

The Evidence Of Genuine Faith

James 2:19-26

I. Genuine Faith Is More Than Just Knowing (19)

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II. Genuine Faith Is Demonstrated Through Sacrificial Obedience (20-24)

²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

III. Genuine Faith Is Proven Through Selfless Service (25)

²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

IV. Genuine Faith Is Demonstrated By Godly Deeds (26)

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Conclusion:

1. Is your faith in Christ genuine? How do you know it is? How will others know of the sincerity of our faith?
2. How does the saving work of Christ on the cross motivate us regularly to serve others like Christ served us?
3. How would we distinguish if our good works are trying to earn salvation versus demonstrating a salvation we already possess?
4. If we asked an unsaved family member, friend, classmate and co-worker if our faith in Christ seems genuine, what would they say? Why?

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Introduction:

- A couple of years ago, I was supposed to be in Canada for a missions conference. I realized the week of travel that my passport was expired. I called the airlines but was given bad information. All I needed was a birth certificate. I didn't have a certified copy, so I again followed bad advice and went to 4 different locations before I ended up at S.F. City Hall. But when I got to the airport, the gate agent said it wasn't enough proof of identity to enter a foreign country – even Canada.
- Travel requires from of identity.
- So does Christianity.

- What proof do we have as being Christians?

- James is saying it's our works that proceed out of our lives that demonstrate our faith.

- Our works could call our identity as Christians into question: foul mouth, immoral lifestyle, being more about material than spiritual things.
- Our works should prove our faith: ministering to widows and orphans, living in purity.

- Ie/ Covid 19 and Shelter in Place will prove a lot of things for churches
 - Do we minister to one another even though teleconferencing is so draining?
 - Is the Body of Christ really important to me when I don't see them?
 - Is Shelter in Place a greater opportunity for spiritual growth or hiding from God?
 - Is my worship through giving only motivated when a plate is passed around?
 - Is not seeing people close up an excuse or a challenge to minister more creatively and sacrificially?
 - Is the church still important when the internet has so many cooler alternatives?

- People wonder what will happen to the church after shelter in place orders are lifted. Every one is. But if you ask the persecuted church, they will say it is a way to see through good works and commitment those who are really in the faith.

- **Today, we will look at 4 marks of Genuine Faith from James 2:19-26.**

I. **Genuine Faith Is More Than Just Knowing (19)**

¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

- “You believe that God is one” – this is a reference to the Shema found in Deut 6:4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is One!”
- This is the basic recitation that every Jew learns from childhood and is repeated every morning and night.
- James was appealing to those who were content in the basics of the Jewish religion and the Christian religion – the is **One God** – not many gods like the pagans believed
 - Muslim’s believe in one god, but not that Christ is their Savior
- James is trying to emphasize that intellectual assent or a mere belief is not saving faith in Christ.
- There are a lot of Christian sects and churches who believe in God but deny Christ’s full payment of salvation on the cross
- Even the **demons** believe in one God – and they fear!
 - There is a difference between a demon and rote religious person – the demons **fear!**
- The rote religious person knows bible verses, bible stories and even theology but don’t react in fear, love or repentance
 - Jesus **gave His life** to help a world and we won’t lift a finger to **help** a brother in need?
 - Jesus **bore our sin** and we don’t feel an ounce of guilt when we **sin** against God?
 - Jesus **resurrected** and we wallow in life **without hope?**

Heart 3 Components ↓	Faith Trusting In Christ ↓	Repentance Turning To Christ ↓	Incomplete Approach ↓	Rebellious Approach ↓
Intellect →	Know the facts of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:3-4)	Know that you are a hell-bound sinner (Luke 18:13; Acts 26:18-20)	Only a mental acknowledgment (James 2:19)	Choose to remain ignorant (Rom 10:3a)
Emotions →	Feel confident in the saving power of Christ	Feel broken and remorseful because our sin has offended God (2 Cor 7:10; Jer 31:19)	Only an emotional response (Luke 8:13)	Establish own standard of righteousness (Rom 10:3b)
Will →	Decide to rely upon Christ alone for your salvation	Decide to turn from you sin (1 Thess 1:9)	Make a decision to trust God apart from the truth of the Gospel	Not submit to God’s righteousness (Rom 10:3c)

- **Augustine** “If you believe what you like in the gospel and reject what you don’t like; it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself”

Ie/ **John Wesley**, a great American evangelist from 300 years ago and founder of the Methodist denomination, was an evangelist who was routine with his devotions, memorized much of the

Greek New Testament and was a missionary to local indigenous Indian tribes. He thought all these good works would help him get closer to heaven. Then he became convicted that only Christ accomplished salvation on his behalf. Midway in his ministry career, John Wesley truly trusted Christ.

- Christ went to the cross to die on our behalf.
- It's not our works that get us to heaven, but the work of Christ.
- But what will be pointed out by the next 3 examples, is that good works is the product of genuine faith.

Ie/ I serve with a **pastor who's wife**, after decades of being a pastor's wife, realized she wasn't saved. She served in the women's ministry and taught. She was a good person compared to others. But she realized she wasn't truly saved. She trusted Christ as her Savior knowing that her knowledge of the facts of Christ wasn't enough for her life needing to be saved.

- Do you have a genuine faith in Christ?
- Are you relying on your church attendance, your moral character and your familiarity with the Bible to get you to heaven?
- Or has Christ saved you?

II. Genuine Faith Is Demonstrated Through Sacrificial Obedience (20-24)

²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

- "useless" = hollow, empty

²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

- Abraham, the Great Patriarch of Jews & Christians, is used as an example by James

Genesis 17:9 And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.

- 30 years after Abraham believed in the covenant made with God in Gen 15:6, Abraham proved his faith in Genesis 22
- V. 2 "**take**" – the Hebrew adds "by yourself" (personal act, not a social act)
- "your only son Isaac"
 - "whom you love" – God asks for what we love
- Moriah – the site of a future Jerusalem

- **“offer as burnt offering”**
 - This doesn’t make sense to Abraham
 - He heard from God that He would make an everlasting covenant and that it would be through Isaac
 - Now God wants him to offer his son up as a sacrifice
 - He waited all these years with Sarah
- But yet, he obeyed immediately
- Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.
- Abraham saw Isaac as the lamb – he hoped in resurrection

²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;

Abraham’s School of Faith

Test	Text	Action	Result
Family	11:27 – 12:5	Leave family – new land	Partial Pass
Famine	12:10 – 13:4	Trust God to provide food	Fail – went to Egypt
Fellowship	13:5-18	Gave Lot 1 st choice of pastureland	Pass
Fight	14:1-16	Defeated kings	Pass
Fortune	14:17-24	Said no to Sodom’s wealth	Pass
Fatherhood	16	Impatient with Sarah, child with Hagar	Fail
Farewell	21:14-21	Sent Hagar & Ishmael away	Pass - heartbroken

Wiersbe, Warren W. (2010-01-01). Be Obedient (Genesis 12-25): Learning the Secret of Living by Faith (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 132). David C. Cook. Kindle Edition.

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- Remember that Paul deals with the front end of justification – Abraham’s faith was counted as works.
- James deals with the back end of justification – Abraham’s works justified his faith
- But you see James points to justification by faith alone in v. 23
- But that works prove our genuine faith.

Romans 4:1-5 **1** What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? **2** For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. **3** For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” **4** Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. **5** And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Galatians 3:6-7 **6** just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? **7** Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

- Good work proceeds from justification
- How does the way you live out your faith prove that you are in the faith?
- What do your class mates and co-workers see in your daily life that points to Christ making a difference in your life?

III. Genuine Faith Is Proven Through Selfless Service (25)

²⁵And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

- Rahab was a Canaanite – enemy of God
- Her particular tribe was the Amorites
- Her culture was dedicated to hating God
- Our culture is strongly becoming anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-truth, antichrist

- “Rahab” – comes from *Ra* (Egyptian god)
- Her name means “insolent and fierce”

- Her occupation: Harlot, prostitute
- The culture was degraded
- But Rahab sold herself to the lowest of the low
- Do you feel that disgusting sin or sexual sin prevents you from being used by God?
- Rahab was a harlot who exercised faith in God

Joshua 2:1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there.

- Her occupation has afforded her a prime real estate location in the wall of Jericho
- For strange foreigners to go to a place of harlotry would not have been unusual
- Rahab may have been accustomed to hiding men from suspicious wives
- She hid these men of Israel sent by Joshua and lied to the King of Jericho who wanted her to produce them to kill them.

- **Rahab had to make a choice: To leave her pagan religion of idols to put her faith in the one true God**

- She recognized God’s will: v. 9 **I know that the Lord has given you the land**
- She responded to God’s power: v. 9 the **fear** of you has fallen upon us
- She knew of God’s work: v. 10 ¹⁰For **we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea** before you when you came out of Egypt, and **what you did to the two kings of the Amorites**
- She reacted with emotion: v. 11 And **as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted,**
- She confessed His Lordship: v. 11 **for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.**

- She asked for nothing about saving her family: v. 13 **“that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.”**

Joshua 2:9-14 “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the **fear** of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰For **we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea** before you when you came out of Egypt, and **what you did to the two kings of the Amorites** who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹And **as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted**, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, **for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.** ¹²Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign ¹³that you will **save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.**” ¹⁴And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”

Hebrews 11:31 **By faith** Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

IV. Genuine Faith Is Demonstrated By Godly Deeds (26)

²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

- So a faith without works is:
 - No greater than the faith of a demon (19)
 - Is hollow (20)
 - Is dead (26)
- James used 4 examples to illustrate faith without works: Demons, Abraham, Rahab and in v. 26 **Death**
- Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body
- Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God
- James speaks of physical death as an example of a dead religion without works
- What godly works are you doing during Shelter In Place that demonstrates the reality of your faith and responds to the sacrificial work of Christ?

Conclusion:

1. Is your faith in Christ genuine? How do you know it is? How will others know of the sincerity of our faith?
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