

Bible Study Group Notes

James 2.14–26

THE BIG PICTURE

James has been reminding us about the difference between spiritual appearance and spiritual reality: receiving the Word, obeying the Word, displaying the Word; rejecting favouritism and embracing mercy. Now he addresses a danger at the heart of church life: a 'faith' that is easy to carry – verbal, orthodox, respectable – but unmoving. James is not attacking faith; he is exposing a claim of faith that produces no living fruit.

His question is meant to unsettle us: is our faith alive?

Read James 2.14–26.

DEAD FAITH: FAITH THAT ONLY TALKS (2.14-19)

1. What is James asking in 2.14, and why does the wording "someone says" matter?
2. In 2.15–16, what "church scenario" does James describe, and what is wrong with the response?
3. What conclusion does James draw in 2.17? What does "dead" mean in this context?
4. How does 2.18 clarify the relationship between faith and works?
5. Why does James mention demons in 2.19? What kind of "faith" is he critiquing?

COSTLY FAITH: ABRAHAM'S FAITH THAT OBEYS WHEN IT HURTS (2.20-24)

6. What example from Abraham's life does James use (2.21–23), and what does it demonstrate?
7. How does 2.22 explain the link between Abraham's faith and his obedience?
8. In 2.24, what do you think James means by "justified" in this argument? (How is he using the word?)

RISKY FAITH: RAHAB'S FAITH THAT IDENTIFIES WHEN IT IS DANGEROUS (2.25)

9. Why is Rahab a striking example alongside Abraham?

10. What does her action reveal about living faith?

11. What might 'Rahab-like' faith look like in ordinary church life – courageous belonging and public allegiance?

REFLECT & APPLY

12. What is James's final image in 2.26, and how does it summarise the whole passage?

13. Where are you most tempted toward "faith that only talks" – good words, good intentions, but little movement?

14. What might an 'Isaac moment' look like for you: one costly step of obedience that will actually cost you comfort, time, money, control, or reputation?

15. What might a 'Rahab step' look like for you: one risky step of identification—being known, joining in, serving, initiating, or speaking about Jesus?

PRAY

- Ask God to expose what is spiritually dead and to give spiritual life: repentance, obedience, and courageous allegiance.
- Thank Him that Jesus did not love us in words only, but in the cross.
- Pray for costly faith like Abraham and risky faith like Rahab to grow in us by the Spirit.