

The General Epistle of James

Faith
that works!

2

OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Matthew 5:1-12**. These opening words of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount are called the *Beatitudes*, from the Latin word *beati*, meaning "blessed." How do Jesus' values differ enormously from the values of the secular world?

INTRODUCTION

A person is justified by faith alone, but faith is never alone. A living faith that loves Jesus Christ springs into action to meet challenges and real needs.

Faith and free salvation are never a license for immorality. The new person in a Christian loves God's law and actively strives to obey God's law. Jesus put it very simply: If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15).

PRIDE AND CONTEMPT

Read **James 2:1-12**

Why is it so easy (and all too common) for us to judge people by externals, such as clothing, material possessions and outward appearance? Are you guilty of such attitudes and behavior?

Identify three reasons given by James for being kind and loving to the poor:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

You have, perhaps, heard the statement: "All sins are the same." **James 2:10** is sometimes used as a basis for this assertion. How is this statement true? How is it inaccurate?

All sins are the same, because . . .

All sins are *not* the same, because . . .

FAITH AND DEEDS

Read **James 2:14-26**

Can fire exist without heat? How can faith exist without actions?

Consider James' words in **2:14-17**. Offer some practical examples of how and where you can put these words into practice.

What is missing in the faith of the demons (v. 18, 19)?

How do you know that your faith isn't the empty faith of the demons?

For discussion: *A friend, relative or close acquaintance is drifting from the Lord. You encourage him to return to Jesus, but he diminishes your admonition, saying, "It's not like I don't believe. I still believe in God, and I know that Jesus died on the cross for me." How do you respond?*

How does the above example serve as a warning to you?

Read Romans 3:28 and Ephesians 2:8, 9. How do you reconcile these verses with the teaching in **James 2:24**?

When you are plagued by doubts, and you are unsure whether your faith is real and your repentance genuine, where do you go for comfort and assurance? (See **John 1:18, John 3:14-18.**)

VERSES TO REMEMBER

James 2:10 *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

James 2:26 *Faith without deeds is dead.*

For next time, read James chapters 1-3.