



SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

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FAITH IN ACTION: EMBRACING TRUE TRANSFORMATION

OPENING & PRAYER:

Life is full of moments that shape us, and often, it's the people God places in our path who make the biggest difference. Looking back, I see how my "Bible-thumping buddies" never shamed me for my choices, but instead spoke truth with love and consistency. Their influence, and the example of my wife and family, nudged me toward a life that was more than just outward appearances. For years, I tried to "do" Christianity—imitating the actions of faithful people around me—without truly "being" transformed on the inside. I was focused on behavior modification, not life transformation, and it left me feeling empty and caught in cycles of spiritual highs and lows.

"Father, I thank you for the opportunity to grow in my trust in You. As I grow in trusting you, and stepping out in faith, I ask you to help keep leading and guiding me through the week. Help me to find ways to match my works and my faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."

SCRIPTURE:

"You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?"

James 2:20 NIV

*You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **James 2:20-21 NIV***

You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 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.

James 2:22-23 NIV

*"Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct." **Galatians 6:4-5 NIV***

*"For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. **2 Corinthians 2:15-16***

GO DEEPER:

It took time to realize that faith and works are meant to be inseparable. James 2:20-22 makes it clear: faith without deeds is useless, but deeds without faith are just as empty. Abraham's story shows us that true righteousness comes when faith and action work together. I had to stop comparing myself to others and start paying attention to my own walk, as Galatians 6 teaches. The world constantly pushes us to measure up to someone else's highlight reel, but God calls us to authenticity and responsibility for our own conduct.

Discernment is crucial, especially in a world of constant comparison and distraction. The Holy Spirit guides and protects us, often through a deep sense of conviction or peace that surpasses understanding. When we put God first—giving Him our first and best in time, talents, and resources—we experience a comfort and assurance that can't

be found anywhere else. This isn't about pleasing people or keeping up appearances; it's about living with integrity and letting God's presence shape every decision.

Serving others doesn't require perfection or a theological degree. Sometimes, the most Christlike thing we can do is simply show up, offer a hug, or be present in someone's pain. My father's sacrificial act and the comfort I received from a friend in my darkest moment reminded me that we are all called to be the hands and feet of Christ, wherever we are. Ministry isn't confined to a church building; it happens in our homes, workplaces, and everyday encounters. When we give God our all—praising Him in every circumstance and letting His love flow through us—we become living testimonies of His grace.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Faith and works are inseparable; one without the other is incomplete. Abraham's righteousness was credited to him because his faith and actions worked together, not in isolation. True transformation happens when our trust in God is expressed through obedient action, not just outward compliance or religious performance. **[15:04]**

Life transformation is deeper than behavior modification. It requires honest self-examination and a willingness to let God change us from the inside out, rather than just adjusting our habits to look good on the outside. Real change is uncomfortable but leads to lasting peace and authenticity. **[16:11]**

Comparison is a trap that robs us of joy and spiritual growth. Galatians 6 reminds us to focus on our own journey and responsibility before God, rather than measuring ourselves against others' perceived successes. The peace we long for comes from God's approval, not the applause or acceptance of people. **[18:16]**

Discernment through the Holy Spirit is essential in navigating life's choices and relationships. Conviction isn't condemnation; it's God's loving guidance and protection, often leading us away from harm and toward His best for us. Teaching our children (and ourselves) to listen to the Spirit is vital in a world full of distractions and false images. **[22:21]**

Serving as the hands and feet of Christ doesn't require perfection or special qualifications. Every act of love, presence, and sacrifice—no matter how small—can be a powerful ministry. Whether it's a wordless hug in a moment of grief or a simple act of kindness, God uses our availability more than our ability. **[37:40]**

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. Why does James say that faith without works is useless? How does Abraham's story help us understand the relationship between faith and action? **[[15:04]]**
2. The sermon talked about "behavior modification" versus "life transformation." What is the difference between the two, and why does it matter for our spiritual growth? **[[16:11]]**
3. According to Galatians 6, why is it dangerous to compare our spiritual journey to someone else's? How can this affect our relationship with God? **[[18:16]]**
4. Are there areas in your life where you are "doing" Christianity on the outside but not letting God transform you on the inside? What is one step you can take to invite God to change your heart, not just your habits? **[[12:47]]**
5. Giving God our "first and best" was a key theme. What does it look like for you to give God your first and best in your time, talents, or resources? Is there a practical change you want to make this week? **[[28:27]]**

CLOSING PRAYER:

"Father, thank you for always giving me the chance to be Your hands and feet. Please help me have the courage to step in, even though I may not feel like I am enough. I know that when my works and faith align, it pleases you. Guide me through these experiences and opportunities this week. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."