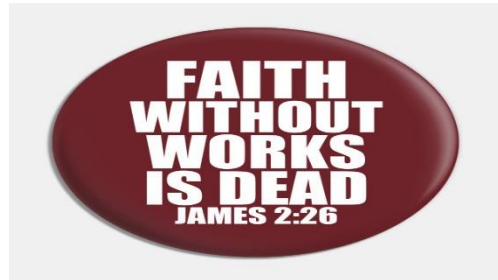


TRUE VINE MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY ALIVE *Zoom Edition*

Working the Word True Faith Leads to Change James 1:21-25; 2:14-26

Have you despaired of ever changing? Do you think you're a lost cause? Maybe you think it's different for you. Other people can change, but your history or temptations or problems make it different for you. The good news of Jesus is that you and I *can* change.

Here James affirms that deeds (or actions) are the byproduct of a living faith. Works do not justify us or make us righteous before God, nor are they the means to salvation. Rather, our deeds are the fruit that grows from one who is obedient to God's commands and transformed by His grace.



To those who believe in Jesus Christ, the subsequent response to salvation is obedience. Those who believe in God choose to obey His commands and willingly forsake their former, sinful ways. As one submits to the Lord, their hearts are changed. Their desires begin to mirror His desires and their deeds reflect His heart for the world.

Deeds are the outer reflection of this inner transformation. They are the evidence of a heart that has been and is continually being transformed and renewed by God. In several passages of the New Testament, deeds are often compared to fruit. A follower of Christ who is obedient, submissive, and committed to God's way of doing things, will naturally bear good fruit in their lives that will be evident for others to see.

No matter what our past lived experiences have been, we should know that God has changed our heart. Formerly, we did not know Christ, but now we do, however imperfectly. Formerly, even if we maintained an outward veneer of virtue, we lived for self. Now, we live for Christ, to know Him and serve Him. Formerly, we were being corrupted by the evil desires of sin that deceived us into thinking that they would bring fulfillment. Now, we are new creatures in Christ, living for righteousness and holiness, which come from the truth that is in Jesus.

Conclusion

A changed life requires putting off the old man, being renewed in the spirit of your mind and putting on the new man. While it is a lifelong process of renewal, you should be able to see the distinct difference between the old person that you were and the new person that you now are in Christ. You should be able to relate to the old preacher who said, "I ain't what I want to be and I ain't what I'm gonna be, but praise God, I ain't what I used to be!"