

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – May 8, 2022

Theme: James: Faith in Action **Topic:** The connection between faith and works

Main Text: James 2:14-26

Key verse: James 2:17 – “So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.” (NLT)

INTRODUCTION: Ask anyone for a Bible reference for faith in action, and the Epistle of James will top the list. And if a conversation about faith and works ensues, our passage today, James 2:14-26, will undoubtedly be the main cause of the debate. And at the center of the ensuing controversy will be James 2:24, ‘*You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*’ (NKJV). On one side of the debate will be those who passionately believe that salvation is God’s gracious gift to us through faith in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). And on the opposing side will be those who believe that ‘... *faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*’ (James 2:17 NKJV). And the debate will rage on. Yet, both are right. How is that possible? Both are right because they refer to different faith – the faith which gets us saved (Ephesians 2:8-9), and the faith of those who have been saved (James 2:17).

1. Read Romans 4:2-5; Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-9; James 2:14-17, 21-23. (a) How do these passages help you differentiate between the faith referred to by Apostle Paul and James? What is the difference between the ‘two’? (b) In the light of this, how do you understand James 2:26? ‘For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead’ (c) Let participants share examples of how they have added works to their faith and seen results or vice versa.

You may have met someone who claims to believe in Jesus as Savior. Yet beyond the person’s words, there is no tangible evidence to buttress such claim. And you wonder! Why would such a scenario make you wonder? James paints such a picture in James 2:14-16. But as good as believing that Jesus is the Messiah might be, we are told that, ‘*Even the demons believe—and tremble!*’ (James 2:19b). Their belief does them no good! In fact, it is foolish to think that faith does not have to work (James 2:20). Faith that does nothing is worth nothing, and our father, Abraham, is a typical example. (James 2:21). As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith which does not act on what it believes in is also dead (James 2:26). Saving faith must produce works of faith in the one in whom it resides!

2. Read Romans 4:17-21; James 2:21-24; Hebrews 11:17-19 (a) How did Abraham connect his faith with his actions? How is that different from the belief of the devil in James 2:19? (b) According to Romans 4:21 & Hebrews 11:19, on what did Abraham anchor his actions? (c) What else do you know about God on which one’s actions of faith could be anchored?

The book of James repeatedly reminds us that real faith will always do something tangible and visible. Apart from the James’ epistle, the Bible is replete with instances of people whose actions were driven by their faith – what they knew about God and His promises. Hebrews 11 lists several of these people, some named and some anonymous. Noah, for instance, was warned of an impending judgment of God by means of a flood - something which had never happened. Moved by holy fear, he did not merely agree that the flood would come, but spent decades doing what God told him to do regarding the flood. Moses’ parents are another bold example. Their faith in what God had shown them about their son, Moses, emboldened them to disobey the king’s directive to kill all newborn males.

3. Hebrews 11 lists examples of how men of faith of old demonstrated their faith in their actions. (a) Identify the circumstances of these acts of faith in Hebrews 11:4, 7,8-12,17-19, 23, 24-28, 35. (b) In what ways does Hebrews 11:1-16 help us keep our eyes fixed on the future, or persevere, or stay focused on Christ even amid overwhelming darkness? (c) What one action are you going to take this week, and henceforth, because of something you know and believe about God?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for saving us through faith in Christ. May our faith in You be evident in daily acts of obedience to You. In Jesus Name Amen.