



FAITH IS MORE THAN SKIN-DEEP
4th of the FAITH THAT SHOWS Series
James 1: 19-27

Faith can be that internal strength flowing from a strong belief in God. But faith is not entirely inward; it manifests itself outwardly. In fact, faith is not just an abstract ideal but is manifested by words, actions and decisions.

Unless proven by deeds, our faith is dead.

In the last weeks, we learned that

1. Faith manifests joy when tested.
2. Faith relies on wisdom provided by God
3. Faith produces righteousness

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In Chapter 2, James highlights two wrong behaviors the believers have: Partiality and Pretense. Both deal with the believers' inclination to make judgment based on the façade or externals. These behaviors are inconsistent with the believers' faith and should be addressed.

James exposes the shallowness of many Christians who are often judgmental because of people's status, position, wealth and appearance. This is partiality. On the other hand, he rebukes the believers who have professed their faith yet never really get to practice their belief. James addresses the hypocrisy, or pretension, of many believers who may have contented themselves with just "words" but never get to validate their faith with works.

FAITH SHOWS NO PARTIALITY (James 2:1-12)

- The seriousness of this offense:
 - we discriminate and become judgmental of people (v. 4)
 - we do not reflect our glorious Lord Jesus Christ when we show favoritism (v. 1)
 - *Luke 1:50-54 tells us that God is merciful to those who are in need
 - *Luke 4:18-19 shows that Jesus' mission is to proclaim freedom to the oppressed and the poor

- What it means when we show partiality
 - We act contrary to the Lord we represent
 - We have dishonored the poor and the exploited (v. 5-7)
 - We break the law and our offense is no better than adultery or murder (v. 8-11)
 - We forget that we will be judged as well if we have not been merciful (v. 12-13)

FAITH SHINES WITH WORKS NOT WITH WORDS

- "Workless" Believers
 - They claim to have faith but have no deeds (v. 14)
 - They speak blessings but does nothing about the needs (v. 16)
- Faith without works is dead (v. 17)
 - Faith professed is faith practiced
 - "If faith does not serve, it does not save"
 - Faith that is dead is even worse than the demons' faith (v. 19)
- Not about "Faith or Deeds"
 - Faith by deeds: it is proven by works
 - Like Abraham who offered Isaac and was called a friend of God, and like Rahab the prostitute, someone is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone (v. 24)
 - "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." (v. 26)

FOR DISCUSSIONS:

1. Reflect: Partiality and Pretense both deal with the believers' inclination to make judgment based on the façade or externals. These behaviors are inconsistent with the believers' faith and should be addressed.
2. Have you considered the seriousness of partiality (showing favoritism) and pretense (hypocrisy)? Have you been guilty of having either of these wrong attitudes?
3. What are the implications of these two offenses of partiality: (1) to discriminate and become judgmental of people or (2) to fail to reflect our glorious Lord Jesus Christ because of our favoritism?
4. Reflect: When we show partiality then we break the law and our offense is no better than adultery or murder.
5. Reflect: When we show partiality then we forget that we will be judged as well if we have not been merciful (v. 12-13)
6. Have you been guilty of being a "workless" believer? Why?
7. Reflect: Faith professed is faith practiced. "If faith does not serve, it does not save"
8. Reflect: You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder (v. 19)
9. Reflect: FAITH SHINES WITH WORKS NOT WITH WORDS
10. Reflect: Faith is not skin-deep. What changes do you need to undertake as application to this message?