

11/23

HOME GROUP GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

LISTEN

Listen to the sermon and read through the main passages(s)



REFLECT

Prayerfully answer the questions below



DISCUSS

Meet with your group to discuss



RESPOND

Apply the truth of God's word to your life

BACKGROUND:

"Had there been no works, Abraham would not have been justified; but that would have been because the absence of works would have meant that he had no real faith."

C. E. B. Cranfield

In one of the most well-known sections of his letter, James answers the question, "What is saving faith?" Faith is a personal conviction that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. But claims can be empty. This is why James insists that genuine faith shows evidence through an obedience that serves others. He is not denying salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10). Instead, he is rejecting an "easy believism" that never engages the will.

James illustrates this with two notable figures from Jewish history. The first is Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, who was prepared to obey God's command to sacrifice Isaac, through whom God's promise of a great descendants would be fulfilled (Gen. 22). The second is Rahab, a pagan prostitute who gave shelter to the Israelite spies and publicly declared her belief in Israel's God as the only true God in heaven and on earth (Josh. 2). Their examples serve as models all believers should emulate: Genuine faith always shows itself in faithfulness.

OPEN:

1. When was the last time someone went out of their way to do something for you? What did their actions tell you about how they felt about you?

REFLECT:

2. Read James 2:14-17. What do his questions suggest about faith that lacks works? What is the problem with saying, "go in peace, be warmed and filled," when there is no effort to meet that person's needs?

3. Read James 2:18-26. While it might be tempting to think of actions like going to church, reading your Bible, and praying as proof of faith, James emphasizes the importance of prioritizing right actions in every part of our lives. Based on this passage, what are some ways we can see faith demonstrated through actions? How do actions support the credibility of faith claims?

4. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How do we reconcile Paul's message to the Ephesians with what we read in James? What is the difference between describing works as the basis of salvation (which Paul denies) and describing works as the evidence of faith (which James affirms)?

APPLY:

5. James is deeply concerned about an issue that arose in the early church that still affects us today. What does it look like when we try to separate faith from works? Can you think of any real-life examples where faith was claimed but not supported by a consistent lifestyle?

6. As you reflect on this passage, how would you like to grow as a person who demonstrates their faith through a life of good deeds? What kinds of things might prevent us from putting our faith into action in our workplaces, neighborhoods, and other parts of our lives outside of the church?

7. How would the world look different if every Christian practiced the active faith James talks about? As members of one church body, what are some ways we can work together to demonstrate our faith through action?

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