

LESSON 6

NOW GET TO WORK!

JAMES 2:14–26



1 How do you feel about salespeople who try to sell you something that they probably wouldn't use themselves? What do you think of people who don't believe in their product?

2 When have you had to do something that you didn't believe in? What kept you going?



Read James 2:14–26 and the following notes:

☐ 2:14 ☐ 2:17 ☐ 2:18 ☐ 2:21–24 ☐ 2:25

3 What does James teach about the relationship between faith and deeds? What argument might James be countering?

4 Why can't we separate faith from deeds (2:18, 19)? How do people try to separate them today?

5 In what ways are Abraham and Rahab different? In what ways are they similar (2:21–25)?

6 If we are saved by faith alone, why are deeds important?



The relationship between faith and deeds is a very important theological topic. This was a major area of contention during the Reformation. The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by faith in Christ alone (Romans 3:28; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Galatians 2:15, 16). When James says that a person is not justified by faith alone (2:24), he isn't contradicting Paul's teaching in Romans 3:28 ("So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law"). James passionately challenges, stirs up, and admonishes all those who believe in Christ to put their faith into practice. Anything less would not be worthy of the God we serve and would not be genuine faith. When we become God's children by faith, God gives us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:25, 26), and we become joined to Christ (John 15:5). Because of this, genuine faith in Christ will always produce thoughts, words, and deeds that reflect God's character and his lordship. The relationship between faith and lifestyle is inseparable. It isn't that we are saved on the basis of what we do. Rather, our deeds are the inevitable result and evidence of God's redeeming work in us.

7 What is the difference between a faith that is weak and a faith that is dead?



8 What kind of reputation for faith in action does your church have in your community? If it's not what you would prefer, what might it take to improve that reputation?

9 How would you answer a person who pointed to the life of Abraham as proof that we are saved by what we do?

10 What would you say to a person who claimed to have faith in Christ but was living an unrepentant, ongoing lifestyle of sin?

11 If you were on trial for being a Christian, what areas of your life would provide strong evidence of genuine faith?

12 If you were on trial for being a Christian, what areas would provide insufficient evidence of genuine faith?

13 What might be some consequences for believers who are not clear on the relationship between faith and works?

14 Each evening this week, remind yourself that you are saved by faith, not by what you do. Consider how you lived out your faith during the day (how did your faith make a difference in what you did?). Then ask God to strengthen your faith.



- A** What do you think demons know about God? How can they have knowledge about God and still not follow him? What prevents you from following Christ when you have true knowledge?
- B** Some people think that Romans 3:28 and James 2:24 contradict each other. Is it possible for the Bible to contradict itself? What do you do when it seems that there is a contradiction?
- C** Why do you think Abraham was called God's friend? What did Jesus mean when he called those who follow him "my friends" (John 15:14)?

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