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Valley Church
Week 34: Faith Really Works!

Introduction:

Some people weaponize verses of Scripture, and James 2 is a common example!

James 2:14, 17, 19, 21, 24-26

Three Critical Questions:

1. What does James mean by _____?
2. What does James mean by _____?
3. What does James mean by _____?

→ SAVE: see James 1:21; 1:14

→ DEAD: see James 1:15; 2:26

→ JUSTIFICATION: see James 2:21, 23-24; Romans 4:2-3; James 2:22

Two Kinds of Faith...is that REALLY the point?

James 2:19

Upon closer examination, we discover that James is not talking about two different kinds of faith, but two different aspects of justification! One is vertical justification before God...the other is horizontal justification before our fellow man.

The Big Idea:

God wants to do amazing things through you, because He has already done amazing things in you! God made you into a loving person so that you can now choose to walk in love! God made you a joyous person so that you can now choose to rejoice. God gave you an obedient heart so that now you can walk in obedience to His ways and experience true fulfillment!!!

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

Personal Life:

1. The fact that “faith without works is dead,” while true, can be easily weaponized and misused to create doubt about a person’s security as a child of God. Why is it so critical that our security rests in the promises of God alone as opposed to our performance? Discuss...

Ponderings:

2. Good works are God's desired fruit displayed through branches attached to Jesus, the Vine (John 15:1-5). Is it possible to know if and when our outward “good works” are truly produced by the Holy Spirit rather than works produced by the flesh? Share your thoughts about this question and why it matters...
3. Have you ever felt “guilted” or “shamed” into doing good works? Share about this experience and how it shaped or impacted your life...
4. Why is walking in obedience to God such a rewarding and uplifting way to live? How is obedience unique under the New Covenant from what it was under the Old? Discuss...
5. God says that when you trusted in Christ, you were made by grace an “obedient from the heart” (Rom. 6:17) instead of mere external behavior modification. Why do you think “obedience” often carries a negative tone in today’s culture? Discuss...
6. What is the difference between “bearing fruit” and “keeping rules?”

Promptings:

7. In the weekend message we emphasized that obedience to God's New Covenant commands are more *descriptive* than *prescriptive*. How can this perspective assist you in the realization that Christ's commands are “not burdensome” (1 John 5:3) like the commands of Moses were? Why is it so critical that we understand that obedience to Christ is how our freedom is most truly expressed? How has a deeper experience of grace produced greater freedom from sin's dominance in your life? How has grace inspired and empowered tangible love of others in your life?