

Believing In God’s Salvation

Christian First Principles #5

**OPEN** (5-10 minutes)

Name a product or brand you find trustworthy, and explain why you trust it.

**DIG** (20-25 minutes) **Read John 8:24 & James 2:14-19**

1. In Exodus 3:14, God told Moses, *“say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'”* What point is Jesus trying to make by using that same “I am” language in John 8:24?

2. The demons know there is only one God, and they still choose to be His enemy. Have you known someone who willingly chose a path of destruction? What drove their decision?

3. Is James making the point that we have to earn our salvation through good deeds? If so, then how many good deeds are enough? If not, then what is our motive for doing good deeds?

4. Of all the good deeds Christians can do, why do James and Jesus (ref. Matt 25:31-46) emphasize helping people who are in need?

**REFLECT** (25-30 minutes)

1. Play the role of devil’s advocate by making your best possible case for why helping those in need isn’t such a good idea?

2. What are some of the valid points against helping those in need?

3. Since we live in a much more affluent society than James and Jesus, can we substitute some other godly deed in place of helping the needy and still accomplish the same goal?

4. If someone observed your activities this past week, would they say you are a “faith *without* deeds” kind of Christian, or a “faith *with* deeds” kind of Christian? Why?

5. If we can’t earn our way into heaven, then why is it so important for us to do good deeds?

6. Is it comforting or troubling to think that you can never *be* good enough or *do* enough good to earn your way into heaven?

7. Where is your faith strongest right now? In personal disciplines like prayer . . . Bible study . . . going to church? In outreach disciplines like witnessing to others . . . helping the needy?

8. Where is your faith being challenged right now?

9. A saving faith is described as both earnestly seeking God (Heb 11:6) and helping people in need (Jas 2:15). Is it correct to say that helping people in need *is* earnestly seeking God?

**PRAYER TIME** - Give thanks to God for His gift of salvation, and for giving us meaningful ways to express our gratitude. Ask God to challenge you to develop a deeper trust in Him.