



THE SABBATH CIRCLES HOME SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Unit Theme: What is God asking of us in this moment?

Lesson connected to Sunday, September 15, 2019

Today's Scripture: James 2:14-16

Key Verse: "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead." James 2:26

Contexts of the Scripture:

- Locate the book of "James" in the Bible. Look at the Table of Contents if you don't know where it is in the Bible. James is in the New Testament, sometimes called the Christian Scriptures.
- Knowing that James is in the New Testament tells us something about where it would fall on our timeline we created last week. For one thing, since it is in the New Testament, we know it was written after Jesus was born.
- What else can we figure out about James and his book and where it falls in the chronology of the Bible? There are several ways to find out this information:
 - Some bibles, especially study bibles, will have a brief introduction of each book at the beginning of each that gives some basic information on it. If your bible has such information, take the time to read it.
 - Another excellent source of basic information is Wikipedia. Here is the link to get some information on James:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_of_James
 - Whether you read information from your bible or from Wikipedia, you will learn that James is a special type of literature in the New Testament. It is called an epistle, just a fancy word for a letter. There are many letters in the New Testament written by a variety of Jesus' earliest followers. They are an important source of information of how those earliest followers made sense of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and how the earliest churches came to be.

Questions to go deeper:

- Read through the text carefully and see if you can figure out what the question posed to James was that he is trying to answer in the letter. What about his letter do you find surprising?
- What examples from the Old Testament does James use to try to prove his point? Are either of these stories familiar to you? Here's where you can find them in the Old Testament: Abraham & Isaac is in Genesis 22 and Rahab is in Joshua 2. Find the stories in your bible and read them. Then think about how James talks about them. Do you think they are good examples of James' point that faith without works means nothing? Why or why not?

Activity possibilities:

- **Family activities.**

- Add this story to the Bible Timeline you created last week. While scholars do not agree on who James was, they do agree that this letter must have been written fairly early, around the middle of the 1st Century, CE.
- Our Guest Preacher for this Sunday in church is/was Susan Sedensky, Executive Director of the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. What do you know about the “PNC?” What are some of the ways our church has supported the PNC before? This month we are providing the financial support the PNC needs to keep doing its important work by attending their family friendly fundraising event called Hog Wild. Check it out: <https://www.pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org/index.php/about-us/upcoming-events>

- **Younger Children activity:**

- Follow this link to download a free coloring book about this passage from James: <https://ministry-to-children.com/james-coloring/>
- “Helping Hands are Praying Hands” craft. Take out a piece of plain white paper and your favorite color crayon or marker. Place one hand on the paper and trace around it. Do the same thing with your other hand. On one hand, draw or print one thing you can do to help someone who is hungry. On the other hand, draw a smiley face with a halo to remind you to pray before each meal you eat, giving thanks to God for your food and asking that those who are hungry find food to eat.

- **Older children and youth activity:**

- Check at school to see what volunteer opportunities might exist to help people who are hungry or in need of help. Make arrangements to support one of these projects and get some of your friends involved. If you can’t find anything at school, organize a food drive yourself at school for the PNC. Check in with them to see what they most need first!
- Sometimes the best place to practice our faith through our works is at home. Pay attention to what your family might need some help with and offer to do it – or at least try to help. Things like laundry, vacuuming, gardening, doing the dishes are always appreciated and can make a real difference. Try to make your family smile!!!

Going deeper:

- James is essentially telling us as followers of Jesus that what we believe or say we believe is not enough; our faith is a living faith only when we make a difference in the world because knowing Jesus has made such a difference in us. Check out this YouTube video of Denzel Washington talking about why it matters for all of us to make a difference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByqyU7FK5tc>

Remember, Rev. Ruth is always happy to answer your questions and help you find more information on anything in the Bible that interests you! Give her a call or send her an email or text. Nothing makes her smile more than questions from students of the bible!

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