

The Christian Arsenal

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HOW TO HAVE REAL FAITH Developing a Faith that Works

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Part 7 of 7
James 2:14-26

“Faith by itself, it if is not accompanied by actions, is dead.” James 2:17

I. WHO IS RIGHT – JAMES OR PAUL?

	Paul	James
Problem:	<u>Legalism</u> – I’ve got to keep all the Jewish laws and regulations to be a Christian	<u>Laxity</u> – It doesn’t matter what you do as long as you believe
Focus:	<u>Works</u> – Jewish laws like circumcision <u>Root</u> of salvation – what happens to me internally (internal/unseen)	<u>Works</u> – the lifestyle of a Christian – acts of love <u>Fruit</u> of salvation – what happens on the outside (external – seen)
Purpose:	How to <u>KNOW</u> you’re a Christian. How to <u>BECOME</u> a believer.	How to <u>SHOW</u> you’re a Christian. How to <u>BEHAVE</u> like a believer.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, for a life of good works that God has already prepared for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8-10 (GN)

Notice the order: + “by grace”
+ “through faith”
+ “for good works”

II. WHAT IS REAL FAITH?

1. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU SAY.

“What good is it my brother if a man claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?” James 2:14

George Gallup poll – 50 million Americans say they are born again.

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“Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.” Matthew 7:20-21

Not everybody who is a professor of Christianity is a possessor of Christianity.

2. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU FEEL.

“Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, Go, I wish you well fed, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?” James 2:15

A lot of people confuse emotion and sentiment with faith.

You can go to church and get a quiver in your liver, goosebumps, but it never makes any difference.

Real faith takes the initiative.

“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” I John 3:17

We are a lot better at verbalizing our faith than practicing it – I can't meet everybody's needs, but I can meet somebody's.

“In the same way, faith by itself if it's not accompanied by actions is dead.” James 2:17

“If I don't feel like helping other Christians, I don't have a sick faith, I have a dead faith.”

3. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU THINK.

“But someone will say, You have faith – I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” James 2:18

Real faith is visible.

Lady Clairol Christian – nobody knows for sure.

Faith is odorless, weightless, invisible so anybody can claim to have it – James says, SHOW ME.”

Faith is like calories – you can't see them, but you can sure see the results.

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“Any time a person becomes a Christian he becomes a new person inside, the old things have passed away. All things become new.” 2 Cor. 5:17

Real faith always produces change.

4. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU BELIEVE.

“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder!” James 2:19

Just saying I believe in God is not enough to get you to heaven. Even the devil believes that.

“The fool has said in his heart, there is not God.” Psalm 14:1

A lot of folks are going to miss heaven by 18 inches.
They’ve got it in their head, but not in their heart.

5. REAL FAITH IS SOMETHING YOU DO.

Illustrations – two very different people.

ABRAHAM

A man

Jewish

A patriarch

A somebody

A major Bible character

RAHAB

A woman

A Gentile

A prostitute

A nobody

A minor character

They had one thing in common – FAITH!

“You foolish men. Do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. His faith and his actions were working together. His faith was made complete by what he did. Scripture was fulfilled when it said, Abraham believed God and it was accredited to him as righteousness and he was called God’s friend.” James 2:20

Our faith is not determined by what we do. It is demonstrated by what we do.

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.” 2 Corinthians 13:5