



STUDY 4

LIVING FAITH WORKS

JAMES 2:14-26

Faith is a funny thing. How do you know whether or not you've got it, and whether it's real? There's also a long running tension between faith and 'good works' as to which is the real 'currency' of getting right with God...

SOME QUESTIONS FROM JAMES

1. In this week's passage James asks a series of awkward questions that go to the heart of the nature of true faith. **Read James 2:14-26**, and identify and write down each of his questions:

Question 1.

Question 2.

Question 3.

Question 4.

Question 5.

2. Nice work! You've just created your own study. Now discuss and answer each question - first your way, and then with the answers James gives.

3. What questions and concerns are you left with? (Does anything seem to contradict other parts of the New Testament?)

SHOW AND TELL

People often suggest that James contradicts Paul's teaching on "salvation by faith alone, through grace alone" (see sidebars). **Read James 2:14-26** again in your group. Look for, and emphasise as you read, the words "**Show me**", "**show you**", "**You see**" and "**You see**".

4. What difference does reading this way make to understanding the point James is making?

So far in his letter, James has been reminding his readers that the gospel - which he calls "the perfect law that gives freedom" - needs to be liberally applied in the way we live out our lives of love. Our faith needs to actively be put to work. What we do - the way we live, and love, and care - shows the world our faith. And for James, an invisible faith isn't real faith at all!

5. James gets right to the point in 2:14-17. What kind of evidence will demonstrate a real and living faith?

Romans 4:4-5

To the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

Galatians 2:16

We have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

Ephesians 2:8-9

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

