

October 24th, 2021

Undivided Devotion: The Letter of James

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James 2:14-26: Faith Bears Fruit

1. What fruitful faith does *not* look like (vv. 14-19):

- **Saying the right words (vv. 14-17):**

- **Thinking the right thoughts (vv. 18-19)**

- **Feeling the right feelings (v. 19)**

2. What fruitful faith *does* look like (vv. 20-26)

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper:

2. What is James' *main* point about the relationship between faith and works (see vv. 14, 17-18, 26)? How does James' argument in this passage relate to what he has just said about mercy and judgment (see vv. 12-13)? What objection is James responding to (v. 18)? Restate this objection in your own words.
3. In verse 24, James argues from the example of Abraham that a person is "*justified by works and not by faith alone.*" The Apostle Paul says that we are justified by faith, not by works of the law (Galatians 2:15-16; see Romans 3:20-28; 4:1-8; Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 2:8-9). How can we reconcile Paul with James? When reading Scripture, why is it important that we make a distinction between words and the concepts they convey? In context, what does James mean by "*works*" (see 2:18, 22), "*faith alone*" (see 2:17), and "*justified*" (see 2:21, 23). How does James' utilization of these terms differ from Paul's? How are James and Paul ultimately complementary, rather than contradictory (see Galatians 5:6)?
4. What *is* the essence of biblical faith? Why will such faith *inevitably* produce works? How does the story of Abraham illustrate this? How does Abraham's offering of Isaac in Genesis 22 "*fulfill*" Genesis 15:6 (2:23)? How does the story of Rahab illustrate the essence of biblical faith (2:24)?

Application:

5. In verses 15-17, James provides an example of a believer who is lacking "*daily*" food (see v. 15). Why is this reference significant (see Matthew 6:11)? What is James implying about the way God answers the prayers of needy believers (see also 1 John 3:16-18)? What implications does this have for us? How might this impact the way we pray?
6. James gives three examples of faith which – by themselves – are insufficient; (1) saying the right words, (2) thinking the right thoughts, and (3) feeling the right feelings (see vv. 14-19). Which of these stood out to you? Why? Which of these are you most likely to fall back on as proof of your own faith?
7. Jeff mentioned that the key to having a fruitful faith is not trying harder, but grasping more deeply the promises and character of Jesus. Why is this the case? What truth about Jesus do you need to focus on this week? How would your life look different if you believed this, and took Jesus at his word?
8. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?