

WOMEN OF GRACE

Lesson 4 | James 2:14-26

*“James’s concern is with false faith (2:19), an intellectual faith that registers assent with certain doctrines but remains unaffected in daily life by the creed that is confessed. Such “faith” for James is not saving faith. There is, however, a kind of faith that brings “profit” (2:14, 16), a faith that truly saves and justifies. Such faith results in and leads to works. If works are not produced, then the faith exercised is not saving faith, for true faith manifests itself in works.” – Thomas Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty*, p. 599*

MEMORIZATION VERSE

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom,
let him ask of God,
who gives to all generously and without reproach,
and it will be given to him.

DAY 1 | Faith and Words | Read James 2:14

1. What encouraged or convicted you from last week’s lesson? Have you made any changes to your thinking or actions as a result?
2. In James 2:14(b) what is James really asking, and what answer do you think he’s expecting?
3. From 2:1 and 14, how would James define “faith” and “works”?
4. According to the following references, what is the relationship between faith and works?
 - a. Matthew 13:18–23

b. Matthew 25:31–46

c. John 14:15

d. John 15:5–6, 8

e. Ephesians 2:8–10

f. 1 John 2:3–6

DAY 2 | False Faith's False Compassion | Read James 2:15-20

1. In verses 15–17, what illustration did James use? How does this deepen your understanding of false faith?
2. From Luke 19:1–10, Acts 19:18–19, and 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10, what is taught about the nature of saving faith?
3. From James 2:17 and 20, how did James describe faith without works?

4. How does Matthew 25:36-40 show us the seriousness of false faith vs saving faith?

DAY 3 | Dead Faith's Empty Conviction | Read James 2:18-20

1. According to James 2:19, Matthew 8:29–30, and Mark 5:7, what do the demons know and believe about God?
 - a. Does James believe knowledge, even mental assent to the truth, is the same as saving faith? How does Deuteronomy 6:4–9 deepen your understanding of the relationship between believing and obeying truth?
 - b. What does knowledge without faith look like?
 - c. How should we respond to someone who claims faith in Christ but has not fruit? Are we to judge if they are saved?
2. In verse 20, what does James assert is a foolish position? How does faith without works hurt evangelism?

DAY 4 | Living Faith | Read James 2:21-26, Romans 4:1-24

1. In verses 21–26, what two examples does James give of faith that produces works?

- a. From Genesis 22:1–18 and Joshua 2:1–21, what do you learn about the faith of these Old Testament saints?

 - b. From James 2:21–26 and Galatians 3:6–11, is James teaching that their works saved them?

2. Dig Deeper: From Hebrews 11:13–16, Acts 4:12, Hebrews 5:9, explain how Jesus' atonement was necessary for Old Testament saints. (Consult the notes in your Bible or use a commentary or other resource for help.)

3. How does Romans 4:1–25 help explain the relationship between faith and works?

4. What is God calling you to do in faith? What do you need to do to be obedient to it?

DAY 5 | Reflecting on James | Read James 2:14-26

1. In your own words, summarize James 2:14–26 in one sentence.

2. What in this passage had the greatest impact on you, and why?
 - a. What specific aspect of God's character have you seen through your study this week?

3. How does James 2:14–26 fit into the overall message of the book?

4. Considering the context of James 1–2, how do you think the “works that faith produces” relate to wise living?

5. Read through the attached document, “The Character of Genuine Saving Faith,” by John MacArthur. Which of these fruits or proofs of true Christianity are evident in your own life?
 - a. If you are a believer, what changes do you need to make to better reflect your condition as a sinner saved by grace? Be practical and specific.

6. If you are not a believer, share with your group what is holding you back.

James 2:14–26

- I. Genuine Faith Produces Good Works
- II. Faith That Has No Works Is Dead
- III. Genuine Faith Is Not Empty Talk but Has Real Outworking
- IV. Cognitive Belief in God Is Not Saving Faith
- V. Genuine Faith Is Manifested Through One’s Actions