

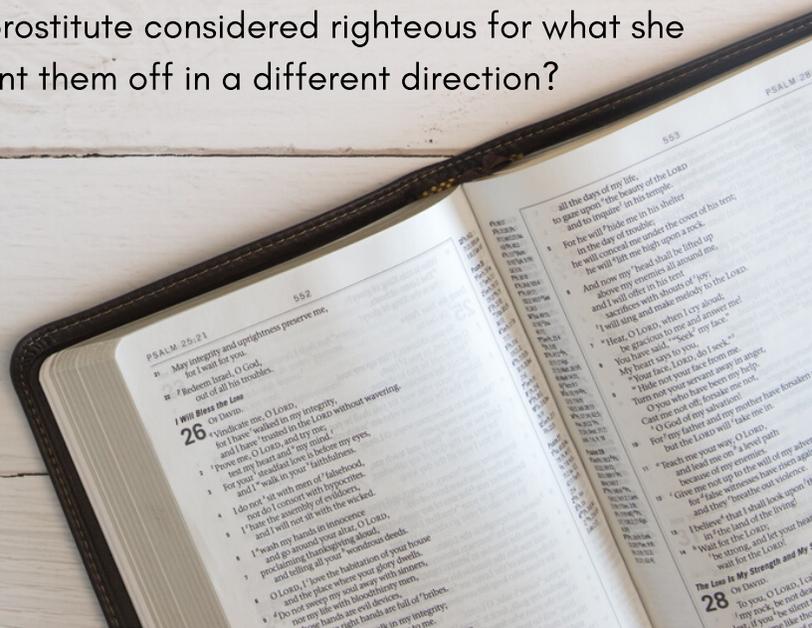
REAL FAITH WORKS

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:17 (NIV)

25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

James 2:25 (NIV)



REV SAM LOFTON

Bible Study

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New Hope Baptist Church

Dr. Leo D. Cyrus, Sr - Pastor

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James is writing primarily to Jewish believers, who are going through extremely difficult times in their lives. He's writing to Jews who are a part of the "Diaspora" which is translated to mean a dispersion or a scattering of the Jewish throughout the world for the purpose of escaping persecution inflicted on them because of their new found faith in Jesus Christ.

At the time of this writing, believers were suffering in every facet of their lives. They experienced major losses of every kind; complete rejection by society; persecution that often resulted in their demise. So much time and attention is given in this letter to encourage believers to continue to trust and have faith in the God who chose them, loved them, saved them, and will provide for them in these trying circumstances.

James' emphasis in this section of his epistle (James 2:14-26) is also to push and challenge believers to put their faith into practice. He points to the idea that faith without action is useless and pointless and, is in fact, not true Biblical faith at all.

This lesson helps us identify what true faith is, what it looks like, and how real faith works.

I. REAL FAITH CONTROVERSY (Paul vs James)

	PAUL (Galatians 2:16)	JAMES (James) 2:24
PROBLEM	Legalism	Laxity
WORKS	Jewish Laws	Christian Lifestyle
FOCUS	Roots of Salvation (internal/unseen)	Fruits of Salvation
PURPOSE	How to know I'm a Christian	How to show I'm a Christian

II. What Is Real Faith?

A. Real faith is not just something you _____.

James 2:14 (NIV)

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds?
Can such faith save them?

II. What Is Real Faith? (cont)

B. Real faith is not just something you _____.

James 2:15-16 (NIV)

15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?

1 John 3:14-16 (NIV)

14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 John 3:17 (NIV)

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?

C. Real faith is not just something you _____.

James 2:18 (NIV)

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

D. Real faith is not just something you _____.

James 2:19 (NIV)

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

E. Real faith is not just something you _____.

1. Illustration of Abraham (vs. 20-24)

James 2:20-24 (NIV)

20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

1. Illustration of Abraham (cont)

Abraham _____ God, and God counted him _____.

Abraham _____ in his faith & _____.

Abraham _____ in His faith as _____ for God.

By faith Abraham _____ God when his faith was _____ the most.

2. Illustration of Rahab

James 2:25 (NIV)

25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

Rahab _____.

Rehab _____.

Rahab _____.

Rahab _____.

DISCUSSION SECTION Adapted from: The Book of James by Francis Chan

1. What's the answer to the question in verse 16? What good is it to offer good wishes but no practical help?
2. In verse 18, we see two kinds of faith. How are they described? So then, verse 19 is referring to the "without works" kind of faith. What does it say about that kind of faith?
3. Why do you think James chooses the oneness of God as the example of basic faith, and not, say, the atoning death of Jesus?
4. In James 2:20-24, there's reference to Abraham as proof of the point. What's the argument here? How does Abraham prove that "faith without works is useless"?
5. How did these actions demonstrate Abraham's faith?
6. James quotes a verse from Genesis (15:6). What does that say about Abraham's faith? What does it say about his works?
7. How did Abraham's actions in Genesis 22 "fulfill" the statement of Genesis 15:6?
8. Do you think it's significant that the faith of Genesis 15 came several chapters before the works of Genesis 22? Does faith generally come first?

DISCUSSION SECTION (CONT)

9. Take a look at verse 25. Why would James go on to talk about Rahab?
10. What do you know about Rahab? What was her occupation?
11. How did she get herself mentioned in the Bible?
12. Isn't it a mistake for James to mention a prostitute as an example of good works? Why would he do this?