

James 2:14-17: Three Kinds of Faith

I. **Dead Faith** (v 14-17)

- A. This kind of faith substitutes words for deeds (consider James' example).
- B. People with this kind of faith:
 1. Know the correct vocabulary for prayer and sound doctrine
 2. Can even quote the right verses from the Bible
 3. But their "walk" does not measure up to their "talk!"
- C. This kind of faith is only an intellectual faith.
 1. In one's mind, he or she knows the doctrine of salvation.
 2. But they have never really submitted themselves to God and trusted in Jesus for salvation.
 3. They know the right words, but they do not back up their words with their works!
- D. Can This Kind Of Faith Save? **James 2:17, 20, 26**
 NO! Three times in this passage, James emphasizes that "faith without works is dead.
- E. Do We Have This Kind Of Faith?
 1. We do, if our WALK does not measure up to our TALK!
 2. We do, if our WORKS do not measure up to our WORDS!

II. **Demonic Faith** (v 18, 19)

- A. Perhaps to shock any complacent readers, James reminds us that even demons have a kind of faith!
 1. They believe in God (no atheists or agnostics here!)
 2. They even believe in the deity of Christ - cf. [Mk 3:11-12](#)
 3. They also believe in the existence of a place of condemnation - cf. [Lk 8:31](#)
 4. And they believe Jesus will be the Judge! - [Mt 8:28-29](#)
- B. What kind of faith do demons have?
 The demons are "touched also in their emotions" (note that they "believe and tremble").
- C. Can this kind of faith save?
 NO! A person can be enlightened in his mind and even stirred in his heart, and still be lost forever!
- D. Do we have this kind of faith?
 We do, if we just BELIEVE the right things and FEEL the right things.

III. **Dynamic Faith** (v 20-26)

- A. What kind of faith is this?
 1. We know from other passages that such faith is based upon the Word of God. - cf. [Ro 10:17](#)
 2. Dynamic faith involves the WHOLE MAN; dead faith touches only the intellect.

3. Demonic faith involves only the mind and the emotions; dynamic faith involves the intellect, the emotions, AND the WILL!
 - a. The MIND understands the truth
 - b. The HEART desires and rejoices in the truth
 - c. The WILL acts upon the truth
- B. To illustrate, James refers to two well-known persons in the Bible: Abraham & Rahab
 1. You could not find two more different persons!
 - a. Abraham was the father of the Jews; Rahab was a Gentile!
 - b. Abraham was a godly man; Rahab had been a sinful woman, a harlot!
 - c. Abraham was the friend of God; Rahab had belonged to the enemies of God.
 2. What did they have in common? Both exercised saving faith in God!
 - a. Abraham demonstrated his saving faith by his works - **20-24**
 - b. Rahab demonstrated her saving faith by her works - **25-26**
 3. We learn from this passage that:
 - a. Faith without works is a DEAD faith - **20, 26**
 - b. That "faith only" (the only time this phrase is found in Scripture) cannot justify one - **24**
 - c. That PERFECT faith necessitates works – **22**

CONCLUSION

Here are some questions we can ask ourselves as we examine our faith:

1. Was there a time when I honestly realized I was a sinner and admitted this to myself and to God?
2. Was there a time when my heart stirred me to flee from the wrath to come? Have I ever been seriously worked up over my sins?
3. Do I truly understand the gospel, that Christ died for MY sins and then rose again? Do I understand and confess that I cannot save myself?
4. Did I sincerely repent of my sins, making the decision to turn from them? Do I now hate sin and fear God? Or do I secretly love sin and want to enjoy it?
5. Have I trusted Christ and Him alone for my salvation by responding to the commands He has given? Have I confessed my faith in Christ and then been baptized for the remission of my sins as He and His apostles commanded?
6. Has there been a change in my life? Do I maintain good works, or are my good works occasional and weak? Do I seek to grow in the things of the Lord? Can others tell that I have been with Jesus?
7. Do I have a desire to share Christ with others? Or am I ashamed of Him?
8. Do I enjoy the fellowship of God's people? Is worship a delight to me?
9. Am I ready for the Lord's return? Or will I be ashamed when He comes for me?