

BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2026 – WEEK 4 HANDOUT

### WEEK 4 – Faith That Works

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

- James 2:17 NLT

- **Mercy triumphs over judgment**

- How the last section ended

*So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. – James 2:13 NLT*

- Before coming to Christ...

*We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, **they are nothing but filthy rags.** – Isaiah 64:6 NLT*

*For **everyone has sinned**; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. – Romans 3:23 NLT*

*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us **while we were still sinners.** – Romans 5:8 NLT*

***But God is so rich in mercy**, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!). – Ephesians 2:4-5 NLT*

*But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not by the righteous deeds we had done, **but according to His mercy.** – Titus 3:4-5 BSB*

***Be merciful**, just as your Father is merciful. – Luke 6:36 BSB*

- **Faith** (belief) produces **faithfulness** (actions)

*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. – Colossians 12-14 NLT*

- This is the message of James
  - Our **belief** should impact our **behavior**
  - Our **faith** must produce **fruit**

*What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? – James 2:14 NLT*

- Many claim to have faith in Christ...  
...but their faith is fruitless
- They call themselves Christ-followers...  
...but they don't follow His example

*Can that kind of faith save anyone? – James 2:14 NLT*

- Is **fruitless** faith **saving** faith?
  - It appears to have no **power**
  - It **saves** but fails to **sanctify**
  - It lacks the proper **identifying markers**

*But **the fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. – Galatians 5:22-23 NLT*

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for **the fruit of the light** consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth). – Ephesians 5:8-9 BSB*

*Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. – 2 Peter 1:5-7 NLT*

- **Faux faith** is easy to spot
  - It is **selfish**, rather than **selfless**
  - It replaces **empathy** with **sympathy**
  - It's more **rhetorical** than **practical**
  - It's meant to **impress**, not **improve**

*If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 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?** – James 2:15-16 ESV*

- This is his second use of this phrase  
*What good is it, my brothers... – vs 14*  
*...what good is that? – vs 16*

**ti to ophelos** – literally: What does it profit?

What "fruit" was produced?

What need was met?

How was mercy extended?

Was anyone ...fed?

...encouraged?

...or loved?

- James drives home his point

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

- **Professed** faith without **visible** proof is lifeless

- Like a body without breath

- Like a rain cloud without rain

*Like clouds and wind without rain is the man who boasts of gifts never given. – Proverbs 25:14 BSB*

*Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. – 1 John 3:18 NLT*

- Like a fig tree without fruit

*In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" And immediately the fig tree withered up. – Matthew 21:18-19 NLT*

- The facade of fruitfulness without the fruit

*Then Jesus told this story: "A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. Finally, he said to his gardener, 'I've waited three years, and there hasn't been a single fig! Cut it down. It's just taking up space in the garden.'" – Luke 13:6-7 NLT*

*"Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the*

*trees. Yes, every tree that **does not produce good fruit** will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.” – Luke 3:8=9 NLT*

- **Authentic, fruitful faith**

- James is not questioning their **salvation**
- He’s raising concerns about their **sanctification**
  - They are boasting in their **faith**
  - While displaying little to no **fruit**
  - So, James issues a **challenge**

*Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.” – James 2:18 ESV*

- Faith (belief) is invisible to the human eye
- But faithfulness (actions) can be demonstrated

*“Your love for one another **will prove to the world** that you are my disciples.” – John 13:35 NLT2:9 ESV*

*No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and **his love is brought to full expression in us.** – John 13:35 NLT*

- **Expressed** faith isn’t necessarily **saving** faith
  - It must be accompanied by **evidence**
  - The words, “I believe” are not enough
  - “Faith alone” does not mean “faith by itself”
  - **Confession** is not proof of **conversion**

*You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. – James 2:19 NLT*

- They believe that Yahweh alone is God
- But they remain **unrepentant**  
**unredeemed**  
**unforgiven**  
**unrighteous**  
and **uninhabited** by the Spirit
- They **fear** God, but do not **worship** Him

- **Evidence from the past**

- James uses two contradictory examples:  
A **patriarch** and a **prostitute**

*Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? – James 2:20-21 NLT*

- James recounts a familiar story – Genesis 15  
*After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”*

*And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. – Genesis 15:1, 5-6 ESV*

- He **believed** God’s promise
  - ~ Despite his contradictory circumstances
  - ~ But his belief would be put to the test
  - ~ He would have to demonstrate his faithfulness

*After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 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.” – Genesis 22:1-2 ESV*

- Isaac has been born
  - ~ He is the fulfillment of the promise
  - ~ He is hope of Abraham’s future
  - ~ He is the love of Abraham’s life
- Now God asks Abraham to prove his faith
  - ~ Was his hope in the gift or the Giver?

*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. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 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.”*

*I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because you have obeyed my voice.**” – Genesis 22:9-12, 17-18 ESV*

*“Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” – Galatians 3:6 NLT*

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see **that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works...** – James 2:21 NLT*

○ Rahab the Harlot

*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? – James 2:25 ESV*

- Rahab believed the promise of the spies
- She put her belief into action
- Joshua sent spies into Jericho
  - ~ They sought shelter in Rahab's house
  - ~ She had heard about the God of Israel

*"I know the Lord has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror....For the Lord your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below. Now swear to me by the Lord that you will be kind to me and my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families."– Joshua 2:9-13 NLT*

*So Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute and her relatives who were with her in the house, because she had hidden the spies Joshua sent to Jericho. And she lives among the Israelites to this day. – Joshua 6:25 NLT*

*By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. – Hebrews 11:31 ESV*

- Her **faith** showed up in **fruitfulness**
- She acted on her belief and was saved

• **Fruitless faith is lifeless**

*Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works. – James 2:26 NLT*

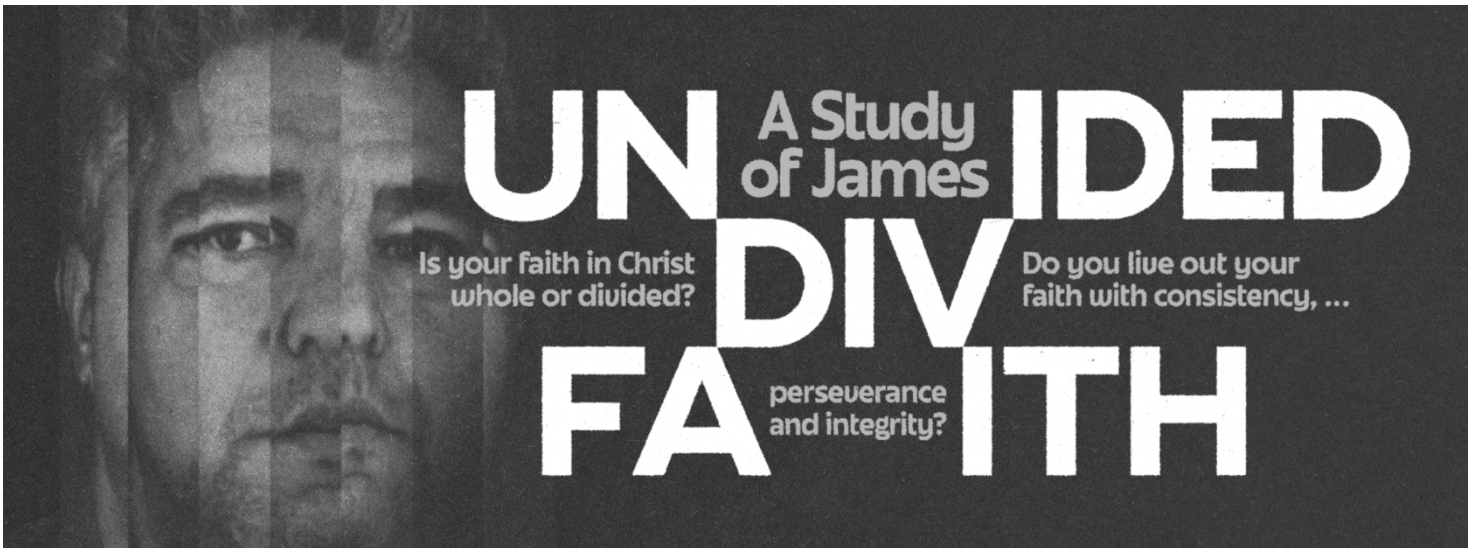
*"I will show you my faith by my good deeds." – James 2:18 NLT*

• **Discussion questions**

Why do you think James chose a Hebrew patriarch and a pagan prostitute to make his point?

How does our faith (belief in God) sometimes fail to show up in our actions? Why is faithfulness so hard?

Which fruit in Galatians 5:22-23 are missing from your life and why?



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SUMMER SERIES 2026 – WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

### WEEK 5 – Faith That Reflects the Heart

James reveals the deep connection between our words, our relationships, and the desires that rule our hearts. He contrasts worldly wisdom—marked by pride, jealousy, and self-interest—with wisdom from above that produces humility, peace, and righteousness. This passage calls believers beyond surface-level change to repentance and submission to God, pressing us to examine whether our faith is shaping our hearts or whether self-interest still reigns.

- In Ken’s Devotional™ on the Book of James, please read pages 33-44 sometime this week. They cover the section of James that we will be studying in week.
- Read **James 3:1–4:12** several times this week. Read slowly and prayerfully, asking God to reveal what your words, attitudes, and relationships may be exposing about your heart and desires.
- Read **James 3:1-12**. What warning does James give about the use of the tongue, and why does he see it as such a serious issue for believers?

What images does James use to describe the tongue, and what do they teach us about its power?

How does James connect control of speech with spiritual maturity?

- Read **James 3:13-18**. How does James describe the difference between worldly wisdom and wisdom from above?

What attitudes and behaviors reveal that someone is living according to worldly wisdom?

According to James, what fruit is produced by wisdom that comes from heaven?

Read **James 4:1-6**. Where does James say quarrels and conflicts among believers come from?

How does James connect conflict to disordered desires and misplaced loves?

Why does James describe friendship with the world as hostility toward God?

Read **James 4:7-12**. What commands does James give that describe the posture of repentance and humility before God?

Why does James warn against judging or speaking against one another?

- Where do you see the strongest connection between your words, your relationships, and the desires of your heart? What is one specific area where God may be calling you to humble yourself, submit to Him, and allow His wisdom – not self-interest – to guide your actions this week?