



*Pointers and questions on the book of*  
**James**

**Session 4**

**2:14-26**

**Faith and Actions**

**Summary**

- 2:14-17** Real faith, by definition, does not exist in the abstract; it always finds expression in practical acts of kindness. Faith without such actions is 'dead'—it is no faith at all.
- 2:18-19** It is not a question of having *either* faith *or* actions (deeds). The two are inseparable. Faith in itself is invisible, deep in the heart, but you know it's a reality when you see the person doing good works. This is a higher kind of faith than mere acceptance of doctrinal truth about God—even the demons have their doctrine of God right!
- 2:20-24** Abraham stands as a good example of the fact that 'faith without deeds is useless'. He had faith in God's promise about having descendants through Isaac, even to the point of being willing to sacrifice Isaac at God's command.
- 2:25-26** Rahab is another OT example. Her faith that God's people would be victorious in line with his promises caused her to take practical steps to protect the Israelite spies.

**Questions to get you thinking**

1. Do you know people who claim to be Christians (to have faith) but whose lives show no sign of the appropriate actions? Do you think they really are saved? (v14)
2. Do you think v15-17 could include *praying* for people in need and doing nothing practical to help them?
3. Is James saying in v19 that doctrinal truth is of no value at all?
4. 'I will show you my faith by what I do' (v18). On this basis, if you were arrested on suspicion of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?
5. Talk about the Abraham illustration (v20-23). How exactly does his experience illustrate the truth in question?
6. How can you square v24 with Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2:8-9?
7. Rahab's morals were poor: she was a prostitute and told lies (see Joshua 2). But within the limits of the light she had on God and his ways, her faith was real, and God honoured it. What can we learn from this about unchurched and unrighteous people today who reach out towards the Lord?
8. The word 'spirit' in v26 can also be translated 'breath'. Does that make the illustration clearer?

