



**Sermon Based Small Group  
Leader Discussion Guide**

**Sermon Title: "Having a 'Do Something' Faith"**

**Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington  
Week of April 10, 2011**

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<b>Session Objectives (Group Leader)</b>	<p><b>By the end of the session, group members should be able to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the necessary connection between authentic faith and religiously motivated works.</li> <li>• Relate the main points in the story of Abraham, the story of Rahab, or both.</li> <li>• Identify at least two ways their own faith could be expressed in deeds.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Connection (Group Leader)</b>	<p><b>How does my story connect to the reading?</b> To prepare to lead this Bible study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask yourself, "How is my faith in Christ expressed in deeds?"</li> <li>• Think of a Christian, living or dead, whose example of faith in action inspires you.</li> <li>• Pray for each member of your group by name.</li> </ul>
<b>Icebreaker</b>	<p>Two options, choose one:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.) Are you more likely to act without thinking or think without acting? Can you recall an instance of either or both of these in your life?</li> <li>2.) Someone observed, "Everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it." Can you think of another topic about which there is lots of talk but very little action?</li> </ol>
<b>Big Idea</b>	<p>The right kind of faith compels us to <u>do</u> something.</p>

**Sermon Text**

James 2:14-26 (New International Version)

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

*<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."*

*Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

*<sup>20</sup> You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.*

*<sup>25</sup> In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

### Learning more about the lesson

James was probably the oldest of Christ's several brothers and sisters since he heads the list in Matthew 13:55. At first he did not believe in Jesus and even challenged him and misunderstood his mission (see John 7:2-5). Later James became a committed disciple, and very prominent in the early church. He was one of the select individuals to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7), and Paul called him a 'pillar' of the church (Galatians 2:9).

1. What kind of faith is James criticizing? How might one identify persons with this kind of faith?

**LEADER'S NOTE: James is criticizing persons with a 'do-nothing' faith. Such people may think about expressing their faith in action, and even talk a great game, but they never follow through with concrete actions.**

2. Hypocrisy – the false claim to live a life aligned with one's admirable principles or beliefs – is a problem as old as the church. What do you think might be some reasons for that?

**LEADER'S NOTE: The old bumper stickers used to say, "Christians aren't perfect – just forgiven." Now, there is big difference between being "just forgiven" and being perfect – lots of room for growth! Still, since there are no perfect Christians, we all must admit that we fail to live up to our ideals 100% of the time. The most grievous examples of hypocrisy, however, are the wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). These are people who shrewdly create false impressions in order to manipulate people; they are con-artists, schemers, and scammers.**

3. Why is Abraham such a good example of faith in action? (See Genesis 22.)

**LEADER'S NOTE: Abraham left his home in faithful obedience to God's call, even without knowing where he was going (Genesis 12:1-4). Abraham believed God's promise that he and Sarah would be blessed with a child, even though they were very old (Genesis 17:19, Romans 4:20-21). Abraham believed God's promise to bless Abraham and his offspring and "give the whole earth" to them (Romans 4:13 New Living Translation). This blessing was to be passed from Abraham through Isaac to his descendents. Therefore, Abraham's willingness to faithfully obey God's command to prepare to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22) expresses an incredible depth of faith and trust in God in time of testing.**

4. Why is Rahab a good example of faith in action? (See Joshua 2:1-21. Note

### Digging Deeper

	<p>especially her actions in v. 6.)</p> <p><b>Leader Note: Rahab lived in Jericho, a city the Israelites conquered as they entered the promised land. When Israel’s spies came to the city, she risked her own life to hide them and help them escape. In this way she demonstrated faith in God’s purpose for Israel. As a result, she and her family were saved when the city was destroyed. She is one of only two women mentioned in Hebrews 11, sometimes called “The Faith Hall of Fame” (Heb. 11:31).</b></p> <p>5. What man or woman, living or dead, inspires you by their example of putting faith into action?</p> <p>6. Is there something concrete for which you would like to be remembered or a passion with which people would identify you?</p>
<p><b>Taking it Home</b></p>	<p><b>How will I live it? Apply it?</b></p> <p>In your life, how are you or could you live out each of these ways of putting faith into action:</p> <p>Showing compassionate generosity:</p> <hr/> <p>Demonstrating sacrificial obedience:</p> <hr/> <p>Taking an uncalculated risk:</p> <hr/>
<p><b>Looking Ahead</b></p>	<p><b>How can I prepare for the next Small Group meeting?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite your group members to attend “Community,” 9:00-10:00 Sundays in the fellowship hall.</li> <li>• The text for next week is Matthew 26:26-30. The theme is “Observing the Lord’s Supper.”</li> </ul>

<p><b>Prayer Focus</b></p>	<p><b>How can I connect with God and others through prayer?</b></p> <p>You can put faith into action only with God’s help and the encouragement of Christian friends. Use this prayer time to ask God to help you know what to do to express your faith in God. Then implore God to grant you the grace and power to do it, trusting that he will.</p> <p><b>Leader Note: Invite group members to share one or more of their “faith in action steps” from the “Bringing it Home” section above. Then have the group pray for one another about these things. If a group member does not wish to share his or her action steps, pray that God will make clear what those steps should be in the days to come.</b></p>
<p><b>Updates</b></p>	<p><b>Announcements from:</b>  Care Coordinator  Outreach Coordinator,  Social Coordinator</p>