

“Faith”

James 2:14-26

Introduction

When we do not engage in enough physical activity, our muscles can atrophy. Muscle atrophy is the thinning or loss of muscle tissue. Without proper use, the muscle begins to waste away. Faith is like a muscle that requires the activity of works to keep it alive and functioning. Faith needs works to take believers to the next level of spiritual development.

Faith without works leaves us lifeless. It produces in believers a credal corpse. In other words, we may believe the right things, but we are not living out our faith or experiencing the benefits of it. This can make us unproductive Christians. Because we are not acting on what we say we believe, our alleged faith is not achieving what faith is designed to do in bringing heaven into history. Faith and works are supposed to form a partnership. Faith needs works to develop. When our faith does not accompany works, we stifle our spiritual development and our usefulness for God. We cannot effectively share the good news of salvation with unbelievers when our lives do not match up with Scripture. We are not able to fully live as examples of God’s love and grace without activated faith.

Our faith should be proven by our works. In Scripture, we have two examples of this in Abraham and Rahab. Abraham passed the test when he was willing to sacrifice his son. His works demonstrated his faith in God and took him to the next spiritual level. When Rahab hid the spies and saved their lives, she acted on what she believed—that the God of Israel is the true God. Her actions resulted in divine intervention and protection for her and her family. Faith without works is useless, but faith *with* works is powerful. You have an opportunity to tap into that power and show others the truth of who God is. Be willing to develop your faith through works and see how God can use you.

Getting Started

1. What do you do to keep your muscles from atrophying? Why is atrophy harmful?
2. There is a well-known quote that says, “If you don’t use it, you lose it.” Besides your muscles, what else will atrophy if you do not use it regularly? What in your life needs regular attention before it becomes a problem?

Let's Get Personal

Take the Next Step

1. What can you begin doing this week to exercise your faith in those weak areas? Who can help you strengthen your spiritual muscles through accountability, prayer and action?
2. How can you “bring heaven into history” this week and show your faith to others through your works? Look for people who need food, clothing, comfort and encouragement in your community and commit to helping them.
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: James 1:1-12; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Hebrews 10:35-39; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; Isaiah 43:1-2; John 16:33; Romans 12:12; 1 Peter 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 5:3-5; James 1:13-18; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 2:9; Psalm 50:15; Genesis 39:6-18; Matthew 4:1-11, 6:13, 26:41; Luke 8:13; 1 Corinthians 7:5; Genesis 3:1-6; James 1:19-27; 1 Peter 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Psalm 139:23-24; 1 John 3:16-18; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 7:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 5:11-14; John 8:31-32; Luke 8:4-15; James 2:14-26; Galatians 2:11-20, 3:28-29; John 4:1-42; Numbers 12:1-16; Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Corinthians 1:26; Romans 12:16; Malachi 2:9; Acts 10:34; Deuteronomy 24:19; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Romans 10:12; Mathew 23:1-12; Acts 6:1-6; Romans 14:1-12; Romans 4:1-5; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 4:17-20; Romans 5:8-10; Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7; John 19:30; Genesis 22:1-19; Joshua 2:1-21, 6:22-25.

Renew Your Mind

“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

James 2:26
