

Louder Than Words #5
Blending Faith with Action

Word

Scripture Reference

James 2:14-26

Discussion Questions

1. You have most likely known people who say they believe in one thing but act contrary to that belief. What are some biblical truths that Christians say they believe, but do not live out?
2. The moment you identify yourself as a follower of Jesus Christ, you put out a notice to the world who will be watching whether your faith is consistent with how you act. As an imperfect people, how can Christians blend their faith and their actions? Read James 2:14-26. A lot of people often misunderstand this passage and take it out of context to teach that salvation is both by faith and works. Taken in its proper context (James was writing to Christians), James in no way contradicts the apostles Paul and John who both teach that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16-17; John 14:6). Paul and John's emphasis is on the *basis* of one's salvation, while James' emphasis is on the *fruits* after salvation—what actions prove the genuineness of one's faith (v. 14). He describes four ways on how a believer's faith and actions interact. First is that your faith should naturally lead to action/works (v. 14-17). What example did James use to make it clear that real faith marks a person's actions (v. 15-17)? Discuss how James described faith that does not come with deeds (v.17). How has being a Christian transformed the way you live? Have you ever prayed for someone—someone in your church, office, school, or home who has a real need? Did you ever stop to think that perhaps God's answer to that person's prayer request is YOU?
3. Secondly, your faith is not proven solely by your actions (v. 18-19). There are many members of other religious groups that do a lot of good things for other people, sometimes even better than Christians, but they have the wrong faith. Action is not the basis of salvation, but is simply an *outflowing* of your genuine faith. Share how you could tell that a person has a genuine, living faith. Is it right to be compelled to do good things just so that you could go to heaven? Discuss how real faith could make you do something out of love.
4. Thirdly, your faith is made deeper by your actions (v. 20-23). James used Abraham in the Old Testament as an example of how a person who was declared righteous affirmed his genuine faith in God by his obedience to offer his son as a sacrifice. Abraham's faith was perfected and made stronger because of his

actions, to the point that God called Abraham His friend. Share the reasons why there are times that it is not easy to apply what you hear in church to your daily life. What biblical instructions do you find particularly difficult to live out? If God has already forgiven you and assured you of eternal life, what then inspires you to live in submission to Him? Share how your faith deepened because of your response to God in obedience.

5. Lastly, your faith is seen by the world through your actions (v. 24-26). The world cannot see what's inside your heart unless it is evidenced by your action. Rahab was another person from the Old Testament that James used as an example of someone whose faith in God was evidenced through actions. She was a Canaanite prostitute who hid two Israelite spies from her fellow Canaanites. Her action justified and saved her life. As verse 26 states, "faith without works is dead." The world will not really know God no matter how much we say that we love Him unless they could see it in our action. Your faith without action is useless. Discuss the ways that many Christians proclaim that they love God, but their actions do not demonstrate what they say. What areas of your life need to be conducted in a more Christian-like way?

Walk

The Word of God is very clear that a person is saved by faith, not by works. Nevertheless, your faith should naturally lead to action. It is not proven solely by actions, but is made deeper by it. God looks at the heart, yes, but the world will see your faith through your actions. That is the Christian life: faith and works standing side by side, blending together. Do you talk about your faith with others? In what ways do you demonstrate Christian love toward them? How can you show greater faith in God by what you do at home, at work or in school?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the reminder that my actions will always speak louder than words to the world. It's so easy to say the right things—speaking "Christianese," saying "Praise the Lord!" all the time, telling someone, "I'll be praying for you," posting encouraging Bible verses on social media...but if I was really honest, half the things I say, I don't actually do. Forgive me, Lord. Through Christ I was forgiven and saved, and through Him I offer my grateful heart to You, ready to obey, to show the world that my God is mighty to save. Give me strength, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.