



## Life Group Notes: 'Active Faith'

Tuesday 3rd April 2018

### READ JAMES 2: 14-26

*14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder. 20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

### INTRODUCTION:

When someone describes themselves as holding a faith, we often understand this to be a person putting confidence or trust in a particular system or religious belief. Whilst this interpretation is correct, we find that the Book of James expands this further by suggesting that our faith in God can only become alive through a purely active and non-passive approach. This week we explore what it means for us to be active in our faith!

### QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

1. In verse 14 James says 'What good is it if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds'. What do you think James meant by this strong statement and how is this view weighed against the truth that our salvation rests entirely on grace and not deeds?

*Further Exploration: Ephesians 2:8-10 (Explore the meaning of these verses and see how Paul evaluates the need to rely on grace rather than deeds for salvation. Equally, explore Paul's encouragement for us to discover the 'good works' that God has prepared in advance for us to do following our initial salvation experience.*

2. In verse 16 James gives an illustration of a person wishing someone well as opposed to physically helping them to become well. Discuss this statement and explore the balance of the need to pray for someone as well as practically helping someone.

***Further Exploration: Luke 10: 25-37** (In light of the parable of the Good Samaritan, explore how this story reveals the difference between 'active faith' and 'inactive faith'. Discuss how a religious mindset can actually reduce active faith if we allow pride to creep in.*

3. In verse 18 James plays down the idea that faith and deeds are two separate things that don't require each other. Alternatively, James promotes the idea that both faith and deeds fully depend on each other. Discuss what ways we can cause our faith to become more hidden and the dangers of adopting a view that active faith is just for the few extraverts.

***Further Exploration: Acts 18:9-10** (Here we see God encourage Apostle Paul to not allow fear to silence his faith and to not give up speaking the Gospel despite the environment he was in. Explore how your environment today can have a negative affect upon active faith.*

4. Verses 21-26 James provides examples of Bible characters that demonstrated great faith by accompanied action. In light of their active faith, discuss what ways you can become an active modern day believer in Jesus Christ. Equally discuss times when you may have felt disappointed when an act of faith didn't produce the result you expected. How can we learn from both our great appointments and great disappointments?

***Further Exploration: Hebrews 11: 1-40** (These passages are often referred to as the 'Faith hall of Fame'. In summary it provides a list of those who have gone before us who also put action upon their faith. Allow these examples to encourage you and remind yourselves that you are called to follow in their footsteps).*

## CLOSING REFLECTION & PRAYER

Take time to pray with each other that God will increase your faith and give you greater boldness in the days to come. For those in your group who maybe require healing, take a step of faith to pray and believe God to use you in the prayer of command and get ready for God to use you!

Finally we encourage you to take new steps of faith in the weeks ahead. Remember God is with you!

**Useful homework scriptures to further explore:**

*(Matthew 25: 31-46, 2 Corinthians 5:7 , Galatians 2: 15-16)*