

FAITH AND WORKS

James 2:14-26

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- How would you describe the relationship between faith and works/deeds? What place or purpose do actions, works, or deeds have in a person's faith life?
- Why is it important for us to know and understand the identifiable characteristics of real faith?

Many passages in the New Testament stress that we are not saved by our works but by grace alone through faith, yet here James stresses that good works are a necessary part of real faith. It's no surprise then that this passage in James has confused new believers and seasoned Christians alike. Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee discuss an important distinction James makes which reveals harmony between James and the whole message of the New Testament.

Reflection

- Identify ways your behavior has already transformed as a result of your faith in Christ Jesus. Celebrate these accomplishments and give praise to God for his gift of faith.
- Consider a recent interaction. Would you say your behavior during that interaction accurately reflects what you profess to believe? What would you celebrate? What would you like to do better in the future?
- Are there specific situations in which you find it harder to behave and act in ways that are consistent with the faith you profess? Consider the details of these situations; what traits can you ask God to develop in you that would help you in similar future situations?

Related Passages

- **Galatians 2:16**
- **Micah 6:6-8**
- **Hebrews 11**
- **Galatians 5**

Conclusion

Remember that faith is a journey, not a destination. Honestly reflecting on the consistency between your faith and actions is an opportunity for growth, for seeing God at work in your life, and for asking forgiveness if necessary. It is not meant for scorekeeping or earning points. God is a good and just God; he takes us as we are, but he does not leave us as we are. In Christ he redeems us and then continues to transform us into his image. Remember Matthew 7:7-8:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

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