

James Session 5 / FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD / James 2:14-26

INTRODUCTION

Faith without Works (2:14-17)

When James says that faith needs to have “works” in order to be saving faith, what does he mean by that? (Does he mean that works need to be added to faith, or that works should naturally grow from faith?) Can you think of a real-life illustration of someone who claimed to have faith, but his life indicated that his faith was dead?

Response of a Critic (2:18-20)

How does James’s comment about the kind of belief that demons have (verse 19) help to establish his point? What’s the difference between correct theology and genuine, living faith? Do you know unsaved people who live moral lives and do wonderful things for others? What are the implications for people like that according to James?

Examples of Abraham and Rahab (2:21-26)

In verse 21, what does the phrase mean which says that Abraham’s “faith was completed by his works?” Is he saying that faith is alive but deficient until we add works to it? (Hint: Is a seed alive but deficient until we add a plant to it?) How should we treat people who claim to have faith but show no evidence of it? How should we respond to them? What do they need to hear from us? What should be their relationship with the church?

IMPLICATIONS

1. God declares us righteous on the basis of faith alone.
2. Living faith will express itself in obedience.
3. Dead faith does not save.