Abraham our father **justified by works** when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?... You see that a man is **justified by works** and **not by faith alone**.
 - C. **THOSE VIEW POINTS SEEM TO BE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER.**
2. **THE SOLUTION**
 - A. **PAUL AND JAMES USE THE SAME WORD FOR “JUSTIFY”, BUT WITH TWO DIFFERENT MEANINGS...** THESE TWO MEANINGS ARE ACTUALLY **TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN**. (SEE THE CHART ON PAGE 8)
 - B. **THE SOLUTION INVOLVES TWO DIFFERENT NUANCES OF THE WORD “TO JUSTIFY.”**
 1. **THE GREEK VERB FOR “JUSTIFY” IS DIKAIŌŌ... AND DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT, THE WORD CAN MEAN EITHER:**
 - a. **“TO DECLARE RIGHTEOUS,” AS IN A LEGAL PROCEEDING, = A JUDGMENT.**
 - b. **OR, “TO DEMONSTRATE RIGHTEOUSNESS” = ACTION = GOOD WORKS.**
 2. **PAUL: “TO DECLARE RIGHTEOUS”, WHICH IS THE LEGAL DEFINITION, IS TO DECLARE A VERDICT OF “GUILTY” OR “NOT GUILTY” PRONOUNCED BY A JUDGE (GOD THE FINAL JUDGE).**
 3. **JAMES, “TO DEMONSTRATE RIGHTEOUSNESS”, A PERSON DEMONSTRATES THEIR RIGHTESS BY ACTIONS THAT ARE OBSERVED BY OTHERS.**
 - C. **SO... PAUL AND JAMES USE “JUSTIFY” IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS, BUT THESE TWO USES ARE ACTUALLY TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN.**
 - D. **ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION OF THE APPARENT CONFLICT OF HOW PAUL AND JAMES USE THE WORD “JUSTIFICATION”:**
 1. **PAUL IS LOOKING AT THE ROOT OF SALVATION.**

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- a. AT THE MOMENT OF SALVATION (PRESENT TENSE), A PERSON IS SAVED THROUGH FAITH PLUS NOTHING.
2. JAMES IS LOOKING AT THE FRUIT OF SALVATION.
 - a. AFTER SALVATION (PAST TENSE) — AFTER THE ROOT OF FAITH HAS BEEN PLANTED, OUR LIVES WILL BEAR THE FRUIT OF GOOD WORKS.
3. ANOTHER CONTRAST INVOLVES TWO DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES:
 - a. PAUL LOOKS AT LIFE FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE....
 - 1) PAUL USES THE WORD "JUSTIFIED" TO MEAN "DECLARED RIGHTEOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IN THE PRESENT TENSE."
 - b. JAMES LOOKS AT LIFE FROM THE HUMAN PERSPECTIVE...
 - 1) HE IS ADDRESSING BELIEVERS WHO HAVE ALREADY EXPERIENCED THIS GIFT OF SALVATION...
 - i. SO JAMES USES THE WORD "JUSTIFIED" TO MEAN "DEMONSTRATE MYSELF TO BE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE SIGHT OF PEOPLE TO SHOW THAT I HAVE RECEIVED (PAST TENSE) GOD'S GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE."
3. REVIEW: DEAD FAITH
 - A. ANY DECLARATION OF FAITH THAT DOES NOT RESULT IN A CHANGED LIFE AND GOOD WORKS IS A FALSE DECLARATION.
 1. DEAD FAITH IS OUTWARDLY INOPERATIVE AND INWARDLY DEAD... IT IS INACTIVE, INERT... WHICH JAMES SAYS IS DEAD FAITH.
 - B. THE PERSON WITH DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY AN INTELLECTUAL EXPERIENCE.
 1. THEY KNOW ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION IN THEIR MINDS, BUT THEY HAVE NEVER SUBMITTED THEIR WILL TO GOD AND TRUSTED CHRIST FOR SALVATION.
 2. THEY KNOW THE RIGHT WORDS, BUT THEY DO NOT BACK UP THEIR WORDS WITH THEIR WORKS.
 - a. PEOPLE WITH DEAD FAITH SUBSTITUTE WORDS FOR DEEDS.
 3. THEY KNOW THE CORRECT VOCABULARY FOR PRAYER AND TESTIMONY, AND CAN EVEN QUOTE THE RIGHT VERSES FROM THE BIBLE... BUT THEIR WALK DOES NOT MEASURE UP TO THEIR TALK.
 - a. THEY THINK THAT THEIR WORDS ARE AS GOOD AS WORKS, AND THEY ARE WRONG!

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C. **FAITH IN CHRIST BRINGS LIFE** (JOHN 3:16), AND **WHERE THERE IS LIFE THERE WILL BE GROWTH AND FRUIT.**

1. **1 Timothy 6:18-19** (NLT2) Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.
2. **Galatians 2:20** (NLT2) My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
3. **DISCUSS... GROWTH AND FRUIT.**

D. **CONCLUSION DEAD FAITH IS NOT SAVING FAITH.**

1. **DEAD FAITH IS COUNTERFEIT FAITH AND LULLS A PERSON INTO A SENSE OF FALSE (AND OFTEN HYPOCRITICAL) CONFIDENCE.**

4. **DEMONIC FAITH**

- A. **James 2:18-19** (NLT2) 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.” 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.
- B. **JAMES WANTED TO SHOCK HIS COMPLACENT READERS, SO HE USED DEMONS AS HIS NEXT ILLUSTRATION.**
- C. IT COMES AS A SHOCK TO MOST PEOPLE TOFAY TO FIND OUT THAT DEMONS HAVE FAITH... WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?
 1. **DEMONS “BELIEVE” IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD;**
 - a. “you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this...”
 2. **DEMONS ALSO “BELIEVE” IN THE DEITY OF CHRIST.**
 - a. WHEN DEMONS MET CHRIST WHEN HE WAS ON EARTH, THEY BORE WITNESS TO HIS SONSHIP.
 - 1) **Mark 3:11** (NLT2) And whenever those possessed by evil spirits caught sight of him, the spirits would throw them to the ground in front of him shrieking, “You are the Son of God!”
 3. **DEMONS “BELIEVE” IN THE EXISTENCE OF A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT,**
 - a. **Luke 8:31** (NLT2) The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit.

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4. **DEMONS BELIEVE** IN **JESUS CHRIST** AS THE **JUDGE** AND THEY **SUBMIT** TO THE **POWER** OF HIS **WORD**... HIS **SPOKEN WORD**.

a. THERE IS **GREAT POWER** IN THE **SPIRITUAL WORLD** IN **SPEAKING GOD'S WORD**.

1) ... "**SPEAKING GOD'S WORD INTO THE FABRIC OF LIFE**".

b. **MARK 5:10-13 (NLT2)** Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. "Send us into those pigs," **the spirits begged**. "**Let us enter them.**" So Jesus gave them **permission**. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water. (= THE FIRST "**SWINE DIVE**"!!)

D. **PEOPLE WITH DEAD FAITH** HAVE BEEN ALTERED **ONLY** IN THEIR **INTELLECT**... **BUT** THE **DEMONS** ARE **INFLUENCED** IN THEIR **INTELLECT** **AND** THEIR **EMOTIONS**... THEY "**BELIEVE**" (**INTELLECT**) AND "**TREMBLE**" (**EMOTIONS**).

1. **BUT** THEIR **BELIEF** IS **NOT** A **SAVING EXPERIENCE**.

a. A PERSON CAN BE **ENLIGHTENED** IN THEIR **MIND** AND EVEN **STIRRED** IN THEIR **HEART** AND STILL **BE LOST FOREVER**.

b. **TRUE SAVING FAITH** INVOLVES **SOMETHING MORE**... **SOMETHING** THAT CAN BE **SEEN** AND **RECOGNIZED**: **A CHANGED LIFE** REFLECTED IN **GOOD WORKS**.

c. **James 2:18 (NLT2)** 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.**"

E. **JAMES ASKS**, "**How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds?**"

1. **CAN A DEAD SINNER** PERFORM **GOOD WORKS**?... **NO**, THAT'S **IMPOSSIBLE**!

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2. WHEN WE RECEIVED CHRIST, WE WERE THEN "... created in Christ Jesus **for** (NOT "BY") **good works**, which God prepared beforehand **so that we would walk in them**. (Ephesians 2:10 (NASB))
3. BEING A **BELIEVER** INVOLVES **TRUSTING CHRIST** AND **LIVING FOR CHRIST**; FIRST WE **RECEIVE THE LIFE**, THEN WE **REVEAL THE LIFE**.
- F. **JAMES HAS INTRODUCED TWO KINDS OF FAITH THAT CAN NEVER SAVE A SINNER:**
 1. **DEAD FAITH** (THE **INTELLECT** ALONE), AND
 2. **DEMONIC FAITH** (**INTELLECT AND EMOTIONS**).
 3. JAMES CLOSES THIS SECTION BY DESCRIBING THE **ONLY KIND OF FAITH THAT CAN SAVE A SINNER... DYNAMIC FAITH**.
5. **DYNAMIC FAITH**
 - A. **James 2:20-26 (NLT2)** How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? 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. 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. Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without works.
 - B. **JAMES CONTINUES WITH HIS FAMILIAR PATTERN OF WRITING:**
 1. **FIRST HE STATES THE PRINCIPLE:**
 - a. **James 2:20-26 (NLT2)** How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?
 2. **THEN HE GIVES AN EXAMPLE:**
 - a. **ABRAHAM AND RAHAB**
 3. **AND HE ENDS WITH A CALL TO ACTION BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE:**
 - a. "... Just as the body is dead without breath, so also **faith is dead without good works**."
 - C. **DYNAMIC FAITH IS:**
 1. **FAITH THAT IS REAL,**

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2. **FAITH** THAT HAS **POWER**,
3. **FAITH** THAT **RESULTS** IN A **CHANGED LIFE**.
 - a. AND... THAT **CHANGED LIFE** **PRODUCES** **GOOD WORKS**.
- D. **FAITH** IS **ONLY** AS **GOOD** AS ITS **OBJECT**.
 1. NO MATTER HOW MUCH **FAITH** A PERSON **MAY** **GENERATE**, **IF** IT IS **NOT** **DIRECTED** AT THE **RIGHT OBJECT**, IT WILL **ACCOMPLISH** **NOTHING**.
 2. “**I BELIEVE**” MAY BE THE **TESTIMONY** OF MANY **SINCERE PEOPLE**, **BUT** THE BIG **QUESTION IS**, “**IN WHOM** OR **WHAT** **DO YOU BELIEVE**?”
- E. **EASY BELIEVISM** IS A **TERM** THAT **DESCRIBES** WHAT **JAMES** IS **TALKING** **ABOUT** WHEN HE **WRITES** ABOUT **FAITH WITHOUT WORKS**.
 1. “**EASY BELIEVISM**” IS A **TERM** THAT **COMES** FROM WHAT MANY PEOPLE **UNDERSTAND** THE WORD “**BELIEVE**” TO **MEAN**.
 - a. **JOHN 3:16 (NLT2)** “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who **believes** in him will not perish but have eternal life”.
 2. THE **DEFINITION** OF “**BELIEVE**” IN **AMERICA** TODAY IS TO “**BELIEVE**” THAT **SOMETHING EXISTS** OR **EXISTED**.
 - a. MANY PEOPLE WILL SAY “**OH YES... I ‘BELIEVE’ IN JESUS**, SO **LEAVE ME ALONE**.”
 - 1) WHAT THEY **MEAN** IS THAT THEY **BELIEVE** THAT **JESUS EXISTED**.
 - 2) **ALL** THEY ARE **DOING** IS TO **NOD THEIR HEAD** THAT THEY **BELIEVE IN JESUS** WHICH IS **INTELLECTUAL AGREEMENT**... AND **JAMES** SAYS THAT **INTELLECTUAL AGREEMENT ALONE** IS **DEAD FAITH**.
 - 3) **JAMES** SAID THAT EVEN THE **DEMONS** HAVE **INTELLECTUAL FAITH**.
 3. **BUT... DYNAMIC FAITH** GOES **FAR BEYOND INTELLECTUAL AGREEMENT** THAT **SOMETHING** OR **SOMEONE EXISTS** OR **EXISTED**!
 - a. **DYNAMIC FAITH** IS **FAITH** THAT **RESULTS** IN **ACTION**... A **CHANGED LIFE**...
 - 1) AND THAT **CHANGED LIFE** IS **PROVEN** BY **GOOD WORKS**!
 - 2) **BELIEVERS** DO **NOT “DO” GOOD WORKS IN ORDER TO BE SAVED**... **BELIEVERS “DO” GOOD WORKS BECAUSE THEY ARE SAVED**! THEREFORE, OUR **FAITH** IS **PROVEN** BY OUR **GOOD WORKS**!
 4. A **BETTER TERM** FOR “**BELIEVE**” IS “**RECEIVE**”.
 - a. DO WE **RECEIVE** **JESUS CHRIST**?

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- b. DO WE “**RECEIVE**” JESUS CHRIST AS OUR **SAVIOR**... AS OPPOSED TO, DO WE “**BELIEVE**” THAT JESUS **EXISTED**?
- F. **DEAD FAITH TOUCHES ONLY OUR INTELLECT**;
 1. **DEMONIC FAITH INVOLVES BOTH OUR MIND AND OUR EMOTIONS**;
 2. **BUT... DYNAMIC FAITH INVOLVES OUR INTELLECT, OUR EMOTIONS, AND OUR WILL.**
 3. **THE WHOLE PERSON PLAYS A PART IN TRUE SAVING DYNAMIC FAITH.**
 - a. OUR **MIND UNDERSTANDS THE TRUTH**;
 - b. OUR **EMOTIONS/HEART DESIRE THE TRUTH**;
 - c. AND OUR **WILL ACTS ON THE TRUTH.**
 - d. **DYNAMIC TRUTH LEADS TO ACTION BY DOING GOOD WORKS.**
- G. **THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM**:
 1. **James 2:21-24 (NLT2)** 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.**
 2. **ABRAHAM'S FAITH WAS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS WORKS.**
 3. **Titus 3:8 (NASB)** This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to **speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.** These things are good and profitable for men.
- H. **THE EXAMPLE OF RAHAB**:
 1. **James 2:25-26 (NLT2)** **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. **Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.**
 2. **JAMES' POINT: BECAUSE OF HER DYNAMIC FAITH RAHAB RESPONDED TO THE SITUATION WITH HER MIND AND HER EMOTIONS... BUT SHE ALSO RESPONDED WITH HER WILL... SHE DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

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- a. SHE **RISKED** HER OWN **LIFE** TO **HELP** THE JEWISH SPIES... AND SHE **RISKED** HER OWN **LIFE** BY **SHARING** THAT **INFORMATION** WITH HER PEOPLE.

- 1) **Hebrews 11:31 (NLT2)** It was by **faith** that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

6. **CLOSING:**

- A. JAMES 2:14-26 EMPHASIZES THAT **MATURE** BELIEVERS **PRACTICE** THE **TRUTH** IN **EVERYDAY** LIFE.

1. THAT **FAITH** IS **NOT** THE **DEAD** **FAITH** OF THE **INTELLECTUALS** OR THE **DEMONIC** **FAITH** OF THE **FALLEN** **SPIRITS**.
2. IT IS THE **DYNAMIC** **FAITH** OF MEN LIKE **ABRAHAM** AND WOMEN LIKE **RAHAB**... **FAITH** THAT **CHANGES** LIVES AND GOES TO **WORK** FOR **GOD**.

- B. IT IS **IMPORTANT** FOR EACH **PROFESSING** **CHRISTIAN** TO **EXAMINE** THEIR OWN **HEART** AND **LIFE** AND **MAKE** **SURE** THAT THEY **POSSESS** **TRUE** **SAVING** **FAITH**... **DYNAMIC** **FAITH**.

1. **2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT2)** Examine yourselves to see if your **faith** is **genuine**. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of **genuine** **faith**.

- C. **NOTE** JAMES IS **NOT** SAYING THAT **WORKS** SHOULD BE **"ADDED"** TO **FAITH** (FAITH + WORKS), **BUT** THAT **TRUE** **SAVING** **FAITH** **"INCLUDES"** **WORKS**... WHICH IS **NOT** **FAITH** + **WORKS** **BUT**... **FAITH** **THAT** **WORKS**.

JUSTIFICATION – TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

PAUL	JAMES
"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Rom. 3:28)	"You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone ." (Jas. 2:24)
Uses " justified " to mean " pronounced righteous in the sight of God "	Uses "justified" to mean " proved righteous in the sight of others "

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Shows how an unbeliever becomes a Christian	Shows how a believer lives as a Christian
Emphasizes the root of	Emphasizes the fruit of
Stresses inward disposition	Stresses outward actions
Demonstrates God's part with human participation	Demonstrates human part with God's help