What's the difference between a living faith and dead faith?

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26)

A living faith is a faith that is dynamic; a dead faith is impotent. A living faith is active; dead faith is dormant. A living faith is real; dead faith is counterfeit. Living faith is genuine; dead faith is insincere. A living faith is practical; dead faith is purely abstract.

Many people living today operate with a faith that should have been eulogized and given a decent burial years ago, because their faith is dead. My friend, do not be deceived! Don’t let the devil seduce you into settling for a cheap substitute for living, dynamic faith. From a cursory observation, you may find it difficult to distinguish between a corpse and a living person who sleeps. Your faith may give the hollow illusion of life, decorated with a few religious adornments, but if it doesn’t lead you to rely on God, serve God, and obey God it is dormant, deceptive, deadly, and even demonic. The Bible tells us that “even the demons believe and tremble” (James 2:19).

In the context of James 2, we learn that a living faith is distinguished from dead faith in the following ways: First, living faith is a serving faith. If we say we have faith, our words should be supported by practical acts of service (V.14-18). Second, living faith is a submissive faith. In the two examples of faith cited by James, he couldn’t not have chosen two more diverse individuals. The first was Abraham, a Jewish man who was a patriarch (V.21-23). The second was Rahab, a Gentile woman who was a prostitute (V.25). Though different in many ways, they shared a common denominator. They both demonstrated a living faith, a faith that led them to submit to the will of God no matter what the cost or consequences. Third, living faith is a saving faith. A workless faith is a worthless faith. “A man is justified by works, not by faith only” (V.24).

Some time ago I heard about a group of women who formed a hiking club called the “Walkie-talkies.” Listen: Real faith not only talks (V.15-18); real faith walks. And a walking faith is a working faith (V.24). In Galatians, Paul says that the faith that avails is a “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6). Therefore, when it comes to getting right and being right with God, your faith won’t work unless you do! Remember, the ultimate test of real faith, living faith, saving faith, is not in its profession, but in its practice!

Brother Ric