

**Twelve Lessons**

*on*

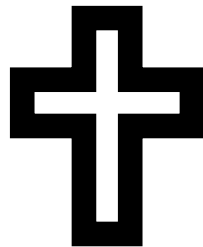
***The Book of James II***

*Compiled and Written*

*by*

*Eugene Goodman, Th.G., D.D.*

*The Staff of Macedonia Baptist College*



**Macedonia Baptist College**

**9722 Hwy 601**

**Midland, NC 28107**

**(704) 784-4200**

**\$6.00**

**CONTENTS**

1. PROFESSION AND PRACTICE .....4

2. WORDS AND WORKS .....7

3. CORRECT TEACHING AND A CONTROLLED TONGUE .....10

4. UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF THE TONGUE .....13

5. HOLY WORKS THROUGH HEAVENLY WISDOM – PART 1 .....16

6. HOLY WORKS THROUGH HEAVENLY WISDOM – PART 2 .....18

7. HOLY WORKS THROUGH HEAVENLY WISDOM – PART 3 .....20

8. HOLY WORKS THROUGH HEAVENLY WISDOM – PART 4 .....22

9. STRIFE THROUGH SELFISHNESS – PART I .....24

10. STRIFE THROUGH SELFISHNESS – PART II .....26

11. JOY THROUGH SUBMISSION .....29

12. THE SIN OF EVIL SPEAKING .....31

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from Macedonia Baptist College and Xaris, Inc.



## **PROFESSION AND PRACTICE – LESSON 1**

### **James 2:14-17**

**Introduction:** Someone has said that faith is like calories; you can't see them, but you can see their results. Faith and works are the Siamese twins of Christianity. The New Testament affirms a relationship between creed and conduct, between doctrine and deportment, and between profession and practice.

There will always be folks who talk about their faith but whose lives are lived according to the flesh, according to fashion, or according to feelings. Genuine faith, however, shapes conduct. I subscribe to the doctrine of an old Puritan preacher I read of on the subject of faith and works. He said, "No man is justified by faith unless faith has made him just."

In these verses, James is saying that one way to prove that our faith is real and living is by showing love for those in need, and ministering to their needs. Praying for those in need without corresponding action constitutes hypocrisy in its worst form! I once read of a well to do family. At the evening meal, the father always asked God to bless the poor widow and her children down the street and to supply their needs. One evening his small son said, "Daddy, if I had your money I would answer your prayer."

James is asking what good is our profession of faith to us, or to anyone else, if we dismiss the needy with our prayers and good wishes and withhold from them the necessities of life. I have noticed through the years, when most church members are confronted with a need, they advise the needy person to go see the pastor, and feel by doing so, they have accepted and fulfilled their responsibility.

*"If our virtues go not with us,  
'twere all as one as though we had them not."--Shakespeare*

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. To show the inseparable relationship of professing salvation and practicing salvation.
2. Explain the purpose of James' statement in James 2:17, "*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*"
3. To define true faith as that belief which moves one to an attitude and actions of sacrifice.
4. Describe the life of the Christian as one of interdependence.

### **Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:**

1. "What doth it profit" – This phrase means, "What good is it, what is the benefit, what is the quality of it"? The question puts forth the idea that the genuine value of a thing is being considered.
2. Interdependency –

## **I. THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIANITY**

### **A. The Subject: Faith not Works**

1. James tells us that "trials" are sent to test our "faith". James 1:2-3 – "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*"
2. Many times the faith of God's child is put to the test to prove to the devil the kind of stuff Christians are made of! I Peter 1:6-7 – "*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the "trial of your faith", being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*"
3. He reminds us that without "faith", prayer is of no "avail". James 1:6 – "*But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*"
4. We should hold "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" and not put Him to shame through our actions of respect of persons and lack of love. James 2:1 – "*My brethren, have not "the faith" of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*"

### **B. The Substance: Possession**

1. Mere professing salvation is not enough. There must be a possession. James 2:14 – "*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?*"
2. This verse is a strong attack against dead faith. A dead faith is a faith without works. I agree with Hinkle Little: "If anything is dead, it ought to be buried."
3. In verse 1:22, James exhorted us, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own*

*selves.*" Jesus said in Matthew 7:26 – *"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be like unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand."*

4. A person may hear the truth and even say that he believes it, but unless the fruit of living faith is evident in his life, he is not saved. The appeal of God through James is to be what you say you believe. You call yourself a Christian, then be a Christian! James says, "If a man says he has faith, but has no works, what profit is it?" Literally "what good is it?"
5. James is not speaking about the person who has real faith, but of the person who "says" they have faith. (Merely saying I am a Christian doesn't make me one!) James is striking at the very heart of the spiritual and moral weakness in much church life today. Faith to many is giving mental assent to a fact. Head knowledge and mental assent to Christian doctrine does not make one a Christian. (A genuine belief "in" the truth will produce a genuine behavior "of" the truth.)
6. True saving faith is a living faith. Galatians 2:20 – *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*
7. Faith is something living; if it is really inside, it will manifest itself on the outside! The word "believe" in the Bible in relation to being saved does not mean something you do once and then forget about. It means that you keep on believing.
8. A Chinese came to a missionary and asked him to baptize him. The missionary asked him where he had heard the gospel? He said, "I have never heard the gospel, but I have seen the gospel." Then he told the missionary how he knew a man who had heard the gospel and was saved. The man had been a violent sinner. He was a changed man. He said, "I want the power that did that for him."
9. The question is, "Has anyone ever seen your faith?" If not, it might be profitable to check up and see if you really have faith.

## **II. THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIANITY**

### **A. The Measure of True Faith: Attitude of Sacrifice**

1. How do we know that our faith in Jesus is real, not false? Verses 15-16 give us a criteria of the authenticity of the Christian faith: *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"* (What good is it?)
2. In America, we have been so greatly blessed of God with material things, it is hard for us to even imagine the abject conditions under which other people in the world live. I went to see a pastor of another church once to ask him if he would receive an offering in his church to feed hungry children in Europe. He said, "I can't cooperate with you, you are outside of our church." I said, "I am not talking about your church, I am talking about hungry children."
3. A Methodist preacher in Wesley's time, when anyone told him about a wealthy person being saved, always asked, "Is his pocketbook converted?" He didn't believe in a religion that cost man nothing.
4. Salvation is free for anyone to receive, but once we appropriate that faith within our hearts there are responsibilities to be discharged to those who are needy both spiritually and materially.
5. If our faith is alive, it will cost us something, if it is dead, it will cost us nothing. A man said to a deacon, "Your church is always wanting money." The deacon said, "When my son was little, he was costly. He always wanted shoes, stockings, and clothes, and wore them out fast. The older and stronger he grew the more money had to be spent on him, but he died, and now he does not cost me anything."
6. Christianity is a life of interdependency. The whole point of James' message is that a Christian can't live a life independent of the needs of others. Galatians 6:10 – *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

### **B. The Manifestation of Faith: Actions of Sacrifice**

1. We can't have the love of God in our hearts unless we manifest it toward those in need. I John 3:17-18 – *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."*
2. A real living faith that comes from God is manifested toward men in acts of love and mercy. If it is not, it is dead. Verse 17 states, *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."* If you are satisfied with a faith without works, you need to examine yourself to make certain whether or not you have the true and living faith.
3. Mouth mercy which is not accompanied by works of mercy is demonstrative of a mere profession of

faith instead of a living faith in the heart.

4. In the first verse of this second chapter of James, we are told that spiritual life has its origin and root in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. All that follows this verse insists that a certain course of behavior will coincide with such belief.
5. A pastor was talking with a man who professed to be saved. He asked the man if he had joined a church. The man answered, "No, the dying thief never did, and he went to heaven." The preacher asked the man if he had ever been to the Lord's table. The man answered, "No, the dying thief never did, and was accepted." The preacher then asked the man if he had ever given anything to missions. The man answered, "No, the dying thief never gave anything to missions and he went to heaven." The pastor said, "The difference between you two seems to be that he was a dying thief and you are a living thief."
6. Saving faith is more than a mere "believing God". There will be many people in Hell who were not atheists. Saving faith is a belief in the heart that rests completely on Christ alone for salvation. Romans 10:9 – *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*