



# Just Grow Up!

James - A Manual for Maturity

Making My Faith Visible

1. Read James 2:14-26. Abraham is used as an example of what James is speaking about. Read Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6-8. What was Abraham given as a result of his faith in God? What does this mean? Read Romans 3:21,22. From God's point of view, how does a person get righteousness? Is this the same as Abraham?
2. Read Romans 4:1-5. What does this passage tell us about how Abraham was justified (declared righteous) in God's sight? How does this line up with what James 2 says about Abraham being justified?
3. Read again James 2:18-24. It talks about Abraham being justified when he offered Isaac his son as a sacrifice. This is found in Genesis 22. This is 18 years after Genesis 15 says Abraham was justified by his faith. What is the significance of this fact? In verses 18-24, it talks about showing your faith to another person. How can you show your faith to another person? How are we justified (declared righteous) by other people? So are there two justifications being referred to in this passage, one before God (by faith) and one before other people (by works)?
4. In this passage it says that faith without works is dead, what do you think that means? Does it mean a person is not a Christian?
5. Pastor Rick said that there are three ways that James says we should make our faith visible to those around us, what are they? Which one are you best at doing? Which one gives you the most struggle? Discuss some ways we can practically do these three things as a group and as individuals.

## ANSWERS

1. It says that Abraham was given a righteousness from God because of his faith in the promise that God made to Abraham. Part of that promise was that all of the nations of the world would be blessed through a descendent of Abraham, which is Jesus. To be given righteousness from God is to be made as righteous as God is (read 2 Corinthians 5:21 where it says we are given the righteousness of God) . What this means is that now God views us as being perfect, as He is, which is why we can go to heaven. In the New Testament, we obtain righteousness the same way Abraham did, by faith. The difference is that he believed that the Messiah would come to take away sin, we believe that he came and took away sin.
2. To discriminate means to take note of the differences between two things, usually with the outcome of choosing the one that is perceived to be better than the other. For example, employers discriminate between two people when they prefer to hire one person over another. There is nothing wrong with this if the decision is based on past behavior, such as if a person works hard as opposed to a person who does not. It becomes wrong when the discrimination is based on something the person has no control over; such as their skin color. God says we should be discriminatory about the people that we spend time with: Don't hang out with people who want to do what is wrong, hang out with Christians who want to do what is right. So, if the discrimination is based on good and bad behavior, that is a good thing. If it is based on an unchangeable attribute that a person cannot control, that is a bad thing. Favoritism is preferring one person above another and granting them special privileges that they have not earned. There is nothing wrong with rewarding good behavior, God does this with us. As Christians, we are never to treat some better than others simply because we like them, we are to treat all people equally.
3. The significance of the fact that Abraham was declared righteous in God's sight in Genesis 15 and then offered Isaac 18 years later shows that offering Isaac (his works of faith) had nothing to do with being righteous in God's sight. As a result of offering Isaac, he became known by other people as being righteous and he was called God's friend. The only way another human can know that I am righteous is by what they see me do (my works), so it is by my works that I am "justified" (declared righteous) by other people. This passage is talking about being justified in the sight of two people: God, which is by my faith and other people which is by my works.
4. The word dead in this passage means unproductive, fruitless. It is not saying that a person is not saved if they do not do good works, it is saying that if a person claims to trust God in a particular area of his life but then does nothing, his claim is false. If a person really has faith, it always produces something. If a person says he has faith that Christ paid for his sins, then he puts his trust in Christ to save him. If a person says that he has faith that God will meet his needs, then he will give of his finances to the Lord's work and trust God to provide for his needs. If a Christian says they have faith in anything that the Bible says, then they will do what the Bible says. The truth is that we have to demonstrate our faith every day of our lives by obeying what God's word says. When I do not obey any particular command of God, it shows that I do not have faith in God in that particular area of my life.
5. The three ways they are : 1. Authentically love everyone that God brings into His family of believers; 2. Demonstrate a difference in the way we live in contrast to those who do not know God; and 3. Sacrificially offer everything I possess and everyone I love into the loving care of God, trusting Him to take care of everything.