

# “Avoiding A Dead Faith”

James – Doing Church Right #4

## INTRODUCTION

As we continue our study in the book of James we come to one of his most recognizable statements, “Faith without works is dead”. This verse has been the subject of discussion within the church. If we are saved by grace through faith, why do we need works? What about those who try to “earn” their way to heaven by works? In this study we will consider how we can demonstrate true faith, rather than the “dead faith” James warns us about.

### *Ice Breaker (Optional):*

What was the last item you tried to use only to find the battery was dead?

## Study Questions (45 MIN)

### True Faith is Action

#### **Q1. Read James 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 3:17-18**

The word James uses for faith (pistis) refers not only to a belief, but also to a firm assurance or guarantee that something is true. It is not our faith, but what we place our faith in that ultimately must be found true. According to Ephesians 2:8-9 by what have we been saved, and what role does our faith play in our salvation? What does verse 9 tell us about our works? In a life controlled by God, what response would you expect toward those in need? Both James 2:14 and 1 John 3:18 refer to those whose profession of faith is not evidenced in their actions. What are some thoughts, or voices, that contend against your expressing compassion for those in need? How might knowing that God’s love and power are guaranteed to you, influence your response?

### True Faith is Submitting to God

#### **Q2. Read James 2:18-19; Mark 1:24; Deuteronomy 6:4**

Clearly, James is saying that believing, without submitting to the Lordship of Christ, isn’t enough to save you. (James 2:19, Mark 1:24) If your works are not a means of salvation, why does James stress their importance? If believing God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4, James 2:18) is not sufficient to save us, why does James commend those who believe? In what way has your submission to God been tested?

### True Faith is obeying

#### **Q3. Read James 2:20-24; Hebrews 11:17-19**

James clarifies himself in verse 22, pointing out that faith is perfected or completed by our works. One example of this is when Abraham offered his son Isaac. What does verse 21 say he gained by the “work” of offering

Isaac? James says this fulfilled the scripture “Abraham believed God”, in other words his actions were the evidence of his faith. What does Hebrews 11: 17-19 tell us Abraham believed about God? How did offering to sacrifice Isaac give the evidence of that belief?

### True Faith is for everyone

#### **Q4. Read James 2:25-26; Joshua 2:8-9; Hebrews 11:31**

The final example of works as evidence of a true faith was an unlikely one; not only a woman, but a prostitute, Rahab! What message do you think the Apostle James wanted to express to his readers by choosing Rahab to exemplify true faith? Based on her statement in Joshua 2:5, what did Rahab believe about God and how did she display her faith through her works? God calls all of us to a true faith that can be demonstrated through our works. Is there a way you feel God has called you to confirm your faith through action, and how have you responded?

## Wrap-Up

James warns us about faith consisting of all words and no action. If we have a true and vibrant faith it will be evidenced in actions that reflect our submission to God. Through our obedience we place our complete confidence in Him, confirming what we believe by the way we live our lives. God may not call on you to sacrifice your son, or risk your own life, but every one of us is called on to live out our faith through submission and obedience as evidence to the world of the God we believe in.

### Memory Verse

*So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*-James 2:17 ESV*

### Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members’ needs: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Challenge: If you find that you have been professing faith but failing to show compassion to those in need, ask God if you need to fully relinquish control of your life so that He can fully express His love through you.*

