

# An Active Faith Necessary

by Billy Strachan

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*Billy Strachan emphasizes the critical need for an active faith that manifests through works, warning against the dangers of hypocrisy and spiritual complacency.*

**Duration:** 1:01:46

**Scripture:** James 2:15

**Topics:** "Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and applying the word of God in a practical and relatable way. He shares an anecdote about a group of students from a theological college who were eager to preach on television but failed to communicate effectively to the audience. The speaker highlights the need for faith to be backed up by actions and warns against hypocrisy. He also references the story of the prodigal son to illustrate the significance of God allowing us to make mistakes and learn from them.

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## Transcript

In James chapter 2, we are looking at section 2 in our notes, proving an active faith necessary. We've already looked at the fact in the introduction that this is one of the earliest letters written to a very young church comprising in the main of Jewish Christians. And even a way back then, it was necessary for one of the apostles to shout to the young church to keep their feet in the ground.

And in spite of the great knowledge that they have, that they are the first people in the whole of history to stand on the earth with the eternal God living in them through the Holy Spirit, making them the church, that that in itself does not qualify them to claim perfection or divinity or be mystical or super spiritual, but they should remember that this is equipping them for the first time in history to be normal people on the earth, on the way to heaven. And try always to keep that in mind, that when God first made man in his own image, there was Adam, a man in whom God lived, and he had his own particular personality that would never be duplicated in the life of any other. Eve had her particular personality that would never be duplicated in any other.

And the intention of God was that the relationship this man would have with him, a love relationship, would be such that God could keep on giving him all that he needed in power and in divine sources of power to keep him normal with that individual personality. And of course the sin of man was that he got converted to the idea of being a man in his own right without God's help. I can be a man, I can be me without God.

That's the nature of sin, independence. And right through the Old Testament to the coming of Christ and his work on the cross, men could never be normal. They didn't have what it took to be normal, and yet they were men that still had their own individual personalities.

Every man and woman that's ever been born has their own individual personality. And God wanted them like that, but under his control, that they've lived like that out of his control, which has made them warped in their personality. And the greatness of the cross is not only Christ dying for sin, the principle of independence, and forgiving you for the sins, all the rotten things that was done with that unique personality of yours because of your independence, but he rose again to come into your life to reinstate within you a divine source of dynamic power that would once again become operative in what you are, and always were intended to be as a unique individual human being on the earth.

And unfortunately Christians today, as the church did then, got the impression that the minute you become a Christian, then if you've got God in you, you must be divine. And they forgot to be human. And I had to remind you last night that Jesus Christ, who was divine, had to come into this earth and become God in the flesh.

God as a man, a normal man on the earth. In fact, he was the second normal man that ever hit the earth. We're told in 1 Corinthians 15 that the first man was Adam, and the second man was Jesus Christ.

All the rest have been subhuman. Welcome to the club. And if you've never yet conceded the fact that you're subhuman, it'll be the first step to health for your own mind, will, emotions, and personality that you can give yourself as a Christian, is to lay aside all the evangelical jargon, look straight in the mirror and say, I'm subhuman.

I am not that which God intended me to be. By birth, I'm a fallen creature, totally depraved, robbed of the right expression of my personality because I was out of the control of God. But now that I'm in God's control, I must now learn to be the kind of practical, down-to-earth, normal human being he wanted me to be on the earth before I step into his presence in eternity.

And so that's why we're dealing with this main section here, that it's necessary to prove faith, to be active. And we opened last night with a subsection A to the outline, the question in James 2.14. What profit is there, my brethren, though a man say he have faith and have not works? Can that kind of faith save anybody's soul? Now be in your right line, put down the example, the example. In chapter 2 verses 15 and 16, James, very practical as he is, immediately stops from going any further in his dialogue to give us an example of what he means, just so that we don't read between the lines and try to think he means something else.

And he says in verse 15, if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be warmed and filled, notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body, what profit is there in that? To see a man sitting in nakedness and starvation and say, God bless thee, brother, we shall pray for thee as you walk off munching your Mars bar. What profit is there? What value was there to your phrase, God bless you? If you haven't had this sense to stop and think that you may be the means with that Mars bar of being the blessing that you're asking God to give, what would your answer be to the question? It's nothing more or less than to be a Corinthian Christian, and I'm sure that you've already been through the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and I trust that you've met the import of what it means to be a Corinthian Christian. I've often tried to visualize the chief deacon opening that letter of Paul's in the assembly that morning.

Brothers, we've just had a letter. Have we? Yes, and I wanted to take a few moments out of our worship this morning just to read this letter that's come from brother Paul, and everybody says, oh yes, brother Paul, and one of the youngest would say, who's he? Oh, he started this church. He's gone on now.

He's moved to another place. What's he got to say, brother? Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God and sustenance, our brother. Oh, get on with it, brother.

We know he's written it. Has he anything of value to say? Well, he says unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, and a deep voice from the back of the assembly would say, amen. Now, I'm glad brother Paul is remembering that it's us in Corinth.

It's the church of God. It's not that group around the corner. It's us.

We are the ones. He's quite evangelical still, isn't he? To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and they look at each other and go, amen. Called to be saints, and they all start feeling for the wings.

They're almost but rising out of the pews. With all that in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, get on, brother. We've got all that. Paul isn't telling us anything new.

What is he writing about anyway? He hasn't shared anything new with us. We know all that already. I thank my God always on your behalf.

Well, a good job, too. You ought to be thankful for us. We are the stalwarts in Corinth.

We're the church of God. We're sanctified. We're saints.

For the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. Of course we've got grace. That in everything you are enriched by him.

We know that. The fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelleth in him, and he in us, and if he's in us, then we've gotten us the fullness of the Godhead bodily. What's new? We've got all that, and you're enriched in him in all utterance and in all knowledge.

You can say it all, and you know it all. Of course we do. Even as the testimony of Christ is confirmed in you.

Ah, we're waiting, Paul, to see if you'd remember to mention the Holy Spirit. It's not a message if you haven't. So that you come behind in no gift.

Good Paul. You remember the gifts? Yes, we're very charismatic here in Corinth. You name it, we've got it.

Stand up the healers. There's one, two, three, four. Stand up those that speak in tongues.

Look at, there they are, see. Let's have the interpreters. Oh yeah, there you are, yes.

Yes. Stand up the teachers. It can't be all of you, sit down.

Where's the evangelists? There they are. Let's count them. Oh yes, we've got everything in this book.

Paul, there isn't a gift that the Spirit gives to the church that we don't have here in Corinth. Paul, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, of course, that's all we are doing here in Corinth, waiting for him to come.

There's nothing else to get. We have it all. Yes, but you see, that's only nine verses of fifteen chapters.

If you read the other fourteen and a half, it only takes two more verses before the Apostle Paul is saying this. It has been declared unto me of you saints that are sanctified with all grace, all knowledge, all utterance, the testimony of the Spirit within you, waiting for him to come back again. By them which are of the house of clothes, not common gossip, they're not afraid to put their name to it, that there are contentions among you.

For all that the people that are pagan see round about Corinth is a big bunch of disagreeable people, factions, party meetings. Some of you won't even have communion with each other. One group in one corner shouting for Paul, the other for Apollos.

And I, brethren, couldn't speak unto you as unto spiritual. I couldn't speak unto you saints that are sanctified, that are the church of God, that have the grace of God, that are enriched in him in all utterance and in all knowledge and have the testimony of Christ and are just waiting for him coming. I couldn't speak to you saints as unto spiritual.

Yes, you can have your gifts, and you're not spiritual, but babes, a big bunch of babies with your gift of tongues, with your ability to teach, with your quality as an evangelist, with your right to testify, with your hymn of praise, your prayer of praise, your song in the spirit, and it's nothing but babyhood. I fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for you are yet carnal with your gift of tongue, carnal with your gift of teaching, carnal with your gift of evangelism, carnal with your grace, carnal with your sanctification, carnal with your waiting for him to return.

For whereas there is among you envying and strife and division, are ye not carnal and walk as fleshly men?

Is this the outcome of the indwelling fullness of Christ, that the obvious evidence of being indwelt by the dynamic of the Holy Ghost and the person of Christ within your life, is that you hate each other, cause party divisions, envy each other, quarrel, split the group down the middle, and dare I read it, it's commonly reported, it's the talk of the whole town, that there is fornication among you saints, that of the church of God and sanctified with all grace and all gifts and all utterance and all knowledge and the testimony of the Holy Spirit and waiting for Christ to come, and such fornication is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one of you saints should go home and have sex with his mother after the meeting, and you're puffed up, if you want that paraphrased, you're a big

bunch of blow bags, and have not rather mourned that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you, all that there is in Corinth is the stench of a bunch of people that talk, with no practical outworking of all that they claim to have by speech, their feet are not on the ground, you won't pick one evangelical fault in them, in the meeting, when you move into that body of people, their theology will be immaculate, but their behavior, rubbish, because it's nothing more or less than a facade and a performance of being Christian, and the thoughts that can go through a mind while partaking of the bread

and drinking of the wine, people would never believe it, oh yes, to turn and say God bless you brother in your need, God bless you brother in your poverty, God bless you brother,

I pray for thee day and night, and walk away leaving him starving and cold, to go back and hang up your coat and your wardrobe with all your clothes, is utter hypocrisy, and you know how much that kind of a Christian testimony profits, it equals nothing, that's the exam result of a talking faith, nothing, nothing, see in your outline the conclusion, verse 17 of James 2, even so faith if it hath not works, is dead, being alone, now if you compare this reference, even so faith, if it hath not works as dead being alone, with some of the great favorites, Romans 5 1, Romans 1 17, Romans 3 27 to 31, Ephesians 2 8 and 9, all the great nuggets, are not being saved by works but by grace, it's the gift of God, it's important to note this, that in all of these references, it's the same word being

used for faith, and the word implies steadfastness, uninterrupted, it's consistent, and it is to be evidenced by outward actions being observed, that's the meaning of faith, not a mental acceptance of fact, but a fact accepted by the mental side of your nature, that's immediately transmitted into action, that's faith, that's faith, and too often we assume there's a difference, to have faith means I believe it, but is a mental belief or a factual belief, an actual belief, where that what you believe mentally is transmitted into what you are experientially, there's a big difference, and it would stagger you the people that have nothing wrong in their intellect as far as the things of faith are concerned, but it's just never moved two feet further down to hit their heart and be put into

action, D in your outline, the first example against a talking faith, the first example against a talking faith, James 2 verse 18, yea a man may say, what do you say anything with, speech, the tongue, yea a man may say thou hast faith and I have works, show me thy faith without thy works and I will show thee my faith by my works, the Berkeley version puts it this way, you have faith, I have works, show me your faith without its practices and I'll show you my faith by its practices, you say you've got faith, okay, show me that faith without practice, show me it and I will show you my faith by practice, you see a man may say he has faith and fail to enter into the kingdom of God, now that's a frightening thing, a man may say he has faith and fail to enter the kingdom of God, just look at

Matthew chapter 23, Matthew 23 verse 1, then speak Jesus to the multitude and to his disciples saying, the scribes and the Pharisees, the two highest orders of religiosities in that day and age, sit in Moses seat, they occupy the throne of theological judgment over Israel, all therefore says the Lord Jesus, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, now what's Jesus Christ saying here to the common people about the scribes and the Pharisees that teach the word of God in that day and age, he says everything they ever preach to you, listen to it, believe it, do it because there's not one word wrong in anything they preach, it's all true and Jesus Christ was given credence to the preaching of that day and age that it was evangelical and it was the truth and that

people should listen to the preaching and do what they're told to do in the preaching, but then he went on to say this, but don't do you after the preacher's works, for they say and do not, for they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born and lay them on men's shoulders but they themselves will not move them with one of their little fingers, but all their works they do for to be seen of men, they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments and they love the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues and greetings in the markets and to be called of men rabbi rabbi but being you not ye called rabbi for one is your master even Christ and all your brethren and call no man your father upon the earth for one is your father which is in heaven

neither be called masters for one is your master even Christ but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased he that shall humble himself shall be exalted but woe unto you scribes and pharisees hypocrites preaching the truth and you're nothing but a hypocrite preaching the truth for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men for you neither go in yourselves neither suffer ye them that are entering to go into you woe unto you scribes and pharisees hypocrites for you devour widows houses and for a pretense make long prayer therefore you shall receive greater damnation woe unto you scribes and pharisees hypocrites for you compass the land to make one proselyte one convert and when he is made you make him twofold more the child of

hell than yourself more unto you blind guides hypocrites hypocrite hypocrite hypocrite what was a hypocrite an actor the first hypocrites were actors the Greeks had their teams of hypocrites and they went around holding a face in front of the real face on stage to portray the part of the character that they were presenting and they were hypocrites and Jesus Christ said to these men that preached truth you're nothing but a bunch of actors and it's just performance long prayers i remember one student coming to see me and he said uh he had a problem i said i was glad to be of assistance to him and when he revealed his problem and had dried his tears i said are you ready to repent and to work at becoming rehabilitated to being a normal person well aren't you going to throw me out for having a

problem like this no we're here to help and since you've been honest and open enough to finally come out from behind your hypocrite your actor's face and share with me here just what you are i enjoy meeting people just as they are therefore it's the beginning for you and we'll begin now if you're ready to begin i'm ready to begin and this is the place where sinners can be rehabilitated to normal manhood and womanhood it's not a school for turnips and cabbages it's for people sinners that are redeemed and are in the process of being rehabilitated back to that normal person god had in mind on their way to eternity are you ready to begin he said yes i'm ready to begin i said how much are you prepared to do not to say but to do to become a normal person he said i'll do anything to get back to

normality i said anything he said anything i said good i want you to be the last person to pray in future in the student prayer meeting and not the first he looked at me and he said what i said i want you to be the last person every morning to pray or not pray at all that is more preferable for the present than to be the first to pray in the prayer meeting in the morning he says you're going to tell me it's wrong to pray i says your kind of prayer it is i said because you haven't pulled the wool over my eyes one bit and i've listened to you every morning and i'm no sooner say let's turn to prayer than you are on your feet and it was superb it was poetical it was even in verse and it was so super the prayers of this fellow were so super that students wove their way up there for elevens

he's saying why can't i pray like him oh wouldn't it be wonderful to be as deep and as holy as that person i said and i knew all along it was the biggest facade that you could build up to detract our attention from what you really were at heart and it was hypocrisy if i can't overcome i must make sure i'm so super spiritual in the outside they'll never see what i'm suppressing and what i'm holding in and i said and god opposes you god opposes you if you read the new testament young people you will see that jesus christ brought a message of hope to the weakened spirit and this matthew 23 was about the only chapter of absolute judgment and denunciation and a message that jesus ever preached and who did he preach it to people that knew the truth and preached it but never did people that said

everything right but were not going into the kingdom but on the other hand you might find a man that never says anything and he does get into the kingdom now try to keep this in balance and keep your feet in the

ground because you see we're such beggars prone to extreme that there will be some of you sitting here right now saying that's it from now on i'm saying nothing got the message from now on it's true it's right i i have to sit here tonight saying you're right i've been holding a face in front of me since my conversion i've been saying everything that's true and i know perfectly well my heart what nobody else knows and that is that down underneath it's nothing but a pig bin and therefore i'm going to say nothing from now on that is just as big an error you see you get the people

that say you gotta tell everybody about jesus get out and give your message you know the truth share it go go go and you're like the road runner and there are those that step back in christianity and look at these people that run havoc through the crowd shouting the truth and they look at the life they're living and they say oh boy what an advert for christianity we can see a mile away that what they say isn't what they are so i'll be different i'm going to let them see what i am and i shall not say a thing and you're just as big a mystery you're just as big a mystery because they look at you and if you're concentrating on living the life without expressing it in word you commit the same error because they'll see and know that you have equality that they do not have but the thing is they

never get to know what it is you have because you never tell them and that's just as big a lie to shut up to do all the speaking try to realize that an active faith is a balanced walk and talk through your life in the experience that's yours and that you have to learn to live speak and move within the scope of your experience and one of the reasons some of your experiences aren't yet deep is that they've never yet been given the chance to develop because for too long you've been squeezed into the protective cradle of babyhood and you see to be living in the confines of a fellowship just giving your testimony to each other and standing up saying i'm saved sanctified and the lord keeps me through all my problems if you've never had any problems it's just a load of rubbish and that's why

some of you have yet to go through hot water your tea bags all right but you haven't been in the hot water you know your tea bags you know what you've got inside that you haven't yet been in the hot water but don't worry about it the pot is boiling they're about to be dipped at any time i'll give one or two you just a month out of school or some of you even before the school's finished and you're really going to blow up you get yourself in a mess but don't worry about it because it's the greatest thing that's ever going to happen to you because this young man at corn that had sex with his mother never knew what repentance was until after he'd done it yes but are you trying to tell me now that we should go out and look for opportunities to sing are you so that i can develop my experience

no don't go out and look for them they're coming anyway you won't have to look for them they're coming anyway and god's the only one that's prepared to let you go i've often asked people what is the most important verse in the story of the prodigal son and they've said oh oh the father viewing from a far distance waiting to welcome the wayward son home to fall on his neck and kiss him put shoes on his feet a robe on his body rings on his fingers and kill the fatted calf and forgive him i've said rubbish it was the first verse they let him go when that fella came into his father's tent and said dad may i speak with you please full of manners and finesse and father looked at him said yes my son dad i've just been thinking you're pretty wealthy aren't you yes son your dad's worked hard and

we've built up the farm and we've got a great business going here your dad is wealthy yeah i was just sort of asking myself the other day there and what are you going to do with it all well my boy when i leave this earth i'm leaving it to you and your brother it's very kind of you dad the only thing is you're pretty healthy at the moment and if you go on the way you're going with your health i might be as old as you are now before

i ever snuff the stuff and i was wondering if you wouldn't mind giving me my cut now i promised dad to look after it and invest it properly and that father sat there and looked his son right in the eye and although sons wouldn't give fathers the credit for knowing anything he looked straight through him and he said in his heart son i know exactly what you're

going to do the minute you get out that door with the money in your hand you're going to blow it all you're gonna flee from me in the face of your promises you're going to hit the nearest den of iniquity the nearest vanity fair you're going to immerse yourself in every conceivable sin that you know that you wouldn't get away with here at home and you're going to get to the place where you have no money left no friends left and you're living a pig pain and you'll even eat the pigs will but boy i can see you that day sitting down in that muck and you know the last thing you're going to do is you're going to come to you yourself at last you'll meet you and as soon as you meet you and know what you are you'll come home but when you come home i'll be waiting for you because you see my love's a

perfect love my love's going to know the worst about you in fact to know it before you do it you're going to do it and i'll welcome you home because you'll come home to stay and if that's going to be the result of letting you go i'll write your check right now and he handed his son the money and his son said thank you father went outside the tent door and said yahoo silly old coot and he hightailed it for the nearest town and had everything he ever wanted but he came home in a mess to a father that says i accept messes i accept pig bins i accept the dregs because that's why jesus died for you some of you don't know why jesus died for you yet you've accepted him but you don't know why he died for you yet because you've never met you yet you haven't conceived in your little minds half of

what you're capable of doing yet but it's coming you see this is the this is the place where the similarity of earthly parents in christian families disagrees with god's dealings with his people in christian families mum and dad absolutely hedge in the children keep them away from sin out there is sin keep them in the activities of the church keep them in the activities of the family never let them out of your sight keep them hemmed in and you'll keep them away from sin and it's untheological sin isn't out there it's in here it's in you it's in me and i'm never shocked to find the christian parent that cries their eyes out because johnny went to college and blew the lot in his first day left our christian home and went straight to grass spent his first turn not knowing whether he was in

college or out of it he was in pot land with his wine women's song i don't know where he learned it we did our best to keep him from it but they have to discover the depraved and god lets them oh yes you have a father who knows and you see you have to remember that the christian life is one of growing up but unfortunately we don't allow our experience in knowledge to keep level with the experience of what we are that's why we become imbalanced we put in the bible knowledge 15 years ahead of our life that's 15 years behind that's why you have to let it be words and words words and words knowing you have a father that does understand the mess you're in but as you let the words and works go from day to day you will progress into normality and a man can say nothing and get into the kingdom

and when i mean say nothing i mean it's possible for a person to have a right relationship to god but not have the evangelical language to express it not because he doesn't know it you know or is suppressing us because it's never reached him did you ever stop to think that every one of your men of god in the book of the pentateuch from genesis chapter one straight through to mooses writing about the whole thing that all of these people had a living faith abraham we're going to be looking at him you regard him as the man of faith of the old testament a man like abraham jacob isaac joe and joseph these were all great men of faith

and they'd no bible moses wrote the pentateuch long after all of these men had died off the earth they couldn't come up in the morning and say praise the lord

brother they couldn't say hallelujah they couldn't say let's give our testimony they couldn't say anything like that there's no theology none but the new god and paul tells us in romans that what might be known of him can be seen clearly in creation you go back to genesis 5 just for a minute and look at a character there verse 21 and enoch lived 65 years and he became methuselah when he was 65 his wife brought forth his firstborn son methuselah you see what it says next and enoch walked with god when after he begot methuselah 300 years begat sons and daughters when did enoch begin to walk with god after the birth of his son was that what spoke to him he never walked with god with god before that and who was it to know that perhaps just even holding that little baby in his hands and

looking at this wrinkled prune and seeing their head arms feet eyes ears nose alive and where did it come from a speck of dirt there has to be a designer there has to be an intelligence behind this he had no name he had no bible he just looked at life and knew that he wasn't responsible that there had to be somebody somewhere or in the words of the up-to-date songwriter there's somebody somewhere bigger than you and i and what does it say enoch walked with god he said well if there is he must be watching i ought to live a life as befitting a person of that quality watching me daily and what was the result and all the days of enoch were 360 and five years and enoch walked with god and he was not for god took him there was just one day when suddenly he was in eternity because god took him

why did god take him look in hebrews hebrews 11 verse 5 by faith enoch was translated that he should not see physical death and was not found because god had translated him for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased god who did he please men no god but without faith it's impossible to please him for he that cometh to god must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him how did enoch walk how did he live to please god by faith faith in what biblical knowledge no he didn't possess biblical knowledge he had no quiet time every morning to read some verses of the word he hadn't had a church pastor's talk on the qt and prayer and the tristing place to maintain the spiritual glow he didn't have any of that what did he have he had a

relationship to an invisible god that he didn't know by words he just knew he was there and he lived a life of faith and unable to express it how you say but yes but billy come on it must have been much easier for a man like enoch genesis 5 i mean sin in genesis 5 i mean that was when things hadn't even warmed up to this kind of conditions we're in today they were more pure then jude verse 14 and enoch also the seventh from adam prophesied of these saying behold the lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment on all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him enoch the seventh from adam under the inspiration of a god that he knew

was there somewhere was able to say in his day and age to the ungodly people that were committing ungodly deeds before god in their ungodly sinful state you're going to be judged for that and he lived in a day when it was as permissive as the day you're living in but he was very limited in the evangelical vocabulary that he could use to reach the people and he in his day could prove to them that he was a man of difference on the basis of walking without talking and it's important to remember that it's not doctrine that declares the truth of christ it's doctrine practiced it's doctrine practiced that's why you find that when it comes to expressing the things of faith in the mass media we're at a loss to get people that are evangelical into the system i remember once talking to the floor

director of one of the bbc stations some years ago and uh asking if he believed some of the liberal rubbish that was put over on the religious programs he said no don't believe it i said well why do you permit it she said because the liberals can say it they can communicate it it makes sense and uh it's entertaining people don't want to switch off find me a christian that can do the same and i'll let them on and i thought i would jump in then and say well of course i know where there's christians with even reach of this station that would probably be able to come and give a good word i said you just have such and such a college up the road from the studio i said oh we've been there we had a team down said we got them on the platform in front of the cameras he said i could tell i could

tell from the control room what was going on back in the college all the students were in the tv lounge watching their group on telly for god and the kids in the studio knew perfectly well that that lounge was packed and that they were on view and so they were sitting on their chair and as the questioner started to talk you could see they were just itching to get a real evangelical word out on the mass media to the whole of britain same oh boy you know and you could he said you can almost see the students back in the lines go we did it they got a word like saved in either that the same redeemed oh boy we get a word you know we got the word over see see we could never have them back again as a matter of fact we've now prepared a sheet here of all the words they can't use if the company

talk about their faith and i looked down the list and some of them couldn't the to every expression you would want to use in your testimony away and of course they came out saying they were just binding us they weren't they were just asking you to communicate it in a fashion that would be intelligible to the unintelligent and to those that don't have the spirit of god and uh that's where we lose out and all we do is talk the theology and so you take students to a meeting which i never do now if i want kids to give testimony i'll go to angela and get some from the warehouse just converted they don't know the bible all they can do is tell you what jesus done for them i always leave the ones that know the bible they come and forget what jesus done for them and talk the theology or last

week's lecture and you don't get a testimony i remember taking some to a meeting with hippies and turn up fellows they came into this coffee bar at birmingham on their motorbikes right into the coffee bar boom boom boom you know and the student's up and says have you left egypt yet i started to pray and so the guy shouts from the back call me i've never been out of birmingham in their life and so of course the christian student took it as persecution they says oh listen my brother he says i'm not your brother friend i'm not your friend either well listen oh oh how we pray and long that you would be in canaan he says i don't want to go i says but just think you could taste of the oil the corn the wine the figs the pomegranates the melons the honey and somebody says oh we're getting a fruit

market report now and i tugged him by the shirt tail and i said and i asked the rest of the students to leave the platform and i got up and i said to the ever heard in your life and they sat and they looked at me as much as well if he's the preacher i'm surprised he's agreeing with that with us we thought we'd have been on their side and i said of course it only shows you where you are because the bible says there's the rubbish of preaching that saves a man and if what you've just heard sounds like rubbish to you it just shows you're not a christian now let me tell you what a christian is and now that way i managed to rescue the meeting and i never spoke all the way from birmingham to cape henry and it was the last time i took anybody with me what did we get they would have passed an exam

in a theological college for using the right terms spiritual language evangelical jargon but it was just a load of rubbish because it was not understandable to the people that didn't have the spirit of god it was just

words and all it needed was for somebody to chit-chat them back on the basis of the words they spoke and they lost their temper in front of the audience and all the audience did was sit back and say well what you're saying if it's holy all it's produced in you is a bad temper not interested and so you see there we have in those few verses just a typical example that james is throwing onto the scene to show us it's not enough to run around saying you have faith because a man might say and be like one of the hypocrites that christ condemned on your way to hell it's what you

say backed up by what you are now just let me say this in closing you'll find in these early hours and james the word is going to be quite destructive to you personally now that's almost but necessary for god to do and all that god will want is as you go along and see the picture and see that it fits you to just before you turn in just tell him you're right because if you're going to be honest enough to apply the picture to yourself that in itself will be remedial to your experience because it means that each time you come back to look in james you'll know that james is going to be taking you forward through the word to a place of reality now i just say that word because at the beginning it will sound so terribly negative so destroying and as if it's just emptying you out all over the

place i know because that's what it does to me every year it just rips me wide apart and shows me me all over again and always remember that i am two people to you you know me for what i am few of you know me for who i am i'm billy strachan what i am is a teacher but i'm just like you a person and believe me it's not easy to get up year after year and look in the mirror to remind myself of my own depravity but i have to and it's good for me so don't be devastated unnecessarily don't give up hope don't think that all that james is going to do through his word and by the spirit in these days is just witty to bits and through you in the dustbin all he's asking you to do is to go to the mirror and if you're prepared to look at it and say okay it's right then god says good now we can build you

up to reality and practicality let's pray father give us the grace and encouragement of your spirit within to be as ruthless with ourselves as is necessary keeping in mind our one goal that through these days we may come to the place of walking in reality that will convince others that what we say is what we are and that what we are confirms what we say and for thy name's sake amen

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