

STUDY 2

FAITH & WORKS ENTWINED

*"Paul denounces the idea of salvation by dead works;
James rejects salvation by dead faith."*

J.I. Packer

Understanding how both 'faith' and 'works' relate with each other can be one of the biggest challenges in following Jesus. Often, we can easily forget that faith is more than a 'thinking' or 'feeling' word – faith is a 'doing' word. Faith is acting on what we believe in – therefore, *'faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead'*.

Specifically, James explains:

1. That faith-inspired works shows belief and transformation (James 2:14-26)
2. The distinction between 'hearers' and 'doers' (James 1:22-25)
3. Prioritising care for the 'poor, widowed, and orphan' (James 2:1-9)

READ TOGETHER

Take turns reading several verses each of James 2:1-26.

CONSIDER AND SHARE TOGETHER

Discuss together the following four points (taking turns reading the supporting verses)

1. **Salvation is by faith alone; but faith without works is 'dead'** – Faith with works demonstrates the outworking of our salvation and fruitfulness of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Simply confessing faith in Jesus is empty and pointless unless it is actively expressed through our **example, action, and witness**.
 - **DISCUSS:** *Can you share an occasion where God has called you to be a 'doer' and not just a 'hearer'? Have there been times when you have hesitated or avoided acting on your faith?*
2. **Show your faith by your works (James 2:14-26)** – Following Jesus isn't just about 'our soul's salvation'. Following Jesus leads us to the outworking of our faith –

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becoming a living expression of 'thy Kingdom come'.

- **DISCUSS:** *What are ways that you are able to demonstrate your faith? Does sharing your faith with others come easily to you? Why do you think both of these things can be a challenge?*
3. **What type of works? (James 1:22-25; 2:1-9; 15-16)** – Known as the 'Amos of the New Testament', James was distinctively passionate about serving the 'poor, widow and orphan'. He outlines these types of works and faith-inspired action – inspired by his brother's teachings with the Beatitudes, prayer, and what it means to be 'salt and light' in a broken, hurting world.
- **DISCUSS:** *Read both Amos 5:21-24 and Matthew 25:31-46. What do these passages reveal about God's heart for the poor and oppressed?*
4. **Faith with works leads us to be a 'friend of God' (James 2:23)** – Drawing upon both Abraham's and Rahab's authentic example of faith that produces works, James reminds us of what takes place in our relationship with God – leading us to be known as a 'friend' of God.
- **DISCUSS:** *Of all the examples he could have given to demonstrate that 'faith without works is dead,' why do you think James chose Abraham (Patriarch of Israel) and Rahab (a prostitute)? (ref v21-26)*

PRAY TOGETHER

Lord, help me see others as You do – with compassion, mercy, and generosity. Help me be quick to my own sins and confess them without hesitation. Keep my heart soft, and my mind wise. Increase my faith and let Your Holy Spirit empower me to demonstrate my faith with action – especially in situations that are difficult and challenging. Let me experience deeper friendship with You, Amen.



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EXTRA RESOURCES

- Daily Devotional: 365-Day Daily Devotional
[*God's Message For Each Day: Wisdom From The Word Of God*](#) - Eugene Peterson
- Book
[*The Wisdom of God - Letting His Truth and Goodness Direct Your Steps*](#) - A.W. Tozer

PREPARE

Read the following passage - James 3:13-18 - in the coming week to prepare for the next study, 'THE GETTING OF WISDOM'.

