



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 175 - Is My Faith on Life Support?

(James)

Luther's Struggle

If someone reads the letter of James to learn what to do to be saved, he will be thoroughly confused. James wrote his letter for those who have already been saved—to teach them what comes next.

- How do James' first words in addressing his readers state his purpose in this letter when he writes, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness"?
- Why is it important to continually draw a distinction between God's work of saving us (justification), and our works that follow faith (sanctification)?

Faith without Works is Dead

James wants us to examine our lives to see if our faith is living and active or on its last legs.

- What does it take to move from being a hearer of God's Word to a doer of it?
- Give some examples of ways Christians live out their faith.
- How do our sinful deeds and attitudes harm our faith and hamper our witness to others?
- How can loving deeds born of faith strengthen that faith and enhance our witness to others?

Let Not Many Become Teachers

James warns us to be sober and careful about what we teach others about God.

- What are some of the crazy ideas about spirituality floating around today?
- Which of these are easy for Christians to get swept up in?
- What difficulties does this create for a pastor, teacher or parent?

The Tongue

As a child you may have heard the saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Most of us learned the hard way how untrue that saying is. James devotes the majority of chapter 3 to deal with how we use our tongue.

- Why are our words so powerful—either for good or evil?

Gossip seems such a little thing, doesn't it? After all, it's so exciting to share secrets, especially when they're true—and it doesn't seem too damaging. But there are consequences.

- What harm have you seen gossip cause?
- How does this help us understand the passage, “Love covers a multitude of sins” (see 1 Peter 4:8)?
- What are some good ways to remind ourselves to be watchful of the words we use?