**1. Motivate**

What does it mean to “practice what you preach”?

* your actions line up with what you say
* your beliefs and your lifestyle agree
* when you say you’re going to do something, that is, indeed, what you do
* you don’t contradict what you say with what you do
* you keep to your promises
* people can depend on what you say you will do
* your walk agrees with your talk

**2. Transition**

Today our Bible study looks at what James says about faith and how you live.

* What you believe is seen in what you do.

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_nkspiymn>. If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/3tbhymzb>

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Faith without Action Is Useless

Listen for a warning about faith.

James 2:14-17 (NIV) What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

What two important theological concepts did James juxtapose in these verses?

* faith, your trust in what Jesus has done to forgive our sins
* works, deeds
* and how the two are related

Note some things Paul said about works or earning salvation

* 2 Tim 1:9 – “Saved us … not according to our works …”
* Titus 3:5 – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us”
* Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.
* Romans 3:20 – no one will be justified in His sight by the works of the law
* Gal. 2:16 – know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Christ

So, according to James, how are believers to understand the relationship of faith and works?

* James emphasizes the fact that our works, how we live our lives is *demonstrated* by our deeds or works
* if certain deeds or behaviors are missing, there is question about the reality of your faith
* you are not saved because of your deeds, but by faith
* your faith will produce a change in how you live
* we respond to God’s grace (undeserved blessings) of salvation by serving Him
* our salvation will be demonstrated by thankful obedience to His commands

What illustration did James use to explain how real faith affects a person’s deeds?

* someone shows up without sufficient clothes, food
* if we just offer words of “encouragement” it means nothing
* it demonstrates you really don’t care
* parallels the issue of faith and deeds

How did James characterize faith that did not demonstrate itself with action? (check different Bible versions)

* dead
* useless

How is being a Christian supposed to change the way we live? What are the characteristics of faith that is not “dead” or “useless”, but “alive”?

* no longer conquered by fear, anger, substance abuse, laziness
* we are a new creation, old things passed away
* Fruit of the Spirit demonstrated: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control
* we’ve been forgiven, we must forgive
* God has shown us mercy, grace … we must do the same with those around us
* because God has saved us from the penalty of sin, he also wants to save us from the power of sin over our lives
* God’s power should be allowed to work in and through our lives to free us from the power of sin

James challenges us to not ignore needs of people around us. What kinds of help can believers provide others in need?

* general friendliness
* be aware of their needs
* prayer support
* practical help
* material help
* sharing of God’s wisdom

3.2 Faith Is More Than Words or Ideas.

Listen for how actions demonstrate faith.

James 2:18-20 (NIV) But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder. 20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

James poses an imaginary debate. What was the assertion of James’s fictional opponent?

* you have faith, I have deeds
* God (and you) should be pleased, impressed by all the good things I have done
* here’s my list

How did James respond to the supposed claim?

* my faith is demonstrated by my deeds
* my deeds are the *result* of my faith
* I will show you my faith by what I do

Suppose you claim, “I believe *Henderson Dunkeld* is the only man fit to be president.” How would you *demonstrate* your faith in that person for the office?

* vote for him
* tell others of his virtues
* support his campaign financially
* volunteer to call door to door
* go to his rallies & cheer
* invite other people to the event

⇨Your belief about this person should be demonstrated by your actions.

We declare that Jesus is “the way, the truth, and the life.” What are some healthy ways we can demonstrate our faith in Jesus to a skeptical world?

* obey His commands
* share our faith – tell others of His virtues
* support God’s work with your resources … time, money, energy, skills
* attend gatherings to cheer and listen to God’s message … CHURCH
* invite others to come with us to hear the Truth of Who Jesus is and why it is good to know Him

3.3 Faith Leads to Obedience

Listen for examples of faith and works in action.

James 2:21-26 (NIV) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Why was Abraham an apt example for showing the relationship between faith and works?

* he claimed to believe in Jehovah
* he believed God would give him a son (even though he and Sarah were well past childbearing age)
* now, sure enough, here’s the son … probably a teenager by the time this happened
* he obeyed God
* he *still* believed God would give (or preserve) his only heir

Why would Rahab be an unusual, yet appropriate example of a person with active faith?

* she was a “madam”, ran a brothel
* she “feared” the God of the Israelites
* she believed in the power of Jehovah
* so much so she was willing to jeopardize her life by hiding the spies and misdirecting the local authorities
* she acted on her beliefs, her faith

How might faith impact our decisions or actions in today’s world?

* how we spend our time
* how we use our money
* change the way we talk (our expletives, the jokes we tell)
* what we allow to rule our lives – anger, fear, doubts, substance abuse (even chocolate chip cookies or ice cream)

Why do you suppose Abraham was called “God’s friend”?

* he and God communicated
* he listened to what God told him
* he obeyed God – got up and left his home and went to where God told him to go
* he believed God’s promise of a son to carry on his lineage which would grow to many people

What changes can we make in our lives to be seen as “God’s friend”?

* you cultivate that relationship
* you communicate with Him – listen to Him, talk to Him
* you value what He says
* you believe what He says, obey what He tells you to do
* He is pleased by how you act, what you say
* you share that friendship with others … He is good to have as a friend

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Read and pray.

* Read Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way.”
* Pray, asking God to expose areas in your life where you are not living what you claim to believe. After praying, develop a plan for life change to help align your actions with your faith.

Write and reflect.

* Create a “faith-in-action journal” in which you list at least five of your core beliefs.
* Over the next week, write ways your actions show (or do not show) that you are applying those beliefs in your life.

Ask and listen.

* Ask a trusted friend to speak into your life and tell you how consistent you are at living your faith.
* Listen to what they tell you.
* Avoid getting defensive.
* Prepare to make some life changes based on what you hear.

Double Puzzle

Aiee Cucaracha! I’m doubly confused. The message is just a bunch of empty boxes. And the clue words with the numbers to determine the letters are all scrambled. Find those words in your Bible study passage and un-scramble them. Tech help is available at <https://tinyurl.com/3tbhymzb> along with further intriguing Family Activities.

