

Aug 05, 2012



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church

Grand Prairie, Texas



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Maturing in the Faith

A Study in James

Date	Lesson	Text
07/08	Introduction to James	
07/15	Trials and Temptations	1:1-17
07/22	Faith and God's Word	1:18-27
07/29	Faith and Impartiality	2:1-13
08/05	Faith and Actions	2:14-17
08/12	Saving Faith	2:18-26
08/19	Controlling our Tongues	3:1-12
08/26	Faith and Wisdom	3:13-18
09/02	Godly Behavior	4:1-17
09/09	Faith and Money	5:1-6
09/16	Patient Faith	5:7-11
09/23	Faith and Prayer	5:12-20
09/30	Review and Summary	

Food for Thought

Faith With Works

Faith is the power that prompts us to go And give to the hungry, bread, Faith means much more than a doctrine or two, For faith without works is dead. What matters is not faith and works; it is not faith or works; it is faith that works.

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

(James 2:17 NASB)

From "Our Daily Bread", Aug 03, 2012)

Faith and Actions

James 2:14-17

How can religious faith be measured? Can we determine whether a person has faith simply by asking him? The book of James offers a very simple but effective way to measure faith: action. To profess faith is one thing; to *possess* faith is another (Heb 10:23-24). As James saw it, the possession of faith is seen in what we do, not just in what we say (Jas. 2:18). Because Paul seemed to emphasize faith and James seemed to stress works, some have seen these two writers as being in conflict with each other. Martin Luther, the great Protestant Reformer, was initially befuddled by James's emphasis on works and was not even sure it was on a par with Paul's writings. Both Paul and James talked about works, but they used the word somewhat differently. They were not, however, contradicting each other. To arrive at that conclusion is to misunderstand the teaching of both Paul and James! When Paul spoke of works, he was usually referring to the meritorious works of the Mosaic law by which some thought they could earn salvation (Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9). On the other hand, when James spoke of works, he was dealing with the works of the Christian life. Such works give validity to our Christian profession and witness. Crowds flocked to hear the Lord Jesus. There were those, however, who heard His words but would not obey them. When they learned that following Him meant taking up the cross of self-denial and suffering, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). They heard the words gladly, but they were unwilling to be "doers of the word." To understand what it means to put the Word into action, we need to pay heed to the teachings of our Lord Jesus. When the people asked what they were to do to work the works of God, Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). When we put our faith in Jesus and trust Him to be our Lord and our Saviour, we have the promise, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit living in us enables us to obey the sayings of Jesus. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you" (Matt. 5:44). We are "always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Jesus commended the benevolence of the good Samaritan and commanded, "Go, and do thou likewise" (10:37). When Jesus lived on earth, He showed compassion for the needy multitude. It was said of Him, "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37). As doers of the Word, we will follow His example. With the Holy Spirit's power, we too will do all things well. *(From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)*

Do we Christians become so engrossed in earning our living and enjoying our lives that we forget our duties to God? I mean the duty of reading his Word and applying it in our daily living, the duty of helping one another at every opportunity, the duty of keeping up an attractive and helpful program of worship in the church and teaching in the Sunday school, the duty of maintaining happy fellowship and mutual encouragement among the saints, the duty of doing "good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10), the duty of sharing the gospel with people who need it, the duty of supporting those who give their full time to various Christian ministries, the duty of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Is it also possible that some of us do not forget all these duties but neglect them anyway? That is even worse than forgetting, for "anyone . . . who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17). As noted in last week's lesson, practical James is interested in what we do. Today he reminds us of our duties and rebukes our neglect of them. The immediate background of our text lies in the verse just before it: "Get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you" (James 1:21). But James says it is not enough to receive the Word and cherish it in our hearts. We need it to direct the work of our hands. *(From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Dead faith because of non-profitable faith (14)

Non-profitable faith is faith that is in vain (1 Cor 15:1-2)

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain.

Non-profitable faith is faith not accompanied by love (1 Cor 13:2)

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Non-profitable faith is when our works deny knowing God (Titus 1:16)

16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Dead faith because of not providing needs (15-16)

By withholding good from those to whom it is due (Prov 3:27-28)

27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. 28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.

By trying to avoid or get rid of those in need (Matt 14:15-16)

15 When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." 16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

By not helping the helpless when given the opportunity (Matt 25:41-46)

41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' 45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

By closing our hearts to those in need (1 John 3:17)

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Dead faith because of being void of results (16-17)

Results that come from unproductive lives (Titus 3:14)

14 Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

Results that come from walking in darkness (1 John 1:6)

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

Results that bear bad fruit (Matt 7:17-20)

18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Results that have been choked by the cares of this world (Matt 13:22)

22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Results that we are ashamed of (Rom 6:21)

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Results that come from faith that has not matured (2 Peter 1:5-8)

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.