

Life Group Homework

Real Faith that Works

James 2:14-26

Let's Get Started



The Parable of the Ducks

There was a certain town where only ducks lived. Every Sunday morning, the ducks would waddle out of their houses, down the main street and into their church building. One week, as usual, they waddled down the aisle and sat in their pews. As the service began, the duck choir sang, and then the duck pastor stepped up and read from the duck Bible. And he gave them a stirring, inspirational message: “Ducks, God has given you wings! With these wings, you can fly like birds! No walls can confine you! No fences can hold you! You have wings, and you can rise up and soar like eagles!” All the ducks raised their hands and shouted, “AMEN!” And when the service was over, all the ducks waddled home.

One cannot read **James 2** without a discussion of “faith that cannot save” contrasted with “saving faith.” These ducks might have had lots of faith, but their faith was dead. And in the second chapter of the book of James, he talks about the problem of dead faith.

How would you describe a “dead faith?”

How serious of an issue do you think “dead faith” is? Do you think people with “dead faith” still go to heaven? Consider the warning in **Matthew 7:21-23**.

Let's Go Deeper

After studying **Romans 3:21-26**, circle your response to the following true or false question.

- **T or F** “Justification makes us righteous.” Why did you respond the way you did?

But I'm a Good Person

Imagine you have a conversation with someone about heaven, and you ask them if they are going to heaven when they die and why. Their response is, "I believe I'm going to heaven because I'm a good person. God would never condemn me to hell along with really bad people." What would your response be?

Read James **2:14-26** carefully and respond to the following questions:

James emphasized demonstrating the authenticity of one's faith. Just "agreeing with Jesus" is not enough. This type of faith is not saving faith. We believe that saving faith involves an *intimate relationship* with Christ. Where does it say this in the Bible? How would you scripturally support this belief?

Describe your journey to entering into "saving" faith in Christ.

If one's "works" do not save him or her, what do they do? What is the purpose of "works" in a disciple's life?

In what ways should the "works" and lifestyle of a disciple of Jesus demonstrate and validate their faith? Give examples.

The Cost of Being a Disciple

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." -**Jesus Christ, Matthew 16:24-25**

"Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: 'Ye were bought at a price,' and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us." -**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

What did it cost the first disciples that Jesus chose to follow Him?

What does it cost you to follow Jesus?

Let's Live It Out Together

The litmus test for real, genuine, authentic, saving faith is found in **1 John 2:4-6** which says, *“The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”*

2 Corinthians 13:5 is a scriptural command to examine ourselves regarding our faith: *“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”*

What area(s) of your life do you feel confident that you are walking in obedience to God's commands?

What area(s) of your life do you need prayer to help you walk in obedience?

Are you Doing Life Together?

Doing life together is more than just discovering new or more information in the Bible as a group. Discipleship is a team sport where people are made to feel safe to share some of their struggles and learn to rely on the encouragement and prayers of the others in the group. It's a place where prayers are answered, sometimes in astounding ways. Living life together also includes sharing God's responses to things the group is praying about.

Have a discussion. Is your Life Group “living life” together?