

FAITH



4. Faith and Action

Jesus said faith is like a seed. When we hear God speaking to us personally, it is like a seed, and as we allow it to go deeper into the soil of our hearts, it begins to grow. When seeds are planted they don't grow into larger seeds, but they send down roots into the ground, and then the stem will grow up and produce fruit. In the same way, when faith is planted in our hearts, it doesn't grow into bigger faith, but it produces appropriate words and actions. In other words, true faith is seen and heard.

Scripture Reading: **James 2:14-16**

- ♥ Is it possible to have faith without actions according to these verses? How is faith without actions described? See James 2:17, 19, 26.

As we have seen true faith is followed by appropriate obedient action. James goes on to give two examples of people who demonstrated faith. The first was Abraham, and the other was Rahab. These two are also included in Hebrews 11, where there is a list of others whose obedience proved their faith was genuine.

- ♥ What actions proved Abraham and Rahab's faith was genuine? James 2:21 and 25.
- ♥ How did the following men and women prove their faith was genuine?
 - Abel - Hebrews 11:4
 - Noah - Hebrews 11:7
 - Isaac - Hebrews 11:20
 - Moses' parents - Hebrews 11:23

- ♥ We have seen what these men and women did, but why did they respond the way they did? What can we learn about faith from these examples?

We have looked at the examples of some great men and women, and perhaps we feel we could never have faith in the way they did. Maybe this is why James included Rahab! She was from a pagan background and had been a prostitute, yet she demonstrated faith. It is possible for anyone to have faith, whatever their background may be, or what they have done in the past.

- ♥ How did Rahab come to believe in the Lord, and in what ways did she confess her faith? Joshua 2:9-11
- ♥ What actions did Rahab do that proved her faith was real? Joshua 2:4, 6, 17-21

Rahab's belief in God was not just an intellectual one. She had heard what God had done and believed that he indeed was the true Living God. Her faith was demonstrated in the way she helped the spies, and then carefully followed their instructions. God honoured her faith, and she was included in the family line of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the message that James wanted his readers to understand. Genuine faith is demonstrated by our words and actions. Is that true in your life?