

July 19, 2020
The Bridge Bible Fellowship
Pastor Paul S. Brown
James 2:14-26

“Is Your Faith Dead Or Alive? – Part 2”

1. Paul and James agree that justification (being declared righteous by God) is by faith alone (Gal. 2:9-10; Acts 15:21-29).
2. Paul and James agree that genuine faith results in works (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 1:16; 2:7; 3:8; James 1:26-27; 2:1ff).
3. Paul and James supplement one another. Paul says, “Faith PLUS works will not save” (Rom. 3:20-22; 4:1-10). James says, “Faith WITHOUT works will not save” (James 2:14-17). Paul is saying that salvation is only by grace. James is saying that salvation only by grace produces works. Paul is defending against the Legalist. James is defending against the Libertine.

A. Dead Faith (14-20)

1. Empty Profession of Faith (14-17)

a. Proposition (14)

b. Illustration (15-16)

c. Application (17)

2. Hollow (dead) Orthodoxy (18-20)

a. Proposition (18)

b. Illustration (19)

c. Application (20)

So what?

Discussion & Application:

1. What is a dead faith? In what ways are a dead faith and a living faith similar?
2. **James 2:16** could be translated, “Go in peace, warm yourselves and fill yourselves,” or “Be warmed and filled by someone else.” Read **Mt. 25:31-46**; **1 John 3:14-18**. How does that compare with James 2:15-16? What are some excuses people make for not meeting the needs of others? What does this potentially reveal about the true condition of their heart?
3. **James 2:18** is very difficult to translate because they didn’t have punctuation in the Greek manuscripts. The **NASB95** says, **But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”** The **ESV** translates, **But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.** The **NLT** translates, **Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”** In the second two examples, the person is arguing with James that they have faith (even though there are no works). What would you say to a person who SAYS they have a sincere faith in Jesus, but there is no shred of evidence (fruit) in their life?
4. What do demons believe about God? Monotheism? Trinity? Creation? God’s attributes? Virgin birth? Sinless life of Jesus? Death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus? [Note: knowing all of these things makes it easier for them to twist the truth in false religions and cults] How does James describe their faith even going beyond normal orthodoxy? What do they add emotionally to their orthodox faith? What good is that faith to them? What point is he making about the dead faith of some humans?
5. What writings of the Apostle Paul would substantiate what James is saying about faith without works being dead? What writings of John? Of the author of Hebrews? Of Peter? Of John? Of Jude? Compile as complete a list as possible.
6. Based on your answers to question #4, if there are that many verses that agree with James, why do so many people today still want to say that repentance and obedience are not necessary to go to heaven? Why would some say that if a person at one time professes faith in Jesus and then later walks away from Jesus, denies him, lives a life of unrepentant sin, and even becomes an atheist, they will still go to heaven? What are they trying to defend? What do they misunderstand about the nature of genuine saving grace and faith? (See Titus 2:11-14)
7. Read 2 Cor. 13:5 and take the faith test. Do you have a living faith or a dead faith? How do you know? What specific evidence is there in your life that you have been transformed by the Gospel of Jesus? [Note: the biblical answer isn’t that you prayed a prayer, walked an aisle, got baptized... See the man Simon in Acts 8 who did all those things, yet his heart was not right with God and he was still in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity.]
8. Who do you know that has a dead faith? Pray for them and then go to them to talk about it. Encourage them to listen to these messages. Tell them how God gave you a living faith that is changing you from the inside-out.
9. If you haven’t already done so, **memorize James 2:14-26** and quote it in the morning, at noon, and at night every day this week. Don’t forget to review the first chapter too. Ask the LORD to transform you from the inside out so that your life is a testimony of the reality of a living faith.

TELL THE TRUTH

Is Your Faith Dead or Alive? Part 2

James 2:14-26

- A. Dead Faith (14-20)
 - 1. Empty Profession of Faith (14-17)
 - a. Proposition (14)

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

- a. Proposition (14)
- b. Illustration (15-16)

¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

- a. Proposition (14)
- b. Illustration (15-16)
- c. Application (17)

17 Even so faith, if it has no works,
is dead, *being* by itself.

A. Dead Faith (14-20)

1. Empty Profession of Faith (14-17)
2. Hollow (Dead) Orthodoxy (18-20)

a. Proposition (18)

¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

- a. Proposition (18)
- b. Illustration (19)

19 You believe that God is one.
You do well; the demons also believe, and
shudder.

- a. Proposition (18)
- b. Illustration (19)
- c. Application (20)

²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

So what?

2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (NASB95)

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.