

Study Guide #4

Virtual Study of James – James 2:14-26
Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

Is this teaching inconsistent with the teachings of Paul?
• Rom 3:19-4:25
• Gal 2:15-3:6
• Eph 2:8-10

I. Dead Faith (14-17)

14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has **faith** but does not have **works**? Can that **faith** save him? **Matt 7:21**

(Is this really "faith" in God?)

(What is the difference between the "works" described by James and those mentioned by Paul?)

15 If a *brother or sister* is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, **A fellow believer.**

16 and one of you says to them, "**Go in peace**, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

Standard Hebrew farewell.

17 So also **faith** by itself, if it does not have **works**, is **dead**. **What does it mean if faith is "dead?"**

II. Demonic Faith (18-19)

(Shema: Deut 6:4)

18 But someone will say, "You have **faith** and I have **works**." Show me your **faith** apart from your **works**, and I will show you my **faith** by my **works**."

Mk 1:23-24; 3:11-12; 5:1-13
Lk 8:26-33

19 *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!* **i.e. from fear**

(Did these "works" cause Abraham to earn his salvation? In what way was he justified by "works?")

III. Dynamic Faith (20-26)

(Gen 22:1-14)

20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

21 Was not Abraham our father **justified by works** when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?

(How does this compare to Rom 4:1-25?)

22 You see that **faith** was active along with his **works**, and **faith** was completed by his **works**;

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness*"—and he was called a friend of God.

(Gen 15:6)

"Works" are the outworking of genuine faith in God

24 You see that a person is justified by **works** and not by **faith** alone.

(Josh 2:8-13
Heb 11:31)

25 And in the same way was not also *Rahab* the prostitute **justified by works** when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also **faith** apart from **works** is dead.

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Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

Questions for Discussion

Faith Without Deeds (vv. 14-26)

Paul's teaching on salvation by faith:
(vv. Romans 3:19-4:5; Ephesians 2:8-10; Galatians 2:15-3:6)

How is the teaching in this section consistent or inconsistent with Paul's teaching of justification by faith in Jesus Christ?

What is the relationship between "deeds" or "works" mentioned in this section, and "works" mentioned in Paul's teaching?

If faith demonstrated by deeds can lead to our justification, does this mean that we are earning salvation? Again...how does this relate to Paul's teaching on works and boasting? (v. 24)

What is the relationship between faith and deeds?

What are some specific deeds that we will demonstrate if we truly have faith in Jesus Christ? Before justification? After?

What does it mean if someone's faith is "dead?" (vv. 17, 26)

What example does James use to demonstrate that a simple belief in God is not sufficient for salvation? (vv. 18-19)

What two Old Testament examples does James give of faith demonstrated by deeds? (vv. 21-25)

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Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

Paul's Teachings on Faith & Works:

Romans 3:19-31 (ESV)

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Romans 4:1-25 (ESV)

¹ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: ⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." ⁹ Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, ¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. ¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who

Virtual Study of James – James 2:14-26

Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.¹⁸ In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.”¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb.²⁰ No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.²² That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”²³ But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Galatians 2:15-21 (ESV)

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Galatians 3:1-6 (ESV)

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Someone says he has faith:

Matthew 7:21 (ESV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Virtual Study of James – James 2:14-26
Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

Shema:

Deuteronomy 6:4 (ESV)

⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Demons Believe

Mark 1:23–24 (ESV)

²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

Mark 3:11–12 (ESV)

¹¹ And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” ¹² And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

Mark 5:1–13 (ESV)

¹ They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ² And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. ³ He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, ⁴ for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶ And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” ⁸ For he was saying to him, “**Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!**” ⁹ And Jesus asked him, “**What is your name?**” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.” ¹⁰ And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹ Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹² and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” ¹³ So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

Luke 8:26–33 (ESV)

²⁶ Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” ²⁹ For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, “**What is your name?**” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. ³¹ And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³² Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and

Virtual Study of James – James 2:14-26
Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

Abraham:

Genesis 15:6 (ESV)

⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 22:1-14 (ESV)

¹ After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.”
² He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together. ⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here am I.” ¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

Rahab:

Joshua 2:8-14 (ESV)

⁸ Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof ⁹ and said to the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. ¹² Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you

Virtual Study of James – James 2:14-26

Bellevue Church of Christ – Summer 2020

also will deal kindly with my father’s house, and give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” ¹⁴ And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the Lord gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”

Hebrews 11:31 (ESV)

³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.