



God Has an App for That!

Leaders Notes Week 4

“Resuscitate a Dying Faith”

James 2:14-26

1. Faith without Works Is Dead. James continues the theme that hearing/faith must lead to doing/works. Although it may seem as if James is contradicting Paul’s “by grace you have been saved through faith ... not a result of works” (Eph. 2:8–9), in reality there is no dichotomy between faith and works, for Paul and James would agree that the basis of salvation is grace alone through faith, with works not the basis but the necessary result thereof (Eph. 2:10).
2. Clothing and food (basic necessities) are used as an illustration of what faith without works looks like in everyday life. In itself the phrase Go in peace, be warmed and filled is a pious wish and prayer for the welfare of the poor, but in reality it is a cop-out, masking a refusal to help the person in need. There is no good (Gk. ophelos, “profit, honor”) in such a prayer. “What good is it?” frames vv. 14–16. Go around and share how you see this lived out today in our culture. Remember, as the leader you may have to be transparent and share your personal challenges in this area.
3. This question reminds us of how there are some who live out these truths and some who do not. Go around and allow members to share their heart in this area. Some members may get deep and personal, remember to be sensitive and encouraging so that they may feel hope and make changes today.
4. He describes faith with the idea that works follow it. Believing is not enough. James stresses its inadequacy, since even the demons believe this, and they shudder. Mere mental assent to the Christian faith does not save anyone. The faith that saves, as both Paul and James affirm, embraces the truth of the gospel and acts accordingly.

5. The Samaritan had compassion, bound up his wounds, gave him a ride, took the man to the inn, paid for the inn and aftercare...etc. In other words, the Samaritan took care of the man's physical needs and put action behind his conviction to help. Go around and share how the Priest, the Levite and the Samaritan would react, based on the parable you just read. Their reaction might be sobering, maybe finally realizing that it is not good enough to acknowledge someone's need, but actually having to do something about it.

6. James continues his rebuttal by citing the examples of Abraham and Rahab, who were both shown by their deeds to be righteous. In these verses, James really drives the point home of how faith and works are to go hand in hand. Too often, we separate those two and never allow them to infuse us to proper Christian living.

Abraham was called a friend of God, in contrast, to those who have no acts of obedience to prove their claims to faith and are therefore seen to be friends of this world (James 4:4). He was willing to sacrifice his son as the Lord had commanded.

Rahab the prostitute believed the stories of God's saving work for the Hebrews (Josh. 2:8-11). Rahab personally risked hiding the Jewish spies from her own people, then lowered them and escaped (Josh. 2:15). Thus, she became a model of faith completed in works.

7. The point of this question is so that group members can make the connection that when we put action behind our faith, God allows us to grow and proves His faithfulness. Go around and share how you have experienced this yourself. Encourage others in your group to share their experiences, as this will promote spiritual growth.

8. For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

(James 2:26 ESV)

James again seems at first to contradict Paul's teaching that one is justified by faith alone (Rom. 3:28), but the two are compatible. For James, "faith alone" means a bogus kind of faith, mere intellectual agreement without a genuine personal trust in Christ that bears fruit in one's life.

James, in agreement with Paul, argues that true faith is never alone, that it always produces works (cf. Eph. 2:10).



FURTHER STUDY |

There is a reoccurring theme throughout scripture for each one of these topical studies. Take this week as the Leader of your group to immerse yourself in the reading of the Word and see how these verses can help you download God's app to Resuscitate a Dying Faith.

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Jeremiah 32:17, 26-27
- 1 Chronicles 29:10-13
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 27
- Psalm 121
- Matthew 8:23-27
- Matthew 14:22-31

