

## DISCUSS

- Take time together to look at the nature of Abraham's faith in the following Bible passages: Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-6; Romans 4:1-3, 18-24; and Hebrews 11:8-9, 17-19.
- What characteristics and kind of action do you see in the faith of Abraham? What one stands out to you the most?
- In Romans 4:3,22-25, Paul seems to use the exact same verse as James to seemingly make the opposite point James is making about what saves. Context of the passages indicate a different concern being addressed by each writer – what do you think Paul's concern was?
- James also mentions the example of Rahab. Why do you think he mentions the good works of a prostitute? What did Rahab do to show her faith in Israel's God?
- What comes first, salvation or works? Why is it debated?

## APPLY

- James uses the extreme examples of Abraham and Rahab as a way of saying, 'Everyone's faith needs to show up in action, no matter who you are.' What are 3 actions you could take this week to show your faith? Share.
- Is there already an action you feel the Holy Spirit has been speaking about for you to take in an attitude of obedience?

## GROUP PRAYER FOCUS

- Ask the Holy Spirit to move you from believing 'that...' to believing 'in...', which shows up in good work.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to complete His good work in you in growing your walk and obedience with Him.
- Thank Jesus Christ for the saving work He did on the cross for you and us...and the amazing grace we have received.

# Making FAITH + WORK

Book of James

# 5

Week 5: Keeping It Real

Key Text: James 2:14-26

## OPEN

Over the centuries, there has been much debate over James' words in this week's passage about the question of whether we are saved good works or by faith alone. Thankfully, the sufficiency of Jesus' work on the cross and the Apostle Paul's words in Ephesians 2:8-9 settles the issue, where Paul says we are saved by grace through faith *alone*, "not by works, so that no one can boast." What James is really getting at in our passage is a different question: *What is the nature of genuine faith?* Typical of James, he does not mince words in making it clear that genuine faith in Jesus is always accompanied by works (action) – as opposed to simple mental assent. Faith without deeds, James claims is actually dead – worthless.

## REFLECT

- James seems to be indicating that there are two kinds of faith (v.18) but only one that is 'saving.' What is the key difference between the two according to James?
- In v. 19, who does James say has 'faith' but not the kind that saves? How would you describe this kind of 'faith'?
- What was it about Abraham that James points to as an example of faith being shown through works?
- What do you think James means by 'works' or 'deeds' in the passage? What constitutes a 'work' or a 'deed' that is revealing a saving faith in a person's life?