



# James

"Walk the talk"



# Context

*This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad.*

James 1:1

James is writing to Jewish believers who are being persecuted. In chapter 2:2 he describes their meeting place as a synagogue.



## What is Faith?

Faith is something that must be seen!

James is asking the question what does faith look like!

Some people may want to reduce faith to a series of statements that people profess to believe, but for James, faith is what is operative in a person's life.



## The proposition

14a What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions?

James contends that faith is dead (useless) if it is not demonstrated by our actions!

He is suggesting that only by actions is it possible to discern whether someone has faith. 14b **Can that kind of faith save anyone?**



## Paul's perspective

He wrote: For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul also understood the necessity of works in proving the character of our faith. He also wrote: This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. (Titus 3:8)



## Examples of Dead Faith

Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? Jam 2:15-16

James is objecting to "faith" that has pious words but no actions. The uselessness of this response is so obvious and offensive that James needs only to repeat his first rhetorical question: What good is it? James expects that faith will surely lead to actions to meet others' material needs.



**It is not faith  
verses  
works**

17 So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.  
James 2:17

The works James requires are not done apart from faith but done in faith, not done instead of faith but done because of faith.



## A Doer of the Word

Endures trials

Gets wisdom

Resists  
temptation

Controls ones  
tongue

Looks after  
orphans and  
widows in  
distress

Loves ones  
Neighbour

A life of faith (pistis) is the unifying theme of James's letter. He strongly emphasizes that faith is a stance of belief and trust toward God--for example, trusting God even in the face of trials. But with equal strength James emphasizes that genuine faith is "working faith" (Moo 1985:107).