

# Living Out the Gospel of Jesus

## Summary and Goal

Through faith in Jesus, God not only forgives us of our sins but He also declares us to be as righteous as Jesus Himself. This is called the doctrine of justification. Sinners, Jews and Gentiles alike, have a new status as God's people because they have been declared righteous in Christ. The Book of James is concerned with the works that come out of a justifying faith. This letter teaches us that works always and necessarily accompany saving faith; good works are evidence of a faith that justifies. Being justified by faith, God's people are empowered through the Holy Spirit to live a life of loving God and loving their neighbors as themselves. We are saved by faith alone, but our faith produces good works.

## Session Outline

1. Faith is dead without works (Jas. 2:14-17).
2. Faith is proven by works (Jas. 2:18-19).
3. Faith is made complete by works (Jas. 2:20-26).

*Background Passage: James 1-2*

## Session in a Sentence

God justifies people by faith, not works; however, true faith is verified by works.

## Christ Connection

Salvation only comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not from works (Eph. 2:8-9). However, true faith leads to good works in the life of the believer, verifying the reality of that faith in order to bring God glory and draw others to faith in Christ as well.

## Missional Application

Because we are grateful to God for our free gift of salvation through Jesus, we perform good works from our faith so that others might also place faith in Christ.

Date of My Bible Study: \_\_\_\_\_

# Group Time

GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

## Introduction

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraph on page 84 in the DDG to note the general thrust of James's letter to the church: *Less talk and more action.*

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*Less talk and more action.* This cultural maxim accords well with the Book of James. James's letter is about faith in action: "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1:22). James took action by encouraging his poor brothers and sisters to suffer injustice in such a way that their steadfast faith would be an example to their oppressors (4:1-8). Violence doesn't bring about justice; love does (1:19-20). James also encouraged those with means to care for those who were poor and distressed, namely, orphans and widows (1:27). To both groups, and to everyone in between, James explained that true worship is reflected and empowered by God the Holy Spirit not merely in what we say we believe but in how we live that out by loving those around us.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What are some ways we can show our love for others? (saying "I love you"; serving others in ways they need; giving gifts; providing for their needs; standing up for them when they are oppressed; by listening)

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**SUMMARIZE:** Through faith in Jesus, God not only forgives us of our sins but He also declares us to be as righteous as Jesus Himself. This is called the doctrine of justification. Sinners, Jews and Gentiles alike, have a new status as God's people because they have been declared righteous in Christ. The Book of James is concerned with the works that come out of a justifying faith. This letter teaches us that works always and necessarily accompany saving faith; good works are evidence of a faith that justifies. Being justified by faith, God's people are empowered through the Holy Spirit to live a life of loving God and loving their neighbors as themselves. We are saved by faith alone, but our faith produces good works.

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## Point 1: Faith is dead without works (Jas. 2:14-17).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read James 2:14-17 (DDG p. 85).

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 85) to help your group members grasp the important connection between faith and works, notably here, care for poor brothers and sisters in Christ.

James believed that faith in the Messiah transforms us to love the vulnerable and weak. Those who are incorporated into the righteousness of Christ by faith are empowered by God the Holy Spirit to live out that righteousness by providing for the needs of our poor brothers and sisters. For James, and all the apostles, how we treat the “least of these” is an expression of our faith—or the lack thereof—in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jas. 2:1,14; see Matt. 25:31-46). How we treat those in need reflects our allegiance to the one true God. The way we treat people is an act of worship.



### Voices from Church History

“The love with which man loves God and his neighbour is the love of God and no other; for there is no other love; there is no love which is free or independent from the love of God.”<sup>1</sup>

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer  
(1906-1945)


- James understood that through the redemptive work of Jesus, the barriers that separated people based on ethnicity, gender, and, here, class have been crucified on the cross of Jesus (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11). God’s new people—Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free, rich and poor—are one and equal in the Messiah. Therefore, they are to treat each other with love and dignity as brothers and sisters in Christ. Ethnocentrism, sexism, and classism do not belong in the body of Christ.

**Commentary:** James and Paul were not at odds with each other. Paul declared the gospel that the righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22). James believed the same, but he emphasized that there is a faith that cannot save and a faith that does; this distinction rests in works (Jas. 2:14). For James, “works” is faith in loving action (Jas. 2:8). Works do not save us, but saved people do works of love. The evidence of being a follower of the Messiah is loving what Jesus loves—people (see Matt. 25:44-45). James expected one’s faith in Jesus to overflow in tangible care for the poor (Jas. 2:14-17); Paul made every effort to do just that through his preaching, his missionary journeys, and his letters to the churches (Gal. 2:10).

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 As followers of Jesus, what is our responsibility to the poor? (to share the gospel with them; to help provide for their needs as the Lord commands and leads; to love and care for them; to show them respect and dignity as image-bearers of God)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 85) to emphasize that our works, such as caring for believers in the church who are poor, gives evidence that our faith in Jesus is alive and well.

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In this letter, James rebuked the believers for showing favoritism to the rich over the poor (Jas. 2:1-9). They were not worshiping the Lord Jesus because they dishonored their poor brothers and sisters whom God had blessed with a rich faith. James said the wealthy people they favored were ones who blasphemed the name of Christ, likely because they took advantage of the poor (2:7; 5:1-6). The “faith” of such people is dead. So rather than side with rich oppressors, they were to love and care for their poor and demonstrate their faith in Jesus was alive and well.

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*Application:* Wealth is not evil, nor is power. However, James admonished people who used wealth, power, and privilege in the wrong way:

- to show favoritism to the wealthy over the poor (Jas. 2:1-4,9)
- to dishonor and oppress the poor in the church and outside the church family (Jas. 2:6)
- to neglect the poor by not providing food and clothing for their brothers and sisters in the household of faith (Jas. 2:14-16)
- to exploit the poor through fraud and withholding wages that were rightly earned (Jas. 5:1-6).

Whether rich or poor, all people matter to Jesus, so they must matter to us as believers too. Meditate on Proverbs 19:17: “Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.”


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**SAY:** Living in faith as a follower of Jesus comprises what some call the “Jesus Creed”: Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself (see Matt. 22:36-40). Faith in the Messiah, through the Holy Spirit’s power, works out in love for the Messiah and one’s brothers and sisters in the faith. Just as the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), love also is incarnational. Love is not just a creed we say in a church service; love is what we do to and for all of our brothers and sisters, and in this we know that our faith in Jesus is alive.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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 What are some actions characteristic of those whose faith is dead? (taking advantage of the poor and refusing to help them; choosing to sin without concern for the eternal consequences of sin or its impact on the church and Jesus’ reputation in the world; forsaking and ignoring the church; living for self instead of Christ and His body, the church)

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## Point 2: Faith is proven by works (Jas. 2:18-19).

**READ** James 2:18-19 (DDG p. 86).

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 86) to explain that works are necessary evidence of saving faith because even the demons believe in the one true God.

Our faith in God and His Son is expressed by the good works we do for our neighbor. Mere intellectual assent to God’s existence is not enough. James made this clear because even the demons believe in the one true God. Yet they do not love God; in fact, they actively oppose Him. Everyone has a responsibility to recognize God as the Creator of this world (Rom. 1:18-20), but acknowledging God and an active faith in Him are two different things, and there is no middle ground. A meaningless faith is demonic.

*Illustration:* Have you ever had jury duty? Regular people, from all walks of life, are asked questions by the opposing lawyers to select the right group of jurors. The jury then has the task of hearing arguments from the opposing lawyers and rendering a verdict based on the evidence provided by the lawyers. Other than your verbal confession that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, would there be enough evidence by your *works* of love toward others, particularly toward the marginalized, poor, and social outcast, to convict you of being a Jesus follower? We are saved by faith alone, but our faith is never alone. It is accompanied by a growing desire to love our neighbors as ourselves (Eph. 2:10; Jas. 2:8). We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

**Commentary:** “James explores the nature of saving faith. There is a ‘faith’ that cannot save. Such faith has kind words but no deeds, no aid for the naked and hungry. It is ‘dead’ because it rests in ideas, not in a life dependent upon and reflective of Jesus (vv. 14-17). Orthodox theology ‘apart from works is useless’ (v. 20). Demons prove this, since they hold to orthodox ideas about God yet live in terror since they don’t trust him (v. 19) ... James does not suggest, then, that faith plus works equals justification. He agrees with Paul that faith alone justifies. But he knows there is a so-called ‘faith’ that is dangerous because it deludes but does not justify. He contrasts that with the faith that does justify—a living faith that by its very nature reflects the One on whom our faith rests, delighting to love others in concrete ways.”<sup>2</sup>

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



In our evangelism, how should we respond to people who say they believe in God? (affirm that belief in God but show them why that is not enough for salvation; make sure they know about believing in Jesus, God’s Son, who is the only path of salvation from sin; clarify whether or not that is the God of the Bible, whom we know chiefly through Jesus; examine them to see if this faith in God corresponds to faith in Jesus and is demonstrated through works in Jesus’ name)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 86) to compare the idleness of meaningless faith with the *shuddering* response of demons to God’s existence. But again emphasize that salvation is by faith alone, and saving faith proves itself through works.

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Some say the opposite of love is not hate but indifference. By comparing those who have faith without works to demons, perhaps James was making a similar point. Just as indifference is the true opposite of love, idleness is the opposite of faith. Thus, in one way, demons possess a better kind of faith than some people who attend our churches! At least demonic faith elicits some type of noticeable response to the biblical truth that the Lord our God is one—*the demons shudder*. But again, the faith that saves stems from a true fear of the Lord that produces good works.

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**Commentary:** “Some scholars suggest that the church in the first century held differing and even conflicting views on justification. But the most satisfactory way to solve this pressing problem is to recognize James’s use of the words *faith* and *works*. He insists that faith is always accompanied by works (Jas. 2:17,20,26), but when Paul employs faith in connection with justification, he wants to highlight that it is faith alone, and not by faith plus works, that allows one *to enter* into the sphere of salvation. James, on the other hand, wants to underscore that true faith will inevitably and subsequently produce good works, both of which are necessary to enter into the final new creational kingdom. J. Gresham Machen notes that ‘As the faith which James condemns is different from the faith which Paul commends, so also the works which James commends are different from the works which Paul condemns.’”<sup>3</sup>

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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 86).

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**Justification by Faith:** Justification refers to the moment when a person is objectively **declared** righteous before God based on the righteousness of Christ’s atoning death. This act of declaration takes place through **faith** in **Christ** and not as a result of human works or effort. Through justification, a person is made to be in right standing before God, changing what was once an estranged and hostile relationship to one of **adoption** into the family of God.

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**Essential Doctrine “Justification by Faith”:** Justification refers to the moment when a person is objectively **declared** righteous before God based on the righteousness of Christ’s atoning death (Rom. 8:33-34). This act of declaration takes place through **faith** in **Christ** and not as a result of human works or effort (Eph. 2:8-9). Through justification, a person is made to be in right standing before God, changing what was once an estranged and hostile relationship to one of **adoption** into the family of God.

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### Point 3: Faith is made complete by works (Jas. 2:20-26).

**READ** James 2:20-26 (DDG p. 87).

<sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 87) to emphasize that a life of faith requires the humility to listen and learn about Jesus’ ways.

In James 2:20, James informed the believers who would show favoritism and callously dismiss the needs of their poor brothers and sisters that they were acting like fools. Their faith was bordering on useless because it was not being expressed through love and honor for others. James asked those who were walking in disobedience to take a moment and learn about their misconception of saving faith. One sign of our responsiveness to Jesus’ lordship and grace is our willingness to learn about His ways.

- Faith, in and of itself, requires humility, a recognition that on our own, we are condemned in our sin and in need of a Savior. By God’s grace, through this faith in Jesus, we are justified, declared righteous before God, and blessed with freedom from slavery to sin and death, forgiveness of our sins, and the promise of eternal life with our Savior forever. But this humility doesn’t stop at the point of justification; it extends through our sanctification as well. Learning to obey Jesus’ ways involves humility and faith, believing that He knows what is best. In this way, we will prove that our faith is not useless and is progressing toward its goal—our salvation (1 Pet. 1:9).
- The ones who would refuse to listen and learn from James on this point are foolish indeed (Prov. 18:2). A useless faith is a dead faith with no hope for the future or eternity. If there is a possibility that we are mistaken or that we misunderstand the nature of saving faith, then we would be wise to listen to one who would correct and teach us rightly.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



What have you had to learn as you have grown in your faith in Christ? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the remaining content in the DDG (p. 87) to explain James’s use of Abraham and Rahab as examples of faith proven by works.

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“Active love is to faith what the breath is to the human body.”<sup>4</sup> Our faith in the Messiah, by necessity, produces works of love for God and neighbor. James used wealthy Abraham and poor Rahab as extreme examples from Israel’s history to prove this point.

- Because Abraham believed God, he was justified by faith alone (Gen. 15:6), and his faith in God moved him to works, one example being his obedience to God’s command to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22).
- Rahab, a social outcast, Gentile prostitute, and ancestor of Jesus (Matt. 1:4), displayed her faith by her actions. Believing in the one true God of the Israelites, she hid the Hebrew spies on her roof and kept them safe from the authorities of Jericho (Josh. 2; 6).

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*Application:* The faith that bring us into God’s kingdom is the same faith that unleashes God’s kingdom works of love through us (Jas. 2:22). Good and godly works are a completion of our faith in Christ. Acts of loving obedience are a sign of a maturing faith. Because we are justified by faith in Christ, we begin to live out our faith, maturing into the image of Christ as we rely on the Holy Spirit’s power.

**Commentary:** Both Paul and James used Abraham to prove their theological points; however, they used different events from Abraham’s life to do so (Gen. 15; 22). Paul wrote about Abraham’s call to believe and obey God (Rom. 4:1-5,16-25), but James wrote about the consummation of his faith years later when he humbly obeyed God in faith to sacrifice his one and only son, Isaac, believing that God could and would raise him from the dead, if necessary (Heb. 11:17-19).

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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 87).

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**Justification and Works:** Justification is not the result of human effort or good works but through faith in the righteousness of **Christ**. Although good works do not lead to justification, justification leads to good works in the life of a believer. While good works do not establish justification, they do **verify** a genuine faith and make our justification **evident** to others.

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**Essential Doctrine “Justification and Works”:** Justification is not the result of human effort or good works but through faith in the righteousness of **Christ**. Although good works do not lead to justification, justification leads to good works in the life of a believer (Eph. 2:10). Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:17). While good works do not establish justification, they do **verify** a genuine faith and make our justification **evident** to others.

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# My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** The grace that saves us is the same grace that sanctifies us. In Christ Jesus, we are God’s workmanship, or artwork. As God’s artwork, life becomes a canvas in which Jesus paints pictures of love, justice, reconciliation, and mercy. Because we have been saved by grace, we become missionaries of grace and bridges of reconciliation. We are saved by grace through faith alone in the Messiah (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus Himself, through His sinless life, sacrificial death on the cross, and glorious resurrection, has won our salvation. We cannot achieve it; we can only receive it as a gift. Paul explained further the relationship between salvation, faith, and works, and he did so in a way that is in agreement with James: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 88), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we are grateful to God for our free gift of salvation through Jesus, we perform good works from our faith so that others might also place faith in Christ.

- **What good works are you being called to do by God because of your faith in Jesus?**
- **How can your group/church demonstrate your faith in Jesus through care for the poor, both in your church and community?**
- **Who will you speak to in faith and love as you perform the good work of sharing the good news of Jesus?**



## Voices from Church History

“Holiness is not the way to Christ. Christ is the way to holiness.”<sup>5</sup>

—Adrian Rogers (1931-2005)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, faith without works is dead, so we ask that You grant to us faith like that of our father Abraham, a confidence in You that justifies us apart from works but that also materializes in good works. Thank You for Jesus who did every good work necessary in order to justify us. Help us by the Holy Spirit to live according to our grace-based justification before You in Christ Jesus so that others might see our good works, glorify You, and turn to Christ in repentance and faith. Amen.

**PACK ITEM 10: COME BACK:** Cut out these bookmarks and pass them out to group members to spur them on to love and good works, knowing that these flow out of our faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 89-91), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 92) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.

# Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 89-91) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 92) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

## Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 89-91) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 2** as a part of point 1 in the session: **If Jesus, the ideal image-bearer, shared a human nature like every person whom we meet, then we should treat all people with love, dignity, and respect, regardless of their ethnicity, class, or gender.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 4:** "If our faith only results in our using religious jargon and never reaches the point of caring tangibly for others in need, then we are self-deceived."
- **Day 5:** "Because you have been loved by God, your faith produces works of love, and by your works of love, the world will know that you are Jesus' disciple."



Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 92) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to consider ways they can more intentionally point others to Jesus through their good works.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

# Additional Commentary

## Point 1: Faith is dead without works (Jas. 2:14-17).

“James turns to another realistic example to illustrate what he means when he speaks of the need for our actions to match what we claim to believe (2:14). Suppose there is someone in the church who is in desperate need of food or clothing. Other believers wish them well and pronounce blessings on them, but don’t lift a finger to meet their physical needs. In this case, the believers’ faith is just talk (2:15-16; see also Matt. 25:41-46). Merely talking about doing good or wishing people well is not the same as obeying the fundamental command to love one’s neighbor. Faith that is not accompanied by practical action is not a living faith but *is dead* (2:17).”<sup>6</sup>

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“The indirect interlocutor, the man who ‘claims to have faith,’ is crucial for James’s argument. A person might say he or she has faith, but what is that claim without the deeds that reveal all authentic faith? Mere profession, because of sin, does not count. The faith Jesus lived and taught is at stake. Acts of mercy are the only demonstration of faith. The implied claimant does not say, ‘I have no deeds’; rather to James and any other observers, none are in evidence. James’s deeds of faith are not at all what Paul meant by ‘works of the law.’ The question James placed before his hearers is very different from the issues before Paul. James was concerned with the demonstration of faith in Jesus through works of mercy. Paul was concerned with justification through Christ alone and not by ritual works of the law, such as circumcision, apart from faith in Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

## Point 2: Faith is proven by works (Jas. 2:18-19).

“The demons perfectly illustrate the poverty of verbal profession in and of itself. They are among the most ‘orthodox’ of theologians, James suggests, agreeing wholeheartedly with the *Shema* . . . Yet what is their reaction? They *shudder*. This verb, used only here in the NT, refers to the reaction of fear provoked by contact with God or the supernatural. It occurs particularly frequently in the papyri to describe the effect that a sorcerer aims to produce in his hearers. Since ancient people often regarded the very pronouncing of the name of a god as having the power to provoke fear and terror, the verb is particularly appropriate in this context . . . James might also want to suggest an ironical contrast between the demons and people who have faith without works: at least the demons display some kind of reaction to their ‘faith’! . . . James might be implying, as demons, knowing something of the true God, yet lacking true faith, shudder in fear of judgment, so also ought people whose verbal profession is not followed up with actions.”<sup>8</sup>

**“But someone will say.** As was common in Hellenistic rhetoric, James introduces a hypothetical respondent into his discussion of faith and works, continuing his argument against those who think that faith can save without works. **God is one.** This affirmation of monotheism stems from the core Jewish creed called the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4; see Mark 12:29; Rom. 3:30). But James stresses its inadequacy, since **even the demons believe** this, and they **shudder**. Mere mental assent to the Christian faith does not save anyone. The faith that saves, as both Paul and James affirm, embraces the truth of the gospel and acts accordingly.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Point 3: Faith is made complete by works (Jas. 2:20-26).**

“Although the apostle Paul preached that we are justified by faith without works, those who understand by this that it does not matter whether they live evil lives or do wicked and terrible things, as long as they believe in Christ, because salvation is through faith, have made a great mistake. James here expounds how Paul’s words ought to be understood. This is why he uses the example of Abraham, whom Paul also used as an example of faith, to show that the patriarch also performed good works in the light of his faith. It is therefore wrong to interpret Paul in such a way as to suggest that it did not matter whether Abraham put his faith into practice or not. What Paul meant was that no one obtains the gift of justification on the basis of merit derived from works performed beforehand, because the gift of justification comes only from faith.”<sup>10</sup>

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“Abraham’s faith did *work* ‘when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar,’ and his ‘faith was completed by his works’ (vv. 20-22). When James says Abraham was ‘justified by works’ (v. 21) he means that his claim to believe was vindicated or validated, not that he earned his salvation. He knows that ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness’ (v. 23). But again, faith proves itself real by works. We are not saved by our works, but faithful works flow from saving faith. Rahab, a Gentile and a prostitute, contrasts with Abraham in every way except that her deeds also proved her faith. She claimed that she feared God and she called him Lord, and she proved it when she risked her life to hide Israel’s spies (vv. 25-26).”<sup>11</sup>

### References

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Touchstone, 1955), 56.
2. Daniel M. Doriani, “James,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1681, n. 2:14-26.
3. G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2020), 397-98.
4. “James 2,” in Bible Lessons International, 2012, <https://bible.org/book/export/html/21430>.
5. Adrian Rogers, *Adrianisms: The Wit and Wisdom of Adrian Rogers* (Memphis, TN: Love Worth Finding Ministries, 2006), 57.
6. Arthur James, “James,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, ), 1735.
7. Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, vol. 36 in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003) [Wordsearch].
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9. Grant R. Osborne, “James,” in *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2394, n. 2:18, n. 2:19.
10. Bede, *Concerning the Epistle of St. James*, in *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. XI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 31 [Wordsearch].
11. Daniel M. Doriani, “James,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible*, 1681, n. 2:14-26.