

**Living God's Way in Today's World**  
**Week 4 – How Faith and Good Deeds Go Together**  
**Scripture: James 2:14-26**

**Message Mate**

- The Book of James was written to Jewish Christians across the Roman Empire and James 2 draws on their heritage by integrating the Shema (Deut 6:4-6: the Lord is one, Love God), love your neighbour as yourself (Lev 19:18), the Jewish greeting *shalom*, and the stories of key figures like Abraham and Rahab, all while addressing the issue of faith and deeds.
- Faith is highlighted as being born again by believing the good news that God loves you so much that He gave his one and only Son to die on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins, to come into God's family as His sons and daughters. We are called to believe and action our faith (James 1:18, 2:1, 1:22, 1:25).
- There has often been confusion about justification (to make righteous) between the writings of Paul and James. Based on Romans 3:28, Paul explains justification as when you put your faith in Jesus, your sins are forgiven completely and God declares you innocent, welcoming you into a right relationship with Him and into the family of God. Based on James 2:24, James says, throughout your life as a righteous believer, you need to follow the great commandments of Jesus to love God and your neighbour as yourself. In context, the words of Paul and James do not contradict but support each other. Jesus approached righteousness in a similar way to James (Matt 7:21, 25:46). James and Jesus reveal righteousness to be in right relationship with God and following His will evidenced by your godly character and conduct.
- To have faith alone is not enough, even demons believe in the reality of Jesus, but they are evil. To have faith but not good deeds means your faith is useless (v20) and dead (v26).
- Abraham believed God, offered hospitality to strangers and was willing to sacrifice his son to God. His righteousness was evident in his love of God, love of neighbours and his actions of obedience to God's word (Gen 15, 18, 22). Similarly, Rahab had faith in God (Joshua 2:11) and offered hospitality to strangers. Whether it was a patriarch of Israel or a prostitute who came to believe in God, both Abraham and Rahab were righteous models of faith and hospitality to strangers (good deeds).
- James concludes with the image that just as the body is dead without the spirit, faith is dead without good deeds. Our faith and good deeds must co-exist and complement each other. With good deeds, faith brings righteousness by showing hospitality to strangers and care for the poor. You can partner with one of Rangeville's local missions as a way of showing hospitality to strangers and caring for the poor.

## Some Questions to Consider

1. Read James 2:15-16. Discuss if you have ever encountered a situation like this, either as the one who is in need or maybe where you have said, "I'll pray about it", but not done anything more (which can be appropriate on some occasions)?
2. Read James 2:24, Matthew 7:21 and Matthew 25:31-46. James and Jesus show the importance of loving our neighbour as ourselves is part of the good deeds that co-exist with and complement faith. Discuss righteousness in this context as they reveal righteousness to be in right relationship with God and following His will evidenced by your godly character and conduct.
3. Discuss James 2:19 along with Mark 1:23,24, in the context that even demons believe in the reality of Jesus as God, and yet they are evil. Consider this in the context of v 17 which shows us that if faith is not accompanied by good deeds, it is dead.
4. James 2:22, 23 show us that Abraham's faith was made complete by what he did, and Scripture fulfilled in crediting him with righteousness by his actions. Discuss how he demonstrated faith and good deeds as an example to us.
5. Both Abraham (Genesis 18:1-10a) and Rahab (Joshua 2) showed hospitality to strangers as an expression of their faith in God. Discuss the comment that "Whether it was a patriarch of Israel or a prostitute who came to believe in God, both Abraham and Rahab were righteous models of faith and hospitality to strangers (good deeds)." How does this encourage you?
6. Discuss the various local mission partners of Rangeville. Is anyone in your group involved with one of our mission partners? Are you interested in supporting one of our local mission partners? If so, please contact the office and we can link you up with a Rangeville leader. A table of ministries is attached at the end of this study.

## Pray –

Thank the Lord for churches in Toowoomba who have established schools and hospitals as an expression of faith and good deeds in our city. Pray for those schools and hospitals.

Ask the Lord to help you grow in righteousness by being in right relationship with God and following His will evidenced by your godly character and conduct

Ask the Lord to help you see how you can care for those in need around you, or pray for situations where you or those in your group are already involved in caring for those in need.

<b>Local Mission Partners</b>	
Eva's Place	Pregnancy and early parenting support services
Sisters	Care for migrant women in our city
Kairos	Outreach and care to people in prison
Brekky Club	Providing breakfast for students at Centenary Heights High School
Teen Challenge	Helping men and women overcome drug/alcohol addictions
Winter Shelter	Providing hope, dignity and community for those experiencing homelessness
Community Chaplaincy	Reaching out to bring hope and help to the community