

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Read James 2:14-26 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, James 2:14-26

May 11, 2014

Title: A Faith That Works

Everybody — except the facilitator — take a deep, deep breath and hold it! Hold it! Hold it...hold it...hold it. You're turning red? Hold it. Starting to turn blue? Hold it. You say you're dying? That's okay if you do. You're saved, aren't you? Hold that breath. Now do you see why I said everybody but the facilitator? Somebody has to call 911.

That's absurd, you say. No more absurd than saying I believe in Jesus, and yet there's nothing about me to indicate my belief has changed me—nothing to show the righteousness of God at work in me. I was a dead man walking (Ephesians 2: 1-2) when God saved me. He breathed life into my corpse and I exhaled. Faith without works is like a deep breath without exhaling, and there's no life in it. James tells us faith without works is dead. Let's take an in-depth look at the dynamics of faith and works—the inhale and exhale of life as a Christian.

Read James 2:14-17. **Question:** What is the issue here?

Question: Why would people claim to have genuine faith if they don't? What might motivate this kind of deception in our world today? **Facilitator:** Suggest human pride might be a factor.

Read James 2:18. **Question:** How would you know for sure if another person is born again...or can you know? Works is works, right? Or is it?

Read James 2:19-20. **Question:** If demons believe, why aren't they saved? **Facilitator:** 1. They don't have a savior. 2. They are not called to salvation. 3. Although they accept factual truth about God, they remain opposed to God and His sovereignty.

Read James 2:21-25. **Question:** If Abraham and Rahab both "...believed God and it was counted to [them] as righteousness (verse 23)," why does James also say that "a person is justified by works and not by faith alone (verse 24)?" Does this passage define what it means 'to believe'?

Compare: James 2:21-25 with Ephesians 2:8-10. **Question:** Do they agree or disagree with each other? How does God's sovereignty control the faith-works dynamic?

Question: If salvation is by faith that results in works of righteousness, what becomes of the person who comes to faith in Christ on his death bed and cannot perform works of righteousness? **Facilitator:** This is a tough one that boils down to what is meant by works of righteousness. Let your group hash it out, but suggest that accepting the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ and yielding to the will of the Holy Spirit (forsaking personal pride) is all God requires to walk in the good works He prepared beforehand (Ephesians 2:10).