

James 2:14-26

- Intro:**
- After reading this passage, how would you state the theme of these verses?
 - Is James countering or combating a particular situation among his readers?
 - If so, how would you explain that situation?
 - Could James be countering a perverted Pauline extremism of “faith alone” teaching?

- Vs. 14**
- Is James a practical pragmatist concerning Christian living? (cf. 1:22,26; 2:12,14,16,20)
 - The man who “says he has faith”... Is this...
 - a false claim?
 - an empty profession?
 - a self-deceived assertion?
 - a “faith-only” advocate?
 - a declaration without discernment of the definition of faith?
 - What is the definition of faith?
 - mental assent?
 - sentiment of support?
 - affirmation of correct belief?
 - receptivity of God’s activity?
 - Are the “works” that James refers to...
 - meritorious acts?
 - obedient follow-through?
 - functional evidence?
 - outworking of God’s activity?
 - When James asks, “Can that faith save him?” is he referring to...
 - regeneration?
 - eternal destiny?
 - ideological accuracy?
 - functional intent of God?

Verses 15 & 16

- How do these verses correlate with James’ illustration in verses 15 and 16?
 - Matt. 25:35-40
 - I John 3:17,18

- Vs. 17**
- What does James mean when he says, “Faith, if it has no works, is dead”...?
 - such faith is annihilated, wiped out?
 - such faith is terminated, ended?
 - such faith is ineffectual, nonfunctional?
 - such faith is non-existent, absent?
 - Can faith exist “by itself,” without works?

- Vs. 18**
- What is the argument of the unidentified objector?
 - “faith and works are two different, detachable concepts”?
 - “some people are passivists, and other people are activists”?
 - “some people have the spiritual gift of faith, and other people have the spiritual gift of works”? (cf. I Cor. 12:9,28)

- Vs. 19** • Is James saying that monotheistic affirmation is not Christian faith?
- By stating that “the demons also believe, and shudder”, is James saying, in effect...
 - “taking your definition of faith as mental assent, the devil has more faith than anyone”?
 - “demons have monotheistic orthodoxy; they know the truth”?
 - “your religious faith isn’t any better than the assent of the demons”?

- Vs. 20** • When James writes, “Faith without works is useless” does he mean...
 - “alleged faith without practical expression is ineffectual”?
 - “orthodox belief without fruitful evidence is unproductive”?
 - “assent without action is absurd”?
 - “genuine receptivity without divine activity is non-existent”?

Verses 21–23

- What does James mean by his assertion that Abraham was “justified by works”?
 - “declared right with God by his actions”?
 - “made righteous by what he did”?
 - “evidenced righteousness by being available to act as God directed”?
- How was Abraham’s faith “perfected”?
 - his faith got better and better?
 - he progressively believed that God meant what He said?
 - the receptivity of God’s activity allowed God’s perfect end-objective to be accomplished?

- Vs. 24** • Do the Reformation themes of “justification by faith” and “*sola fide*” contradict what James says in this verse?

- Vs. 25** • How does Rahab serve as an illustration of James’ thesis of “justified by works”?
- Why do some Christian readers find James’ use of Rahab as an illustration for the evidencing of righteousness ill-advised?

- Vs. 26** • What is the point James is trying to make by correlating a “dead body” with “dead faith”?
- “just as a body without spiritual function is a corpse, so faith without Spiritual function is but an empty shell”?
 - “just as a body that doesn’t breath by inhaling and exhaling is dead, so faith that doesn’t function by receptivity of God’s activity is non-existent”?
 - “just as a body apart from the vital dynamic of spiritual function is defunct, so faith without the vital dynamic of the function of the Spirit of Christ is null and void”?

- Conc.** • Would you say that the real issue in these verses is the determination of the question, “What is faith”?
- How does Paul’s phrase, “the obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26) correlate with the theme of these verses?