

DEAD OR ALIVE

James 2:14-26

Starting point:

If you have not heard the sermon, please take the time to go to our website, www.vcfj.org and listen to it BEFORE YOU START this small group lesson. It will allow you take notes along the way and be ready for the questions at hand. Remember, this is not an exercise but rather a group discussion to help you on your journey to greatness. May the Lord bless your faithfulness.

Overview

Read *Matt 3:7-9 and John 3:2-3*. What do these verses tell us?

Pastor asked us the following questions: What is the difference between being dead or being alive? What does it mean to have dead faith or alive faith?

1. The FOUR CHARACTERISTICS of being alive *James 2:15-20*

Read James 2:15-16

- What are the two verses telling us? Give a modern example of the situation described in these two verses.

Read 1 Tim 6:6-8

- What do we learn from reading these verses? What is the basic need described in these verses?

Read 1 John 3:17

- What do we learn from this verse?
- What happens to God's love when you see a brother in need and close your heart?
- What does faith have to come together with to be genuine faith?
- Explain the meaning of *James 2:16* in your own words.
- What is the answer to the question in verse 16?
- What good is it to offer good wishes but no practical help?

Read Matt 5:14-16

- What is Jesus telling us about our faith in these verses?
- What has genuine faith changed in us?
- What does it take to have faith become part of our life style? Can you give an example from your life?
- What does "useless faith" look like?
- What is the point of *James 2:19* when James says even the demons believe?
- What is the difference between the demons' belief in God and a true Christians' belief in God?

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

- What do you learn from these verses when you *read James 2:20*?

2. The two BIBLICAL EXAMPLES of being alive *James 2:21-25*

Read Hebrews 11:17-19

- What do we learn about Abraham from these three verses?
- How does Abraham prove that “faith without works is useless?” Was Abraham saved by faith or works?

Read James 2:21 and Rom 3:28

- Who is right? James or Paul?
- The key word in both verses is “Justified.” In Greek the word is DIKAIOS which can mean either “to declare righteous “as in a legal proceeding or to “demonstrate as righteous.” With that background, can you describe what Paul was looking at for SALVATION and what James was looking at for SALVATION?

Read James 2:25 and Josh 6:17-23

- How did Rahab demonstrate her trust in God?
- How did Rahab demonstrate her change of faith?
- Why do you think James uses Abraham and Rahab at this point of his Book?
- How can you be encouraged when reading about both Abraham and Rahab?

3. The APPLICATION of being alive

Read James 2:26

- What happens when you find separation of the body and spirit?
- When you have separation of faith apart from works?
- What is the difference between faith and living faith?

Conclusion—How do we put James into action in our “Journey to Greatness?”

- What is wrong with having faith without works/deeds?
- Practical care for God’s people is the mark of a faith which is alive. What should that look like?
- James has been very specific as to the needs we should be responding to.
- Do these needs exist in our community/communities? If so how can you help?
- What kind of faith is in your heart?
- Do you have “faith with works” or “faith without works?”
- Is your faith “mostly on the inside?” or on “the outside?”
- Do you need God’s help to put your faith into action?