

No favorites; faith that works

James 2:1–26 · 26 verses · Song: “Faith That Works”

The picture: An usher bows the man in gold rings and fine robes to the best seat, while the poor man in rags is left standing by the footstool.



PICTURE WORD

Ring

THE CHAPTER IN BRIEF



Two men walk in: one with a gold ring, one in rags. Faith shows in how you treat them.

Remember it: TWO men walk in; TWO witnesses, Abraham and Rahab. Chapter 2: faith that works.

MEMORY VERSE

In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:17 · the author's translation

GREEK WORD

ἔργα

“works” · verse 14

In James: fifteen times, in 3 chapters

James means the deeds that faith does: Abraham offering Isaac, Rahab taking in the messengers. Paul warns against works of the law done to earn God's favor (Rom 3:28); James warns against a faith that never does anything. In Abraham, faith and works were “working together” (2:22).

HOW THE CHAPTER MOVES

- 1–7 The gold rings and the filthy clothes: no favorites.
- 8–13 The royal law: love your neighbor; mercy triumphs over judgment.
- 14–17 Faith without works is dead.
- 18–26 Abraham and Rahab: faith shown by what it does.

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

- v. 8 ← Lev 19:18 “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- v. 11 ← Exod 20:13–14 No adultery, no murder (also Deut 5:17–18).
- v. 21 ← Gen 22:9–12 Abraham offers Isaac on the altar.
- v. 23 ← Gen 15:6 “Abraham believed God.”
- v. 23 ← Isa 41:8 Abraham, the friend of God (also 2 Chr 20:7).
- v. 25 ← Josh 2:1–21 Rahab takes in the messengers.



Listen. Hear James 2 sung in the **James by Heart** app, or free at ispress.de/james/songs/2.

The song: “Faith That Works.” Every verse of the chapter is sung.

No favorites

The royal law of love

Mercy wins over judgment

Faith that works

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Two men walk in: one with a gold _____, one in _____. Faith shows in how you _____ them.

CHECK YOURSELF

1. What is the royal law found in the Scripture?

(A) Keep the Sabbath

(C) Give a tenth

(B) Love your neighbor as yourself

(D) Do not take oaths

2. What triumphs over judgment?

(A) Mercy

(C) Knowledge

(B) Riches

(D) Sacrifice

3. Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is what?

(A) Enough

(C) Dead

(B) Hidden

(D) Perfect

TALK IT OVER

1. Who are the people in your world who get the “good seat,” and who gets told to sit on the floor?

2. “Go in peace, stay warm and eat your fill.” When is it easier to say kind words than to give real help?

3. Abraham and Rahab were very different people. What does it mean that James puts them side by side?

IN YOUR OWN WORDS: WHAT DOES JAMES 2 TEACH?

☐ I listened to the song

☐ I can say 2:17 by heart

☐ I can say what it teaches

☐ I know the picture word

Answers: Blanks: ring · rags · treat · Check yourself: 1. B (v. 8) · 2. A (v. 13) · 3. C (v. 17)