

Living by Faith VI: James

"By Acting Out Faith"

James 2: 14-26

Going Beyond the sermons into the Scripture preached by Pastor Peter Oh on September 17, 2017

Entering In:

Reviewing James' exhortations in chapters 1-2, share three exhortations that you feel are challenging to follow.

- Consider trials pure joy (1:2)
- Ask God for wisdom (1:5)
- Believe God's promises without doubting (1:6)
- Be quick to listen and slow to speak/become angry (1:19)
- Not only listen to the word but also do the word (1:22)
- Keep a tight rein on your tongue (1:26)
- Look after orphans and widows (1:27)
- Keep yourself from being polluted by the world (1:27)
- Do not show favoritism (2:1)
- Keep the royal law (2:8)
- Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom (2:12)
- Be merciful (2:13)

1. How would you answer James' *first* question in verse 14? (See also 1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

What does James imply in his *second* question in verse 14?

To what is "such faith" referring?

What are the characteristics of "such faith"?

2. For each of the following choices, explain why it either does or doesn't describe *faith* that *is useful* according to James.

- A. belief in God
- B. unquestioning allegiance to God
- C. A spiritual transformation of the heart that changes one's behavior
- D. A personal commitment to making this world a better place
- E. other

3. What is James teaching in verses 15-17?

What is implied about the *deeds* that accompany true faith? For each of the following choices, explain why it either does or doesn't describe *deeds* as James uses the term.

- A. they are *good* acts
- B. they merit God's favor
- C. they can only flow from true faith
- D. they are accredited to us as righteousness by God
- E. other

Do you agree with the statement, “In every church there are struggling brothers and sisters who need to be cared for”, as mentioned in the sermon? Why or why not?

4. How does verse 19 prove James’ point in verse 17?

What are *good works*?

Read the following answer from the Heidelberg Catechism (Q.91) and define *good works* in your own words.

[Good works are] those only which proceed from true faith, and are done according to the Law of God, unto His glory; and not such as rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men.

5. What two examples of good works from the Old Testament does James cite in this passage?

Why might these examples *not* have occurred to most people?

What does that teach you about *good works*?

How does this prove that faith without deeds is useless?

Give some examples of what some believe are good works, but which are *not* good because they “rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men.”

6. Explain how the word “be justified” (δικαιόω, *dikaioō*) can be used differently? (cf. Luke 23:41; Romans 3:4)

Which way does James use the word “be justified”?

7. In verse 24, does James contradict the doctrine of *Sola Fide*, “salvation by faith alone”? (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:28) Why or why not?

[Explain using different kinds of faith and works as Paul and James used, respectively.]

True or false – this passage teaches, “Faith alone justifies, but the faith which justifies is not alone.” Explain.

Is James saying that it is possible to be completely orthodox in what you confess you believe and still not be saved? What in the text might lead you to that conclusion?

Living It Out:

Choose one item from the “Entering In” list that you need to practice in order to live by faith.

Spend time in prayer asking God for his Spirit to work this change in your life.

