# SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

## JAMES 2:14-26

7-22-2020

**TODAY, WE NEED TO EXAMINE THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH!**

*What should I look for?*

**I. LOOK FOR THE <u>SYMPTOMS OF A DEAD FAITH</u>** (V. 14-20)

**A. A DEAD FAITH GIVES ONLY <u>LIP SERVICE</u>** (v. 14-18)

**1. His claim to have faith is <u>constant</u>** (v. 14)

**2. His claim to have faith is <u>without compassionate action</u>** (v. 15-17)

**3. His claim to have faith is <u>without concrete proof</u>** (verse 18).

**B. A DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY <u>HEAD KNOWLEDGE</u>** (v. 19-20

**II. LOOK FOR THE <u>SIGNS OF A LIVING FAITH</u> (v. 21-26)**

***<u>Two proofs of righteousness</u> (both involve a living faith)***

**A. LIVING FAITH <u>OBEYS</u> GOD** (v. 21-24
Sacrifice out of obedience to God

**1. The evidence of faith** (v. 21-24)

"Justified" – has two meanings in the N.T. –

1) To <u>pronounce</u> (declare) to be righteous before God (Ro. 3:24-28
2) To <u>prove</u> (show) to be righteous before men (Mt.11:19; Luke 7:29,35; Ro. 3:4; I Tim:3:16
In this context, James is describing the proof/evidence (showing) of one's righteousness (cp. v. 18 – "shew").

**2. The Results of faith** (v. 22-23)

*A faith <u>that works</u> results in:*

**1) A more <u>mature</u> faith** (v.22)

**2) <u>Proof</u> that your conversion experience was real** (v. 23a)

**3) <u>Friendship</u> with God** (v. 23b)

**3. The Companion (partner) of faith** (v. 24)

**B. A LIVING FAITH <u>SERVES</u> GOD'S CHILDREN** (v. 25-26)

***Take spiritual inventory***

# SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

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8-5-2020

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**I. LOOK FOR THE <u>SYMPTOMS OF A</u> _____** (V. 14-20)

**A. A DEAD FAITH GIVES ONLY _____** (v. 14-18)

**1. His claim to have faith is _____** (v. 14)

**2. His claim to have faith is _____** (v. 15-17)

**3. His claim to have faith is _____** (verse 18).

**B. A DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY _____**(v. 19-20

**II. LOOK FOR THE <u>SIGNS OF A</u> _____ (v. 21-26)**

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**B. A LIVING FAITH _____ GOD'S CHILDREN** (v. 25-26)

***Take spiritual inventory***

# SIGNS OF TRUE FAITH

## JAMES 2:14-26

7-22-2020

INTRO: Illus. Physical exams are good (beneficial). If a problem is found, they allow you to do something about it before it is too late. If you are well, it is an encouragement to you.

Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" - II Cor. 13:5 (in order to be in the faith, you must have true (genuine) saving faith).

This message is vitally important. We can be wrong in a lot of areas in life, but if we are wrong in this matter of having a genuine faith, we jeopardize our eternal salvation.

--What kind of faith really saves a person?

--How can a person tell whether or not he is exercising true saving faith?

Def. of faith: Faith is not a feeling, it is a confidence that God's Word is true and a conviction that it must be obeyed.

There are two types of faith:
1) Dead (unprofitable)
2) Living (profitable)

James in verse 14-20 describes a dead faith--which is actually no faith at all.

**TODAY, WE NEED TO EXAMINE THE GENUINENESS OF OUR FAITH!**

*What should I look for?*

**I. LOOK FOR THE SYMPTOMS OF A DEAD FAITH** (V. 14-20)

This often twisted passage of Scripture of James does not contradict Paul.

Cp. Paul's teaching - "Faith alone" (Rom. 3:28, 4:1-12; Gal. 3:6-14)
Cp. James' teaching - 2:14, 17, 20, 24, 26

Both look at salvation - but from two different time periods. (Paul looks at what it takes to be saved [faith]; James looks at what results from being saved [works]).

See: Ephes. 2:8-10.

"My brethren" is placed in the middle of the question to show tender concern. It shows James' hope that they will not be like the people described.

## A. A DEAD FAITH GIVES ONLY LIP SERVICE (v. 14-18)

### 1. His claim to have faith is constant (v. 14)

"Say" = present tense, showing that this person repeatedly claims to have faith. He is sincere!

Lit. "Can that faith save him" - the Greek has the definite article, which functions as a demonstrative pronoun (It is called "the article of previous reference" and refers back to the word "faith" in the question).

"Works" - does not mean legalistic works for salv. (ex. going back under Judaism) but rather the works of love that spring forth after salvation.

"Faith alone justifies; but faith that justifies is never alone."

Mt. 7:21 - "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of Heaven."

### 2. His claim to have faith is without compassionate action (v. 15-17)

"Brother or sister" = believers.

Those of the "household of faith" ()Gal. 6:10)

(NOTE: Obligation is to male and female alike - no partiality - cp. previous context)

Don't confine yourselves to your family only, but also to your spiritual relatives in the Lord's family.

Food & clothing are basic needs of every human being.
Paul said: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:8).

"Naked" = wearing only an undergarment (cp. JN. 21:7).

"Daily food" = not even a "day's supply of food"

The double need shows the extremely destitute situation. The individual is both cold and hungry.

To by-pass obvious needs reveals heartlessness. One who is saved and recognizes what Christ has given him will not neglect to give to others. This is true faith!

"Go in peace" - a kind expression designed to give the person a feeling of peace and well-being. Jesus used these words (LK. 7:50; 8:48)--but only after he had met their needs.

"Be warmed and filled" - corresponds to the words "Naked" and "food" -- shows the speaker was well aware of the needs.

Note passive verb "be" - indicating, "Let someone else (ex. God, church, etc.) clothe you and feed you."

A dead faith paralyzes the arm from helping, paralyzes the hand from giving, paralyzes the leg from going, but does not paralyze the tongue from speaking.

People with a dead faith substitute words for deeds.

Appli: When you see a need meet it! Don't just say, "I'll be praying for you . . ."

Appli: These people praise virtue, but do not practice it.

They know the correct vocabulary for prayer and testimony and can even quote the right verses from the Bible.

“Salvation is not seen by words of lips but by works of life.”

Paul said to Titus: “They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him” (Tit. 1:16).

“Ye give them not” – the problem was not inability to give; but no desire to give.
(If God has given to you [in response to genuine faith when you asked Him], you will give tp others).
Compare Job 31:16-22

To help a person is an expression of love.
John said: I John 3:17-1 – “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

Ex. Of priest and levite in parable of good Samaritan.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “If you want to give a hungry man a tract, wrap it up in a sandwich” He could also have said, “If you want to give a hungry man a sandwich, wrap it up in a tract.”

People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

V. 17 – any profession (declaration, testimony) of faith that does not result in a changed life and good works is a false profession.

“Dead” = lifeless; unable to save (cp. v 14b)

The “faith had a splendid opportunity to show its life, but it’s failure to act showed that is was lifeless. (Lenski, p. 589)

Illus. Of a dead tree that bears no leaves, fruit, etc.

Faith in Christ brings <u>life</u> (I John 5:12) (to the inner man – what you <u>are</u>). And where there is life there must be growth and fruit (an outworking – what you <u>do</u>).

“No man can come to Christ by faith  and remain the same anymore than he can come into contact with a 220 volt wire and remain the same” (Wiersbe, p, 78

**3. His claim to have faith is <u>without concrete proof</u>** (verse 18).

In effect he is saying, "Suppose that we have only faith." Then a man could easily challenge us by saying, "You say that you have faith and I merely have good actions. Well, go ahead and show me (prove to me) your faith without actions [it can't be done], and I will show you (prove) my faith by my actions."

"Show"= demonstrate, exhibit.

Faith is invisible, but its fruits are not.

Works <u>prove</u> that he has faith, because without that faith he could not and would not do them (out of pure motives).

Being a Christian involves trusting Christ and living for Christ; you <u>receive</u> the life, then you <u>reveal</u> the life. (Wiersbe, p. 79)

Illus. Of a tight rope walker across Niagara Falls. Asks "Who believes I could carry a person across?" They all did. But none would dare volunteer.

**B. A DEAD FAITH HAS ONLY <u>HEAD KNOWLEDGE</u>** (v. 19-20

"Believe" = an intellectual acknowledgment in this verse (just as Simon in Acts :13)

"One God" = God is one

Shows <u>unity</u> of Godhead; and <u>monotheism</u>. This was a Jewish confession of faith (Deut 6:4-5 – the "Shema").

James' point is that religious beliefs without religious acts show your beliefs to be nothing more than what the demons have (cp. the demons confession – Mk. 5:1-10; 1:23-34). There are no atheistic or skeptic demons. (agnostic)

An intellectual, orthodox confession of faith is good, but if it is <u>alone</u>, it is tragic! James shatters the idea that knowledge = spirituality.

James wanted to <u>shock</u> his complacent readers, so he used demons as his illustration.

NOTE: James gives the demons even more credit. They "believe" (Intellect) and "tremble" (emotional), but exercise no good acts of the will (volitional).

"Tremble" = to shudder; lit – to bristle. It conveys the picture of a horror that causes the hair to stand on end. They are aware of their doom (Mt. 8:29, 25:51; Lk. 8:31).

True faith involves the whole man. The <u>mind</u> understands the truth; the <u>heart</u> desires the truth; and the <u>will</u> acts upon the truth.

We can't be content with just defending doctrine (dead orthodoxy) – we must live them!

"Wilt thou know" = are you willing to know?

"Vain" = hollow, empty. One who has an outward shell of Christianity but no inner reality.

Dead faith is a <u>counterfeit</u> faith that puts a person to sleep (spiritually) with a <u>false confidence</u> of eternal life.

You may have been deluded by the devil! And accepted an <u>imitation.</u>

Are you willing to examine yourself? (Your faith will stand he acid test if it is real)

## II. LOOK FOR THE SIGNS OF A LIVING FAITH (v. 21-26)

***Two proofs of righteousness (both involve a living faith)***

### A. LIVING FAITH OBEYS GOD (v. 21-24

Sacrifice out of obedience to God

#### 1. The evidence of faith (v. 21-24)

Illustration: a child. "Did you get into the pudding?" He/She says "No" but the evidence is all over his face!

"Abraham" – carried a lot of weight with the Jews

We are saved by putting 100% of our faith in the Word of God (Ja. 1:18, 21; I Pet. 1:23; Ro. 10:17)

Faith cometh by hearing.

Faith is only as good as it's object – many say "I believe!" …. But in what??

"Justified" – has two meanings in the N.T. –

1) To declare (pronounce) to be righteous before God (Ro. 3:24-28 {Justified Freely by faith}, 5:1; Lk. 18:14 {Publican was justified})

2) To prove (show) to be righteous before men (Mt. 11:19 {Wisdom is justified of her children}; Luke 7:29, 35; Ro. 3:4; I Tim:3:16 {Christ was proven to be righteous be the power of the Spirit. He promised that He would rise again and He did by the Sprit's power})

In this context, James is describing the proof/evidence (showing) of one's righteousness (cp. v. 18 – "shew").

NOTE: God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness (Gen. 15:6) occurred 30 years before he offered up Isaac (Gen. 22).

"Offered up Isaac" – see Heb. 11:17-19 –

God's commanding Abraham to offer up Isaac seemed inconsistent with God's promise to raise up a nation through Isaac – yet Abraham believed and obeyed and by his sacrificial obedience proved that his faith 30 years prior was real!

Abraham believed God enough not to question Him when God asked him to offer Isaac.

Abraham's obedience proved the reality of his trust.

**2. The Results of faith** (v. 22-23)

*A faith <u>that works</u> results in:*

**1) A more <u>mature</u> faith** (v.22)

"Perfected" = to reach the goal

"Wrought with" = cooperated with; worked together

-- Abraham was not saved by a faith plus works, but by a faith that works.

**2) <u>Proof</u> that your conversion experience was real** (v. 23a)

"Abraham believed God" – as long as my faith is in <u>me</u>, it won't work. Abraham had faith <u>in</u> God, not about God.

"Imputed" – is a legal or financial term; it means to credit or to "put in one's account." As a sinner, Abraham's spiritual <u>bankbook</u> was empty. He was bankrupt! But he trusted God's word and God put righteousness on his account.

**3) <u>Friendship</u> with God** (v. 23b) – intimate closeness (Jn. 15:15: " I no longer call you servants… but friends"

Cp. II Chron. 20:7 (Jehosaphat says to God "Abraham your friend); Is. 41:8 (God Himself refers to "Abraham my friend")

**3. The Companion (partner) of faith** (v. 24)

**B. A LIVING FAITH <u>SERVES</u> GOD'S CHILDREN** (v. 25-26)

James now uses the opposite extreme (from that of Abraham). People might have said "How do you expect us to live up to Abraham?

"Rahab" – was a Gentile (Canaanite), a woman, immoral, without stature.

Rahab is in the list of heroes of the faith (Heb. 11:31).

See Josh. 2:1-14

"Received" = to welcome and serve

"Sent out" = indicates energetic action; she acted with urgency and personal concern for their safety.

Rahab responded with her mind ( she knew her city was condemned), and her emotions ("their hearts melted" – Josh. 2:11), but she also responded with her <u>will</u> – she did something about it ( she risked her life to protect the Jewish spies).

Rahab realized her <u>obligation</u> to meet the needs of God's people.

If you had real faith you would:

Love the saints:

because God is love and He lives in you (I Jn. 4:7-8) . . .

Love your mate:
Forgive – because God forgave you.
Serve – because God has been good to you
Witness – because God has saved you.

Just as the body (external) without the spirit (internal) is dead, so Faith (internal) without works (external) is dead also.

In His Original creation, God joined the body and Spirit together. In his new creation, He joins faith and deeds together. " What God joins together we dare not put asunder." Blanchard, p,. 175

James is saying: Faith and works are inseparable. A faith that does nothing is of no more value than a lifeless corpse.

Paul's theme : No man can <u>produce</u> justification <u>by</u> good deeds. James' theme: No man can <u>prove</u> justification <u>without</u> good deeds.

Conclusion:

***Take spiritual inventory. Ask yourself:***

1) Have I truly realized I was a hell-bound sinner and needed Christ?

2) Have I trusted Christ and Him alone?

3) Has there been a change in my life? "If any man be in Christ he is a <u>new</u> creation…." II Cor. 5:17

   a. Do I sacrifice anything to God?

   b. Do I serve other believers?

4. Do I desire to share Christ with others, or am I ashamed of Him?

5) Do I enjoy the fellowship of God's people?

6) Am I ready for the Lord's return?

***Recapitulation –***

A. Are the symptoms of a dead faith in your life? Is our profession merely lip service or head knowledge?

B. Or are the signs of a living faith in your life? A faith that sacrifices to God and serves God's children.

*Note: I am not calling on you to examine the strength of your faith, or the amount of it, but the genuineness of it!