

# A FAITH THAT WORKS

## How does real faith change everything?

James emphasized demonstrating the authenticity of one's faith. A mere profession of belief, even if it is orthodox and sincere, is not enough. Such faith is not saving faith. Saving faith involves a vital relationship with Christ whose transformation of our lives overflows into our actions.

**Read: James 2:14-17**

*What do the questions in verse 14 imply about faith without works?*

### GOING DEEPER:

The word "faith" has the sense of trust in and commitment to Christ for salvation. The openness to receive God's grace brings redemption, and the redeemed live out that grace. The term "works" refers to good deeds—actions on others' behalf that demonstrate Christ's love (see v. 8).

James's question called for an obvious answer: An inactive faith accomplishes nothing. Good deeds arising from faith give concrete evidence of commitment to Christ. The reality of faith is shown in a lifestyle characterized by ministry to others in obedience to Christ. Faith cannot be separated from daily behaviour.

*In what way should the lifestyle of a Christian verify his or her faith?*

*Can you give a modern example of the situation described in verses James 2:15-16?*

*What is one way to tell if a person has a real, living faith?*

**Read: James 2:21-26**

### GOING DEEPER:

For examples of authentic faith, James turned to the Old Testament. First, he pointed to Abraham, the father of the Hebrews—the first patriarch. The example of Abraham and his offer of Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-19) affirms James's teachings about faith. Abraham's faith was proven genuine by his obedience to God's command. His faith made his good works possible. Faith's purpose in a believer's life is to produce good works; without good works, faith is incomplete. Good works demonstrate faith's integrity and maturity.

James's second example of faith demonstrated by works was Rahab the prostitute (Joshua 2:1-24). James emphasized that she had demonstrated her faith by protecting the spies. Her actions were evidence of her having a right relationship with God.

*Why do you think that James chose these two people as examples of faith from the Old Testament?*

*Is there anything you see in the stories of both Abraham and Rahab that points us to a faith that is active?*

**APPLICATION:**

Understanding the differences between saving faith and living faith is not beneficial if we do nothing with that understanding.

***What is the purpose of authentic faith?***

God saves us so that we can know him but also so that we can represent him.

***What one action that you have performed do you know you would not have engaged in if you didn't follow Jesus?***

***How would the world be different if every Christian demonstrated authentic faith as James describes it?***

***What are some of the things our church is already doing to minister to people in need? And can you get involved in serving alongside these teams?***

**REFLECT & PRAY:**

Take some time to reflect on what you have learned but how it can enable you to live a life of faith that does good to others.

Pray for opportunities to reflect God's love to those who are part of your personal world

Pray for our church and the incredibly important ministries that are showing faith in action