

Good-For-Nothing Faith

James 2:14-26

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What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? James 2:14 (New Living Translation)

Big-Picture Truth: A claim of faith is bogus if it is “faith” without obedience.

JAMES' CORE QUESTIONS

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? James 2:14 (NLT)

(See 2 Corinthians 5:17)

This same Good News [the Gospel] that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace. Colossians 1:6 (NLT)

Illustration #1: SAVING FAITH RESULTS IN SERVICE TO OTHERS.

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶and 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? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. James 2:15-17 (English Standard Version)

Illustration #2: SAVING FAITH RESULTS IN THE ABILITY TO TAKE RISKS.

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? ²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. James 2:25-26 (ESV)

Illustration #3: SAVING FAITH IS ALWAYS MORE THAN INTELLECTUAL AGREEMENT.

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. ¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? James 2:18-20 (ESV)

Illustration #4: SAVING FAITH IS A DEEP TRUST IN GOD THAT LEADS TO OBEDIENCE.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and 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. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. James 2:21-24 (ESV)