

# How to Make Your Faith Real

*James 2:14-26*

## I. The Misunderstanding About Faith

A. You can be saved by simply living a good life.

1. Not true! You can live a very good life & go to hell! - Jam 2:10
2. Faith in the Lord Jesus is essential for salvation because:
  - a. Rom 3:28 - For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
  - b. Gal 2:15-16 - We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

B. Believing certain things about God - intellectual faith - solves the salvation problem. Right? Wrong!

1. Because John the Baptist said you have to prove the reality of your repentance (Matt 3:8; Lk 3:8).
2. Because the Lord said that we have to live so the world can see our good works (Matt 5:16).
3. Because the Lord insisted that faith that existed in words only could never be a substitute for doing the will of God (Matt 7:15-21).
4. Because Rom 2:6 says, God "will give to each person according to what he has done."
5. Because Rom 13:12 says, The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.
6. Because Rom 14:12 says, So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
7. Because I Cor 3:8 says, The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

## II. v14-20 - Why is an Intellectual Belief Alone Inadequate?

A. v14 - Because it can't really save you.

1. Rom 3:28 tells us we are saved without works & Eph 2:8-10 tells us we are saved for works.
2. What this is saying is God wants you to surrender to Him just as you are - so He can mold you into what He wants you to be - so you can honor Him by doing good works!

B. v15-16 - Because it can't accomplish God's will.

1. Works are your response to the Royal Law - Love your neighbor as yourself. - Mk 12:31 echoed in v8.
2. The Lord implied that only those who expressed their faith charitably would enter His kingdom (Matt 25:31-46).

C. v19 - Because it can't make you any more righteous than a demon.

1. It was a giant step for a Gentile (a non Jew) to accept the concept that there was only one God!
2. ILL: The demons believed in Jesus as that one God (Mk 5:7).

D. v17, 20 & 26 - Because your faith needs to come alive.

1. Adam was a perfect human being; but he was dead until God breathed into him the breath of life (Gen 2:7).
2. A car may be in perfect running condition but won't run until you put gas in it.
3. A vacuum cleaner will not clean a rug until you plug it in!
4. Faith needs works to make it come alive.
  - a. Tit 2:7 - In everything set them an example by doing what is good.
  - b. Tit 2:10 - Show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

### **III. v21-26 - How Do You Know God Honors This Kind of Faith?**

A. v21-24 - Because God justified Abraham.

1. Abraham left Ur with his family.
2. Abraham trusted God's word that Isaac would be born (even though Sarah laughed).
3. Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac because God told him to.
4. Abraham trusted God by obeying God even though he didn't understand & desperately wanted to.

B. v25-26 - Because God justified Rahab.

1. Considered the least likely to succeed spiritually - she was a practicing prostitute.
2. But her faith was demonstrated in hiding the spies of Israel (**Josh 2:1; 6:17**).
3. Because of her faith she was rescued at Jericho & became one of our Lord's ancestors (**Matt 1:5**).

### **IV. Heb 11:3-7 - What are the Ingredients of Real Faith?**

A. v3 - Recognize God as Creator.

B. v4 - Worship God through the blood of Christ.

C. v5 - Walk with God like Enoch walked with God (**Gen 5:24**).

D. v7 - Work your faith - Noah spent 120 years preaching & building that ark (**Gen 6:3**).

**ILL: The Dog in the Movie Just Didn't Like the Book!** To the rest of the world your faith is either a book containing just words, or a movie alive with actions. What kind of faith are you going to have?

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