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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Faith Without Works is Dead James 2:14-26

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson examines the relationship between faith and works so that we can understand that **Faith Without Works is Dead**. The study's aim is to discover that the reality of the Christians life can be recognized by the results produced. The study's application is to assist Christians to arrive at full assurance of their relationship with Jesus Christ.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

As a naturalist, I learned to identify the different types of trees. To do that, I use different parts of the tree: the leaves, the bark, and the tree's overall height and appearance. For instance, I do not expect a maple tree to have a leaf shaped like a tulip, I expect that from a poplar. One of the main sources for identifying a tree is the fruit. A good naturalist knows that you find sap in a sugar maple, not a pine tree. If I wanted acorns, I would not look for them around a beech tree but around an oak tree. I would also not go looking for beechnuts to fall from a willow. I can tell that a tree might be dead if it has stopped producing fruit. In the same manner, a believer's faith can be measured by actions. The actions of a strong, thriving believer will reflect spiritual growth. Even as a plant needs a good balance of water and sunlight, so a believer needs a balance of faith and deeds. When one is lacking, the believer's growth becomes stunted. Eventually, the believer's faith can be choked out to a great degree. Just as love involves action (1 John 3:17-18), so also does faith. Consider what would have happened had Abraham not left his homeland. How would his life have been different? Or what if Moses had not chosen to heed God's call to return to Egypt? What would have occurred had Joseph not taken Mary and Jesus and left the country? My point is simple. Faithful believers must be active participants in God's plan. We cannot sit back and passively go along for the ride. There will be times when we have to step out, make decisions, and be willing to do what God clearly calls us to do. Each of us has a role to play, for each has a part in His great and amazing redemption story. God's grace is at work within His people. His spirit persuades us to be willing; He does not make us act against our will. He is not interested in robots but people. Although God does not need us to accomplish His will, God chooses to use us every day. As He allows us to take part in His plan, He is giving us the opportunity for growth and blessing. God endows every one of us with a certain set and number of talents to be used for the work He appoints to us. If we use these talents wisely, He will add to our talents and equip us for greater service. If we choose not to use them, however, we might find even those talents fading away (cf. Luke 19:12-27). God promises that to those who prove themselves faithful in small things, He will give greater things (Matt. 25:29). How we act, how we use the talents we are given, and what we say all reflect what is in our hearts. If we are truly sincere in our walk, we will hasten to put it into practice. We cannot simply sit back and say, "Let someone else serve. I cannot do it right now." Are you motivated? Are you serving? If your actions are not testifying to your faith, maybe you need to step back and consider who you truly follow. After all, Christ did not call us to sit quietly in our houses. He told us to go out into the world (Matt. 28:19). When we sit back passively, we cannot bear fruit. Let us be quick to step forward and add deeds to our devotion; let us be found faithful to our King.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

What matters is not faith and works; it is not faith or works; it is faith that works

POEM FOR THE WEEK:

Faith is the power that prompts us to go And give to the hungering, bread— Faith means much more than a doctrine or two, For faith without works is dead. — Woodrum

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead

(James 2:17 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Aug 3, 2012)

Series: Faith in Action

UNIT: Self-Controlled, Upright, and Godly Faith

NEXT WEEK

A Disciplined Faith (James 3:1-12)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Evaluation of Dead Faith (James 2:14-20)

Dead faith is non-profitable (14)

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

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

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

Dead faith is not providing needs (15-16)

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

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

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

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

Dead faith cannot produce godly results (16-17)

Because results come from unproductive lives (Titus 3:14)

Because results come from walking in darkness (1 John 1:6)

Because results bear bad fruit (Matt 7:17-20)

Because results have been choked by the cares of this world (Matt 13:22)

Because results causes us to be ashamed (Rom 6:21)

Because results don't come from a faith that has matured (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Dead faith can't produce actions God desires (18-20)

Actions that don't respond to daily opportunities (Matt 25:41-43)

Actions that don't put God's word into practice (Luke 6:47-49)

Actions that hear the word, but doesn't do it (Ezek 33:30-32)

Actions that do not result in being obedient (Matt 21:28-31)

Illustrating Genuine Faith (James 2:21-26)

Genuine faith results in being justified (21,24)

Justified apart from the Law (Rom 3:28)

Justified resulting in peace with God (Rom 5:1)

Justified by faith in Jesus (Gal 2:16)

Justified by being led to Christ (Gal 3:24)

Justified by being counted as obeying the Law (Rom 2:13)

Genuine faith is saving faith (22-23)

We are saved by grace through faith in Christ (Eph 2:8)

There is such a thing as false faith, which does not save (Matt 7:21)

The faith that does not save is a mere profession of faith that does not result in a life of good deeds (Matt 15:7-9)

The faith that does not save may be doctrinally correct, but there is no change of heart or behavior (Matt 23:27-28)

Genuine saving faith results in a life of good works, whereas false faith does not (Matt 5:14-16)

Genuine faith is doing good works (25-26)

God created us to do good works (Eph 2:10)

Good works are obvious (1 Tim 5:25)

Good works include being generous and willing to share (1 Tim 6:18)

We should encourage each other to do good works (Heb 10:24)

Good works comes from living a life full of honorable conduct (1 Peter 2:12)