

James: Putting Our Faith Into Action

Lesson 4 - Faith Goes Hand in Hand with Deeds

Warm up -

1. What happened to the guy who kept crying "Wolf!" in that one fairy tale?
2. When people say, "Hey! We should get together sometime!" or, "We should go out for coffee," do you assume that they mean it, or are they just being polite?
3. Do good intentions count if they aren't accompanied by action? Think of an example of an injustice you see in the world and the kind of action it might require of you.

Lesson -

Suppose a person you really like or admire from afar comes up to you and says, "Hey, you busy Friday night? Let's hang out together." Then you hear from your friends that he's trash-talking you around school. He ignores you when he sees you, or, worse, makes a point of being rude to you.

Now imagine that an acquaintance calls you her worst enemy. But then she proceeds to lavish you with praise and presents. And whenever you walk into a room, she seems delighted to see you.

Which situation would you rather have to deal with? Exactly. Deeds are much more important than empty words.

That's basically what James is saying about our faith too. We can say we believe in Jesus Christ all we want, but if our daily lives don't give evidence that we follow his teaching what good is it? But wait a minute, you may be thinking. Doesn't the apostle Paul tell us that our faith is a free gift from God? That we're saved by faith, not deeds? You're right - Paul says we are "justified by faith apart from observing the law" (Rom. 3:28). James isn't disputing this. He's simply saying that once you have faith, it's going to show up in your actions.

It's been said that we have one tongue in our mouths and two tongues in our shoes. And what the tongues in our shoes do says more about who we are than what the tongue in our mouth says.

Read James 2: 14 - 26

1. As you read this, point out the arguments James offers to show that actions are important.
2. What do the demons believe that we believe? What is the difference between their believing and ours?
3. James mentions two people who had great faith. Who were they and how did their actions show their faith?
4. James says that we don't have faith if it doesn't show up in our deeds. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain why.
5. Think of someone you know who has great faith. How can you tell? What kind of deeds go along with this person's faith?
6. What do your deeds say about your faith? Ask God to give you opportunities to put your faith into practice this week.
7. What obstacles prevent you from letting your faith guide your actions?
8. What effect do your deeds - both good and bad - have on your friends and neighbors in the world who you know you are a Christian? What will they think of you faith if your walk doesn't match your talk?
9. Think of a difficult decision you are faced with (or have been faced with). Does your faith make a difference in what you decide to?