

## James 2:12-26

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 <sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under  
2 the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one  
3 who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.  
4 <sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has  
5 faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?  
6 <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in  
7 daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace,  
8 be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things  
9 needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by  
10 itself, if it does not have works, is dead.  
11 <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith and I have  
12 works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I  
13 will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that  
14 God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and  
15 shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person,  
16 that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham  
17 our father justified by works when he offered up his son  
18 Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along  
19 with his works, and faith was completed by his works;  
20 <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham  
21 believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”  
22 — and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see that a  
23 person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> And  
24 in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified  
25 by works when she received the messengers and sent them  
26 out by another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit  
27 is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

**Read the passage through completely before looking at these questions.**

**Observation (What does it say?):**

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Connect repeated or related words or ideas.
- What different illustrations does James give to make his point?

- What else do you observe in this passage?

**Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

After observing the passage:

- How are the various illustrations similar? How are they different?
- Which illustration do you find the most helpful? Why? How does it help you understand faith and works?
- What “works” come to mind as you read? What works do you think James had in mind?

**Application (What does it mean for me?):**

- How do you see faith and works in your life?
- Do you struggle with the question of faith and works? What is the struggle like?

**Observation** – What does it say?      **Interpretation** – What does it mean?      **Application** – What does it mean for me?

**For additional thought and discussion:**

Does the New Covenant affect your understanding of James’s teaching on faith and works? How?

<sup>31</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. <sup>33</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. ” **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules . **Ezekiel 36:25-27**

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

## Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

### **Observation** **(What does it say?)**

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

### **Interpretation** **(What does it mean?)**

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

### **Application** **(What does it mean for me?)**

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,  
but draw everything from them,  
and suffer nothing to remain  
hidden that is really in them.  
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

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