



Message Reflections

May 17, 2020

James 2:14-26 is a very practical and hard-hitting section of the book of James. James is relentless in making sure that we have a full definition of faith—a definition that includes **both** faith and works. Often, James' words are compared to Paul's words on faith and works, but how do they line up with Jesus' words?

Read Matthew 7:24-27 (in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount).

- What is Jesus saying that is similar to what James says?

James 2:15-16 gives us an example of a Christian brother or sister who is unwilling to offer practical help to a fellow believer. Instead, they offer empty words to them, "Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed," but they do nothing about their physical needs. This may seem pretty harsh, but we have all probably done something similar. How do we know when we are supposed to help someone? After all, there are so many opportunities around us all the time. How do we choose?

- What does the Holy Spirit offer to us to help us in this process? (See John 14-16.)
- Have you ever missed an opportunity to help someone that you should have helped? What did that feel like, and what did you do?
- This passage describes an opportunity to help someone who is close to you—someone that you probably know. Do you find it easier to help those who you know (and are around you), or is it easier for you to help strangers?

James finishes this section with a very clear word picture that shows just how serious he is about faith and actions working together: "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead." May we all take these powerful and practical words to heart!

Todd