

3

Faith on Display in Your Actions

WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN FAITH IN ACTION?

The POINT >

What you believe is seen in what you do.

> JAMES 2:14-26

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can such faith save him?

¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, stay warm, and be well fed,” but you don’t give them what the body needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself.

¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder.

²⁰Senseless person! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? ²¹Wasn’t Abraham our father justified by works in offering Isaac his son on the altar?

²²You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵In the same way, wasn’t Rahab the prostitute also justified by works in receiving the messengers and sending them out by a different route? ²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

You're likely familiar with the idiom, "Talk is cheap." But that's only half the story. Originally, the commonly used phrase was, "Talk is cheap, but it takes money to buy a farm."³ Don't be all talk.



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Our response to God's love is to remain pure in all aspects of life—with our bodies, thoughts, attitudes, actions, and speech—and He empowers us to obey His commands as we live by the Spirit.

In the US today, almost seventy percent of people identify as Christian, and among teens specifically:

- Thirty-four percent attend church at least once a week.
- Ten percent attend regularly, though not weekly.
- Sixty percent claim that religion is important to them.¹

You would assume that with so many people seeing religion as important and going to church, the ethical and moral standards of our country would be more in line with the Bible. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Some want to blame our morality issues on social media, music, movies and TV, or the opposing political party. However, the responsibility rests on us as individuals.

Across all ages, sixty-eight percent of people in the US claim to be Christian, so where are our ethics and morality?²

The problem is not with what people believe. The problem is that too many of us don't live what we claim to believe. There is a large disconnect between our belief system and our conduct. James, in his letter to the church, pointed to a better way.

JAMES 2:14-17

1 What does a useless faith look like?

2 What are the characteristics of a faith that is alive?

JAMES 2:18-20

3 Why are right beliefs so important?

4 Why are right beliefs never enough?

5 How can we demonstrate our faith to a skeptical world?

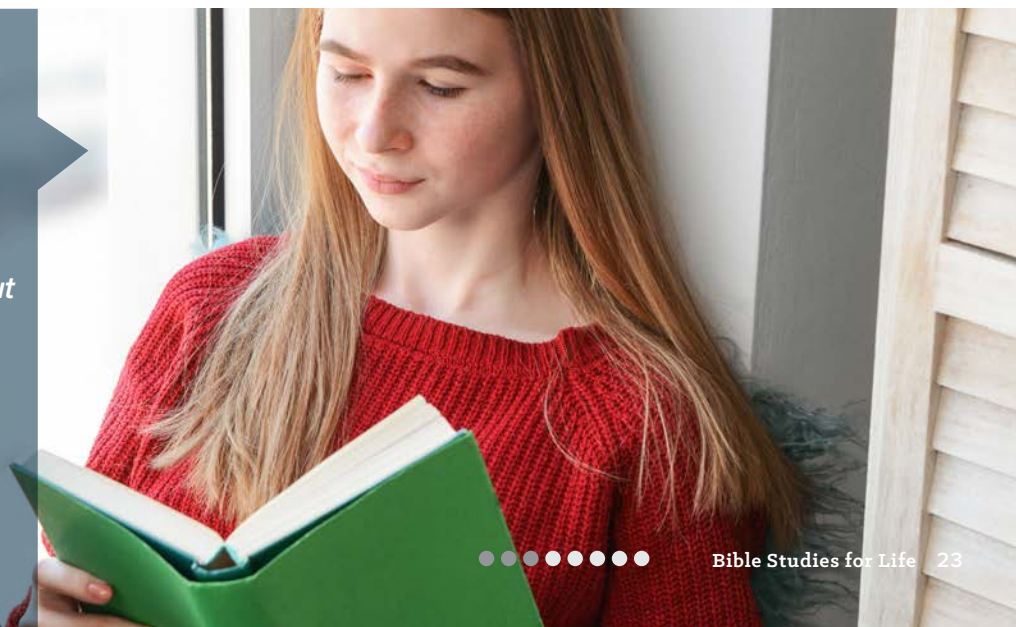
JAMES 2:21-26

6 How would you describe the connection between faith and obedience?

7 What sometimes keeps us from living out our faith?

8 In real ways, how does your faith influence the ways you act?

*True faith leads
to a life-changing
relationship
with God.
#BSFLFaithLivedOut*





LIVE IT OUT



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // PEOPLE

Our response to God's love is to remain pure in all aspects of life—with our bodies, thoughts, attitudes, actions, and speech—and He empowers us to obey His commands as we live by the Spirit.

Faith is essentially believing the truth about Jesus and trusting Him in a way that leads to obedience in all areas of life. True faith leads us to live in ways that reflect Jesus, including our actions and words, as well as our thoughts and attitudes.

> CHRIST

9 Read Psalm 139:23-24 and write it below:

10 Pray asking God to expose the areas in your life where you are not living what you claim to believe. After praying, develop an action plan for life changes to help align your actions with your faith.

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

> COMMUNITY

Ask a trusted friend to speak into your life and tell you how consistent you are at living your faith.

11 Listen. Avoid getting defensive and prepare to make some life changes based on what you hear.



> CULTURE

We are called to share the gospel with lost people, including (or especially) non-believing friends. It's incredibly important that our actions line up with the things we claim to believe, and this kind of consistency is one of the most powerful ways we prove our faith is real and makes a difference.

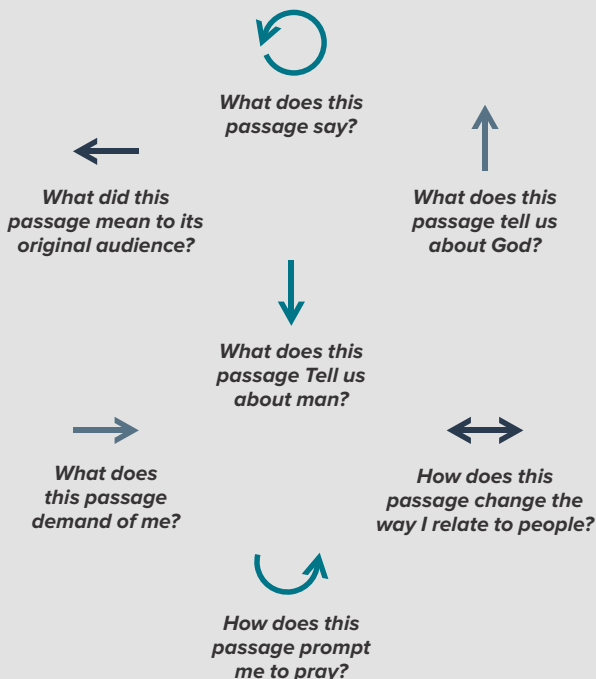
12 What are some examples of faith in action? How do your non-believing friends see your faith lived out?

13 How will you use this to help your non-believing friends understand the difference Jesus could make in their lives?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One EPHESIANS 2:1-2

It can be a little tough to understand, but it's possible to be physically alive, but spiritually dead. The world and its ways refers specifically to the ways people live which are opposed to God and His purposes. Before we were Jesus's followers, we all lived this way, and we were spiritually dead. This kind of spiritual death shows up as selfish living, words that are crude and cruel, conflict in relationships, patterns of anger or jealousy, pursuing perverse or unholy entertainment, and many more sinful attitudes and behaviors. And people who live these ways are being influenced by Satan. When our friends or neighbors live lives characterized by sinful patterns, we need to understand that it's not simply bad choices, but that they are living in darkness, which has serious eternal consequences. We must strive every day to live in obedience to God and seek to help others know and live according to His truth.

➤ **What does it mean to be dead in sin?**

➤ **What do our patterns of living reveal about our spiritual condition?**

Day Two

EPHESIANS 2:3



All people are born with a sinful nature, and, apart from our trusting Jesus as Savior, we will continue to live sinfully and selfishly. However, Jesus changes all that. Paul said to the church that they “previously” lived in ways that the flesh would incline them. Previously implies that their lives had changed because of Jesus’s work. For those of us who are Christians, we have a “previously” too. Before, we lived sinfully. After all, we were born sinners. Now, however, because Jesus has changed us, we will live by faith in ways that reflect our Savior.

➤ **How would you describe your “previously,” before coming to faith?**

➤ **What has now changed about the ways you live?**

Day Three

EPHESIANS 2:4-5

When we were sinners, “dead” in our trespasses and sins, we simply couldn’t live as people who were spiritually alive. Makes sense, right? We were spiritually dead. But God intervened on our behalf. When we could do nothing about our broken and hopeless condition, God sent Jesus to die in our place. But because Jesus was powerful over death and was raised from the dead, He made it possible that we too could be raised to life. Mercy means that God didn’t give us what we deserve, and because of sin, we deserved eternal judgment. But instead of judgment, we have been saved by God’s grace, which is specifically a free gift that we didn’t deserve. When we were dead, there was nothing we could do for ourselves. So God did it for us. He loved us so much that He sent His only Son to pay the price, and if we are willing to trust and follow Jesus, salvation is a free gift.

➤ **What could we do to save ourselves when we were dead in our sins?**

➤ **What is mercy? What is grace?**

Day Four

EPHESIANS 2:6-9

Earlier, we saw that because we are sinful, we deserve judgment, but God in His mercy didn't give us the bad things we deserve. Further, we saw that God, in His grace, gave us good things that we didn't deserve—specifically, salvation. There's one more concept we need to grasp in order to understand how salvation is made a reality in our lives. Faith is more than believing in God. It means believing the truth about Jesus and trusting Jesus in a way that leads to our following Him in all the ways we live. There's nothing we can do to earn salvation. God's standard is perfection. God's standard is Jesus! And we fall desperately short. However, when we respond to God's call, choosing wholeheartedly to trust and follow Jesus, God responds by giving us the gift of salvation.

➤ **How would you describe or define faith?**

➤ **Why is it important to understand that salvation is a free gift from God?**

Day Five

EPHESIANS 2:10



Paul taught that we are saved by God's grace, not by our own works. God's salvation is a free gift that we cannot earn. This doesn't mean that our works aren't important. They are! Here's a good way to think about it. We aren't saved by works, but we are saved to work. Whereas we can never be good enough to earn God's favor, our acts of kindness and service to others do make a meaningful impact in the lives of our neighbors. And God uses those works as expressions of His grace to lead others into a relationship with Himself. Our works don't save ourselves or others, but God does use our obedience for His purposes.

➤ **In your own words, what's the difference between being saved by works and being saved to work?**

➤ **Why are our works important?**