

The Book of James

Faith in Action – Lesson #3

The Book of James is a practical communication from James to especially Jewish Christians. He covers several themes that are applicable to our Christian living: experiencing joy in challenges, increasing in patience and wisdom, making sure our faith is active, and praying to our Lord. In Chapter 2, James considers our sinful tendency toward favoritism and the essential connection between faith and fruits.

Review:

1. Favoring one group of people or even one person over another is prejudice. What partiality did James speak to in Chapter 2? What are the prejudices that we have?

2. James makes a connection between showing partiality and judging (James 2:4-5). Jesus talks a lot about judging in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:1 ff.). How does judging hurt us and others?

3. James points out two ways to stay away from favoritism/prejudice in James 2:8 and James 2:13. What are they and where do we get these antidotes to judging?

4. James 2:13 speaks of the law that gives freedom. Typically we think that laws take freedom away. How does the law give us freedom?

5. Any discussion of faith and the fruits of faith/actions has to begin with a clear statement about our salvation. How are we saved? Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:15-16; Ephesians 2:8-10

6. Spiritual things like faith are impossible to see except by what they prompt. Faith prompts actions. Jesus, in John 3:1-8 speaks of this when explaining the Spirit. How does this teaching of Jesus help us in the “faith without works is dead” discussion?

7. The Jews stated a creed daily called the Shema: “The Lord our God the Lord is one.” James states (vs. 19) that it is good to believe that, but faith must be more than a statement. Actions must follow. How can we become like the devil and his demons when our faith remains only words?

8. It is predictable that James would hold Abraham up as a model of faith and actions. It is curious that out of all of the possible examples, James chooses Rahab as the second example of faith and works. What might we learn from these two selections? How is this a reminder that mercy must triumph over judgement?

Read Chapter 3 of James for next week.