

Sunday September 27, 2020 – Faith Under Fire Pt 4
Do You Have A Real Faith – Faith in Action?

‘Chapter 1: A Mature Person Is Positive Under Pressure

- ✓ Positively Joyful
- ✓ Positively Patient
- ✓ Positively Confident
- ✓ Positively Blessed
- ✓ Positively Proper
 - a. Proper Perspective (James 1:12-18)
 - b. Proper Behavior (James 1:9-27)

Chapter 2: A Mature Person Puts His Faith Into Action

James 2:14-26...¹⁴ *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?* ¹⁵ *Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food.* ¹⁶ *If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?* ¹⁷ *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* ¹⁸ *But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.* ¹⁹ *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.* ²⁰ *You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?* ²¹ *Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?* ²² *You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.* ²³ *And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend.* ²⁴ *You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.* ²⁵ *In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?* ²⁶ *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

DO YOU HAVE REAL FAITH?

Adapted from Developing a Faith That Works – Part 7
Rick Warren November 2, 1986

James 2:14-26

“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by actions, is dead.” (vs. 17)

I. WHO IS RIGHT - JAMES OR PAUL? BOTH

	Paul (Gal. 2:16)	&	James (Ja. 2:24)
Problem:	"Legalism"		"Laxity"
"WORKS"	Jewish laws		Christian lifestyle
Focus:	"Root of salvation" (internal/unseen)		"Fruit of salvation" (external/seen)
Purpose:	How to <u>know</u> I'm a Christian		How to <u>show</u> I'm a Christian

“For it is BY GRACE you have been saved THROUGH FAITH...FOR a life of GOOD WORKS which God has already prepared for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:8-10 (GN)

“I want to talk to you today about what James has to say about how to have a real faith. There are a lot of phony religions out there -- people who think they are Christians and really aren't. In this passage James talks about the difference between real and counterfeit Christians, authentic believers and fake believers. He talks about how you have a real faith.

This is one of the most controversial and misunderstood passage in the book of James. Every cult misunderstands it and they try to use this passage to prove you have to work your way to heaven. It's important that you get what I'm going to talk about today so that when those guys come to your door, you'll know what to say to them. The entire New Testament teaches that we are saved by faith alone. *“By grace, through faith, we are saved.”* James comes along and says, “It's not just faith but faith and works.” What is he talking about? James and Paul. They are both right. They are talking about different things.

Paul was fighting the problem of legalism -- the problem of "I've got to keep all the Jewish laws and regulations to be a Christian." Paul is talking to that group.

James is not fighting legalism but laxity -- those that say, "It doesn't matter what you do as long as you believe."

They are fighting two different enemies. But they both use the word "works" in different ways. When Paul uses the word "works" he's talking about Jewish laws like circumcision and things like that. When James uses it, he's talking about the lifestyle of a Christian -- acts of love. It's totally different. Paul focuses on the root of salvation -- what happens to me internally. James focuses on the fruit of salvation -- what happens on the outside. Jesus said, *"By their fruits you will know them."* Paul is talking about, "How to know you're a Christian." James is talking about, "How to show you're a Christian." Paul is talking about his passages on faith alone, how to become a believer. James talks about, how to behave like a believer. It is not a contradiction.

It's summed up in Ephesians 2:8-10, *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, for a life of good works that God has already prepared for us to do."* There are three prepositions in this passage -- "by grace", "through faith", "for good works". If you get those out of order, you're in trouble. If you think you're saved by works, for faith you're in trouble. But he's saying we're saved by grace through faith. We're saved just by accepting God's gift.

But how do I show I am a believer? James says there's five ways you can know you've got the real thing. He gives us five steps or principles here in this passage". (Rick Warren)

WHAT IS REAL FAITH?

1. **REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU SAY**

"What good is it, my brothers, if a man CLAIMS to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such "faith" save him? (vs. 14)

Matthew 7:20-23

"It doesn't say he, actually has faith, he just claims to have it. He talks about it. He knows all the right phrases. There are a lot of people who claim to be Christians. George Gallup says that 50 million Americans say, "I'm born again," but you don't see anything in their lifestyle.

Today we tend to label people as Christians if they make the slightest sound of being a believer. It's more than just talk that is involved in real faith. Jesus said, *"Not everybody who says to me 'Lord, Lord' is going to enter into the kingdom of heaven."* Not everybody with a Christian bumper sticker is a believer

Charlie Brown and Linus are inside all bundled up and Snoopy's out in the cold shivering in front of an empty dogfood bowl. Charlie and Linus are having a discussion on how sad it is that Snoopy is hungry and cold. "He's cold and hungry. We ought to do something about it." They walk outside and say to Snoopy, "Be of good cheer, Snoopy."

2. **REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU FEEL**

"Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" (vs. 15-16)

"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"

1 John 3:17

(Also 3:14-16, 4:7-20)

"Real faith is more than just sympathy and feeling and emotion. You get assistance. You do something about it. You act on it. Real faith takes the initiative. A real believer has real faith and it's practical. It gets involved with people. He's talking about Christians here. When you become a part of God's family you have some family responsibilities. A real believer cares about other believers. (R Warren)

"James is saying that if my faith doesn't lead me to share with others it's wrong. Verse 17, *"In the same way, faith by itself if it's not accompanied by actions is dead."* If I don't feel like helping other Christians, I don't have a sick faith, I have a dead faith. James is laying it on the line. He says, "Do you want real faith? It's more than just something you say and it's more than just something you feel."

(Rick Warren)

3. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE

"But someone will say, 'You have faith - I have deeds.' SHOW ME your faith without deeds, and I will SHOW YOU my faith by what I do." "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder!" (vs. 18, 19)

"James would have made a good Missourian. The theme of the state of Missouri is "Show me". James is saying, "You say you're a Christian? Prove it. Let me see your actions back up your words."

The word believe in Greek means "to trust in, to cling to, to rely on, to commit yourself completely." I believe Hitler existed, but I'm not a Nazi. I'm a Christian because I believe in Jesus. But it's more than just a head knowledge. A lot of folks are going to miss heaven by 18 inches. They've got it in their head but not their heart. They say "I believe in God." James says, "Big deal. Everybody believes in God. How do you have a creation without a Creator? But that's not enough."

Real faith is not just saying "I believe". There is so much easy believism in America. Article in the Register: "Many in Orange County believe but don't practice." They did a survey and asked people all over Orange County and they found a high degree of belief. "Sure, I'm a believer. I'm a Christian." Do you attend church? "No." "Do you donate your time?" "No." "Do you tithe?" "No." James would say that's a phony belief. You're just conning yourself. A lot of people are doing that.

Real faith always produces change. Real faith is not just something you say. It's not just something you feel. It's not just something you believe"! (Rick Warren)

4. REAL FAITH IS SOMETHING YOU DO

²⁰ ... do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

In the next couple of verses, James gives two illustrations that say real faith is something you do. Faith is active. It's not passive. It's a commitment.

Two illustrations of two very different people, Abraham and Rahab -- exact opposite extremes. Abraham is a man. Rahab is a woman. Abraham is Jewish. Rahab is a Gentile. Abraham is a patriarch. Rahab is a prostitute. Abraham is a somebody. Rahab is a nobody. Abraham is a major character in the Bible. Rahab is a minor character. He uses these illustrations to say, it doesn't matter who you are as long as you've got the important thing. They only had one thing in common -- their faith in God. Their faith in God led them to an action.

- **Abraham (vs. 20-24)**
- **Rahab (vs. 25)**

In a sense James is saying here... 'Talk is cheap. Put your money where your mouth is. "I believe in Jesus!" Prove it. Our faith is demonstrated by our actions. Actions speak louder than words. Our behavior shows what we really believe.

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves." 2 Corinthians 13:5

Our faith is not determined by what we do,
it is demonstrated by what we do.