

MARK & FRIENDS PROGRAM RESOURCES

Faith That Makes an Impact

Living Faith Produces a Transformed Life

Pastor Mark Johnson

Friday, July 24, 2026

Program Summary

In this Friday edition of Mark & Friends, Pastor Mark Johnson leads the studio audience through James 2:14 and the relationship between faith and works. Good deeds do not earn salvation; salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Yet when Christ gives a person new life, that living faith begins to make an observable impact. Desires change, convictions grow, compassion becomes practical, and believers are moved to help people in need. Genuine faith does not remain merely an idea or a religious label - it produces a transformed life.

Key Takeaways

- Good works are not the pathway to salvation; salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Works are the natural evidence of a living and transforming faith.
- Christianity is more than adopting a moral structure or appearing to be a good person.
- The Holy Spirit brings conviction and steadily changes a believer's desires and conduct.
- Living faith responds compassionately when someone is hungry, hurting, or in need.
- Every believer has a past, but through Christ every sinner can have a future.
- Trials can deepen faith and prepare believers to help others walk through similar pain.
- Jesus does not merely offer a new set of rules; He offers new life.

Scripture References

- James 2:14-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- James 1:2-4
- Ephesians 2:8-10
- Matthew 5:14-16
- Galatians 5:16-25

Quote of the Day

"We don't need a new set of rules. What we need is a new life. Jesus offers new life."

Broadcast Notes

Pastor Mark Johnson facilitates an open studio discussion on James 2 and asks listeners to consider the word impact: How should becoming a Christian affect a person's life? Audience members share personal stories involving accidents, grief, trials, conversion, conviction, and spiritual growth. The conversation carefully distinguishes works-based righteousness from the biblical teaching that good works flow from a heart transformed by Christ.

Practical Applications

- Ask God to reveal whether your faith is producing visible Christlike change.
- Respond to conviction promptly when the Holy Spirit identifies an attitude or action that needs to change.
- Look for a practical need you can meet instead of offering words alone.
- Avoid judging spiritual life only by outward rules or appearances.
- Allow personal trials to deepen your compassion for others.
- Read the five chapters of James regularly and identify one truth to practice each day.

Today's Challenge

Complete one concrete act of faith this weekend. Help someone who is hungry, hurting, lonely, or overwhelmed. Do it quietly and lovingly - not to earn favor with God, but because Christ's life and love are at work within you.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that salvation is Your gift, received through faith in Jesus Christ. Give us more than outward religion or a list of rules. Continue transforming our hearts through Your Holy Spirit so that our faith becomes visible through compassion, integrity, obedience, and practical love. Show us where someone needs help, and give us willingness to act. May our lives reflect the new life we have received in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.

About Today's Speaker

Pastor Mark Johnson

Senior Pastor of Calvary Church in Springfield, Illinois

Pastor Mark Johnson serves as Senior Pastor of Calvary Church in Springfield, Illinois. He regularly facilitates the Friday Mark & Friends studio Bible study, guiding listeners and participants through Scripture with an emphasis on clear biblical teaching, honest conversation, and practical application. His current study through the book of James encourages believers to pursue an authentic faith that changes both the heart and everyday life.

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Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Mark & Friends Welcome Song

We're glad you're here, we're glad you're here,
Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near.

It's so good to see you, we hope that it's clear,
Everyone loves you, we're glad you're here.

We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here. Fellowship Sweetheart.

Knowing you're here. It's so good to see you. We hope that it's clear.

Everyone loves you. We're glad you're here. We're glad you're here.

We're glad you're here. Fellowship is sweeter, knowing you're near.

It's so good to see you. We hope that it's clear. Everyone loves you.

We're glad you're here. Reading from the book of James, chapter 2, 14 through 17. What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

That was James, chapter 2, 14 through 17. And that was Kristi, and you're listening to the Friday edition of Mark & Friends. Oh, magnify the Lord with me.

Let us exalt his name together. It is Friday, July 24th, 2026. Welcome to another chapter in our study of the book of James.

We're looking at chapter 2, and we'll probably cover, Lord willing, 14 through 16. You never know. Sometimes it might be just a verse or two, but I hope you're feeling prayed up.

In fact, we have, I think, 21 or 22 of us all in the same room. Many times there's the overflow room where five or six or eight others, but we're getting near a new record, and hopefully in a month or so we'll have the studio downstairs where we can accommodate more of you to come and join us. It's kind of a great fellowship, a little Bible study time together where we have open conversation, and Pastor Mark Johnson of Calvary Church, he facilitates our discussion, and he's passionate about the book of James.

He's mentioned many times it's only five chapters, so Monday through Friday you could read a chapter or read all five chapters on the weekend. It's a great book. It's kind of like the New Testament version of Proverbs.

It has a bunch of points of application, and today we're going to learn about faith and deeds. So thank you, Mark, for joining us once again and facilitating this discussion, and we're all prayed up. It was pretty powerful, a number of people praying in this very room for you, the listener, and for us to all glean some good truths.

I really want people who are listening today to think along with us about this word impact. How does becoming a Christian impact a person's life? This is what James is pointing to in this passage. He's not pointing to this passage as a pathway to salvation.

He's pointing to this passage as the natural results of an experience with Christ that is birthed through faith and what happens inside of our life. So if you're listening, I want you to be thinking about impact in life and how Christianity should impact a life, and we'll talk a little bit more about that as we go through today. But I've asked some people in this room just to maybe share with us about impact.

And one of the impacts that we have is if you've ever been in a car accident. If you're driving out there, be careful. Be careful what you're doing.

But has anybody in this room ever had a car accident that's had an impact when it happened to you? Anybody? Well, I did a whole program on this a few years ago with Donna Leland when a drunk driver ran a red light, totaled my car. The medics and everyone showed up and the airbag got launched. Anyways, God used it in a number of ways as some of the officers that responded said, aren't you Mark Burns from the radio station? So I felt like a little celebrity for a little while, but it was interesting how I got to witness and share.

And the car totaled completely, and yet I walked away and just with a little knee injury, but no problems. But I got to talk about it on the air and use it as a witnessing opportunity where God showed up in a number of ways because one of the sergeants was, my dad sings with the Singing Men of GNN. And you know, anyways, we had some delightful conversations.

Anybody else? I was in a big car wreck which totaled my car, messed up my back and both knees. And not at the time, but in time, that's what really messed it up. I don't know.

It was quite an impact in my life. I sued the guy because I was hurt. And really that didn't do me no good.

I mean, got some money out of it, but did it fix my back? Did it fix my knees? No. So I learned a lesson there. I would tell you, you know, I've been in several accidents.

One so minor you hardly even knew it happened. And one that totaled out my car. And so you think about the impact that can happen in an accident.

So let me take that a little step further and kind of change focus. For those in this room that are with me today, how did becoming a Christian, a Christ follower, a person who put their faith in the work of Christ for their salvation, how did that change or impact your life? It changed everything. I went to Catholic school, prep school until about 18.

And last few years I got into existentialism because you were wondering what the meaning of life was. But later on when I was born again, it all made sense. Entire world opened from eternity past, present and future.

And that has impacted not just my eternity, but how I live now and how I think. And as years go by, almost 40 years, you're to the point now where in the 70s, everything clarifies, the word comes alive, the Lord speaks through you and speaks to you too to discipline you sometimes. But it's a beautiful thing.

It just impacts your entire life. 2 Corinthians 5:17, the new creation is absolutely true. Right, Pastor Mark? That's exactly right.

The philosophy of lifestyle of Christianity, if everybody would live by the teaching, the moral structure of Christianity, that in itself would make the world a better place. If everybody was honest, if everybody was kind, if everybody was sexually moral, if everybody avoided drunkenness, if everybody avoided being mean, the world would be a better place if we just followed the structure of Christianity. But you can follow the structure of Christianity and not be a Christian.

Right. You can just, I've accepted the structure of Christianity. I've known people, very, very good people.

You'd have to say they're good people, but they weren't believers. They would tell you they weren't believers. They would say, I don't believe that Jesus was real or I don't believe that I'm gonna stand before God and answer for my life someday.

They're trying to be a good person. And the Bible gives us a great structure and how to be a good person. We get it confused though when we say, I am a Christian because I do these things.

That's not what makes me a Christian. A Christian is someone who has put their faith in Christ to be their savior. And then this is how faith and works come together.

I don't work to become a Christian. I don't work even because I see that these are the right things to do. But once I become a Christian, the impact on my life is nature changing.

So we meet people, maybe some of you listening to us today, maybe you've met Christians and you found them to be hypocritical or you found them to be, guess what, Christians aren't perfect. But there are some out there who are just corrupt, who say they're Christians. And we apologize for that and we ourselves try not to be that.

We try to be sincere followers of Christ in every area of our life. But when Christ comes into our life, it changes who we are fundamentally. And all of a sudden, what I felt comfortable doing in the past I no longer feel comfortable doing.

I feel conviction. This is where James comes down to this idea of faith and works. And Mark, isn't it also important to point out that we're not doing the works because we're Christians and are supposed to.

We're doing it because of the love relationship we have with God. And we're doing it out of that outpouring like we want to do good works because we love God. Yeah, that's such a subtle change is that my heart changes.

I don't stuff in my lust. My lust of my heart gets changed and I become free from that. I don't stuff in and say, okay, I can't act like a racist anymore.

The racism is taken out of me. I'm delivered from it. I'm freed from it.

I'm changed from it. And there's a process of that, a sanctifying process, where what happens is my old man tries to continue down the old road, but the Holy Spirit is in us kicking against that old man, pushing against him, wrestling with him. And if we're really seeking after God, we become a person who comes under this conviction and we recognize it.

I should not be a racist. I should not be this angry dad. I should not curse at people.

I should not do this, this, or this. I need to stop. We become convicted by it.

I remember a young lady that had gotten saved in our youth group. I think I've told this story here before. She got saved in our youth group.

She'd grown up completely away from the things of God. And she comes to me about a month or so after she'd gotten saved and she said, I had a friend last night. He handed me a joint like he always does.

I started to take it, but the Holy Spirit said to me I shouldn't do this anymore. So I gave it back to her. Do you think I heard from God? And I said, yes.

I think you heard from God. She said, do you think there'll be other things like that? I said, the rest of your life. The rest of your life on this earth you will face these things and the Holy Spirit within you rises up and says, no, don't talk that way anymore.

No, don't look at that anymore. No, don't be that way anymore. Because the work of the Spirit is in us.

So James is pointing out, look, somebody comes into your midst and they're hungry and they're thirsty and you say, go and be well fed. Your faith is dead. Your faith is dead.

If it's live, what's going to happen is the Spirit's going to say, do something about that. That's the living faith. Do something about it.

Help that person. And we want our faith to be living. We don't want it to be something, oh, I could check this mark and do something for him, but I don't really feel like it today.

No, I've got to do something. I've got to do something to help this person in some way. So that's what we're talking about and I'm in the studio with us is a Robert Frazier and he's all about reaching and touching people that are hurting or need help or assistance.

But I like this verse 14. What good is it, my brothers, now this is James speaking to all of us, but the words recounted by the Holy Spirit here in James 2. What good is it, my brother, and for that matter, sister listening, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds, can such faith save him? James is talking to us about this fact that Jesus invaded this world. He invaded a fallen world.

We are, as Christians, the Bible calls us aliens. We see ourselves as aliens. We're not a part of this culture.

The church is an outpost of Christianity and we're supposed to be a shining light of Christianity that is attractive, that is something that is drawing to us. So there's going to be an evidence that we are different from this world because the work of Christ is happening in us. It's a shame when the church becomes something other than that.

Now, there are some who see that light and are repelled by it because the light not only says do good works, the light also shines light on darkness. And sometimes when the light shines on the darkness, on evil, on wickedness, on what is corrupt, those who are corrupt don't want that light to be shined on them and so they hate the light. They hated Jesus.

They'll hate us. But we are called to be people by nature, the people that have been transformed by the power and the light of Christ. Well, I'm enjoying listening to the conversation and a phrase just kind of came into my mind which is every saint has a past, every sinner has a future.

And what a great transformation that God can create in an individual. Now, we started this conversation talking about how accidents can impact someone. I would like to share two things.

I had a son that had passed away. Pastor Mark Johnson is very familiar with my family. Passed away at the age of 20, stage four cancer.

So our family got through it with the help of the church and friends in the community. Was I rooted in the word at that time? Perhaps not where I should be. Well, a few years later, talking about an accident, my baby daughter was involved in a car accident.

Her skull was crushed and boy, did that cause me to reflect on my son dying, okay? Fear of death, just a fear of a lot of different things impacting my life at that point. Then I started, I don't know if I should say this, but questioning like, what's up God? Why is this happening to my family? But it led me to start thinking about heaven and hell. Where are my kids? Well, thank goodness, my kids were rooted.

Can I do a plug, okay. My kids grew up at Calvary Academy. So I am thankful that I felt very comfortable that they are in heaven.

But that caused me to wonder about all the other people out there that don't have the opportunity. And I know we have a gentleman sitting here, I think his name is Robert that was introduced earlier, that he brings into the community love of the community, unity. And I think all those things are important because not everybody has the opportunity.

Some people grow up in dysfunctional families if I may use that word. Some families have trouble. I'm looking to see if Marcus is nodding his head at me.

But there is just so much going on. And James, the book of James talks about trials and we're supposed to have joy in it. Now, a trial of my son dying, a trial of my daughter.

Oh, by the way, and she is just a female version of the son that had passed away. But facing those trials, how am I supposed to have joy in that? Because it says in James, consider it joy, what is it? Consider it pure joy. Yeah, consider your trial joy.

But it did lead me to other things. And thank God, I thank God profusely every day, every minute, I'm out there on my motorcycle, I'm singing, I'm praising God for all the things that He's put into me, my life. The things that I've seen, and also I'm an old guy too, okay? So because of the experiences of my kids from the things that I've seen, I've seen a lot of death.

I had an occasion to do my daughter's wedding the other day and I made a big deal out of it. This is when I had her skull crushed, by the way. I said, you know, don't you go to weddings? And I said, well, at my age, I go to more funerals than I do weddings.

But I do go to some weddings because all my kids are young. And so, some of my kids' friends invite me to the wedding just kind of to tag along or to even help with the wedding process along. But God is good, that's all I can say.

Just put your faith in God. Sometimes it doesn't make sense, but God's timing is perfect always. I had a friend that is having some trouble and I just simply said to her, and she said, again, brought up James, chapter two, verse one, how can we have joy in all this? And I said, you know, and it's not the answer that she wanted, but I said, of course, pray and find the resources necessary to settle this.

But a year from now, with God's help, you'll be laughing about it, and maybe have you walk people through. Deeds don't save us. So you can't measure somebody's walk with God by their deeds alone.

Yeah, that's exactly right. Let's think about it this way. We don't need a new set of rules.

When I was growing up, if a teenage boy didn't smoke, didn't cuss, and cut his hair short, he was a good boy. He was a good boy. He was a good Christian boy.

He was an absolute train wreck outside of the church. But everybody in the church thought, well, he's a kind kid, and he's got his hair cut right, and he's all of this. We don't need a new set of rules.

What we need is a new life. Jesus offers new life. This world is temporary.

What we need is new life. We don't understand all the things that happen on this earth. We come to this new life that gives us hope, doesn't do it.

I am a fallen creature. I need transformation. I need a new nature.

That's what Jesus offers. The evidence of that is what James is pointing to, is that the evidence of that is works. The evidence is I'm going to do some things differently.

Things are going to change in my life, and that's individual for every one of us. There are common things. We're going to stop certain sins.

But then there's transformation that comes inside of our personal life that's individual, that God makes us because we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. The heading of this section in the book of James chapter 2 is Faith and Deeds. Listening friends, you might have a lot of great deeds, and that's wonderful if they're done because God is leading you to do them, but it's faith in Jesus Christ, what Jesus Christ did on the cross for you, and what he did on the cross for me.

He paid the penalty for our sins, and if you were tuned in on Tuesday or Wednesday for those editions of Mark & Friends, Evangelist Dave Kistler really talks about the importance of finding life in Jesus, in our Savior, the Savior of the world, and so it's through that relationship the outpouring will be that we'll want to do good deeds. We'll want to honor God. We'll want to honor Jesus, and that'll be part of that sanctification process that we grow through as we lean into Jesus and ask him for help and ask for the Spirit's leading each and every day.

So read the book of James. It's a fantastic book. I think you'll be fascinated by it.

You'll learn. You'll grow. There'll be healthy conviction which will draw you to God.

We're all in a row here. He's your youth pastor at Calvary? Young adult. Mark Collins.

Appreciate Mark Collins and a couple other new guests. One in from the Philippines. She's in the other room.

She'll be able to share this with her friends when she gets back to the Philippines. I think she's returning soon. That's Noreen, and then also Robert Fraser.

He's going to be a guest here at the studio. So we appreciate the friends. We packed them all into the room and we invite you to come join us sometimes.

You can call the station and find out more, but we'll continue through our book of James on Fridays in the coming weeks. We'll pick right up next week at James chapter 2, probably about verse 15. We got through one today.

So thanks for listening. Thanks for being a part and have a great day and night.

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