

Faith Takes Grit: Genuine Faith Works

James 2:14-26

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Background and context:

1. James is writing to scattered and struggling Jewish Christians.
2. Those Christians were religious but struggling with sin.
3. Throughout the book, James' goal is to describe what genuine living faith looks like.

Q's: Can you relate to any of these 3 aspects of the background and context? Which one(s)? How can we relate this to our lives in 2019? What impact does this background and context have in your life today?

The Big Idea:

True, Genuine, Saving Faith = Faith + Works

Salvation comes by faith alone, but true faith is never alone.

Works don't earn our salvation; the evidence it.

Q's: In verse 2:14, James speaks of a person having faith without deeds and asks, "Can such faith save him?" Can it? Why is it so important to have deeds along with faith? What does that look like in your personal life? What are your motives? Do you weigh in more on the "faith" side of the scale or the "works" side? What does Jesus say about faith and works (Matthew 7:26-27)?

Applying James' 3 main points:

1. Faith – Works = Ineffective and Dead – vv. 14-17, 19-20
2. Works – Faith = Worthless and Dead – v. 18
3. Faith + Works = True, Genuine, Saving Faith – vv. 21-26

Q's: Give a modern example, from your life experience, of the situation described in James 2:15-16. In your own words, explain the meaning of James 2:18 (worthless and dead). Doesn't James 2:18 contradict Paul in Romans 3:28 when he writes "man is justified (saved) by faith without the deeds (works) of the law"? What is the point of 2:19 where James says that even the demons have faith?

Our Response:

Q's: In Ephesians 2:8-10, I believe that Paul outlines 3 steps when it comes to faith and works. What are the three steps? Do you live those out in your life? Was Abraham saved by faith or works (Gen. 15:3-6, Romans 4:3)? In your daily life, how do your deeds truly demonstrate your faith in God? Why is an intellectual knowledge of God dangerous? How does that question math the point that James makes in 2:19 where James says that even the demons have faith?

