

Active Faith

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. ²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. ²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." James 2:14-26 (NIV)

Saving faith results in a distinctive life

Saving faith promotes works. (vs. 22)

Saving faith needs works. (vs. 22)

Saving faith precedes works. (vs. 23)

"The Bible is very easy to understand, but we as Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we do understand, we are obligated to act accordingly." - Soren Kierkegaard

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"I wonder what would happen if we all agreed to read one of the Gospels until we came to a place that told us to do something, then went out to do it, and only after we had done it, began reading again? There are aspects of the Gospels that are puzzling and difficult to understand. But our problems are not centered around the things we don't understand, but rather in the things we do understand, the things we could not possibly misunderstand. Our problem is not so much that we don't know what we should do. We know perfectly well, but we don't want to do it" - Peter Marshall, former Chaplain of the United States Senate

Small Group & Personal Reflection Questions:

Read James 2:14-26

1. Can you think of a person that has an active faith? How do you know they have an active faith?
2. When reading verses 14-17, could James be describing you?
 - a. If yes, explain why. What could you do to change this?
 - b. If no, explain why. What will you do to keep this up?
3. How would you describe your faith compared to the demons in verse 19?
4. Has there ever been a time in your life where you expressed your faith like Abraham and Rahab (vs. 21-26)? What did you do?
5. Do you have an active faith? Explain.