

DAY 2: Read James 2:14-19

1. What would a faith without deeds look like?
2. What is James saying in verse 19 and how does this relate to what he writes in verses 17-18?

DAY 3: Read James 2:20-23

1. You may recall the story of Abraham's offering of Isaac found in Genesis 22:1-18, or you may refresh your memory by reading the story. What stands out as you read this? How does this relate to what James writes?
2. Why was Abraham considered righteous when he offered Isaac?
3. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. How does this passage help explain Abraham's obedience?
4. Recall a time when you had to sacrifice or give something up in order to obey God. Is there anything you are afraid that God might ask you to give up?

DAY 4: Read James 2:20-24

1. How do we know Abraham believed God?
2. Read Romans 4:4-6. What is Paul saying here about the relationship between faith and works?
3. What does this statement in verse 23 mean: “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness?”
4. What does verse 24 mean to you in light of what you have already read in James?

To Dig Deeper: Faith and Good Works

Compare James 2:18 with Romans 3:28 and Ephesians 2:8-10. Does it seem that James and Paul have different understandings about faith and good works? How do we reconcile these apparently contrasting statements?

DAY 5: Read James 2:25-26

1. Verses 25 & 26 refer to the story of Rahab in the Old Testament. Read Joshua 2: 1-21 for background on Rahab. Why do you think James chose to use Rahab as an example?
2. Note verse 11 in the Joshua account. Why were Rahab and her family spared?
3. What is James' conclusion about Rahab, and how does it relate to his discussion of faith and good works?

DAY 6: Reread James 2:14-26

1. Now that you have studied the first two chapters of James, list some of the kinds of “works” or “deeds” that he mentions. Which word—works or deeds—do you think is the better English word to get at James’ meaning? Why?
2. What does James say in these verses about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Write down two or three ideas about discipleship from this passage.
3. Identify a verse in this passage that is particularly meaningful or significant, write it down, and memorize it.
4. Think about a song or hymn that speaks to these issues – perhaps “So Let Our Lips and Lives Express”

*So let our lips and lives express
The holy Gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine.*

*Our flesh and sense must be denied,
Passion and envy, lust and pride;
While justice, temperance, truth, and love,
Our inward piety approve.*

or “Christ of the Upward Way”

*Christ of the upward way, my Guide divine,
Where Thou hast set Thy feet, may I place mine;
And move and march wherever Thou hast trod,
Keeping face forward up the hill of God.*

*Give me the eye to see each chance to serve,
Then send me strength to rise with steady nerve,
And leap at once with kind and helpful deed,
To the sure succor of a soul in need.*