

Rick Warren: The Difference Between Real Faith and Fake Faith

If 2020 has taught us anything about faith, it's that fake faith isn't enough.

Our culture is literally overrun with fake products. You can get fake versions of just about everything at a cheaper price than the originals. I fly through many international airports, and in many countries, you can buy a fake \$15,000 watch in airports for \$100. It looks and functions just like the real one.

Most of the time, getting a fake version of something isn't a big problem. You may be able to get by with a fake watch, but you can't survive spiritually with a fake faith. Fake faith won't give you security in the midst of a global pandemic. Fake faith won't help you survive an economic catastrophe. Fake faith can't heal generations of broken cross-cultural relationships either.

James tells us fake faith is "dead." In times of trial, this dead faith won't help our churches. That is why there has never been a better time for us to help the people in our congregations develop real faith.

What does real faith look like?

Real faith is more than just words.

Jesus says faith is about what you do, not just what you say. "'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Talk is cheap. I could claim to be the greatest dancer in the world, but you'd quickly figure out the truth when I started to dance. The same is true for your faith. You can use all the right words, but if your actions don't line up with those words, it will quickly become obvious.

Real faith is more than just emotions.

You might really care about people. You might want to help them. But it's your actions, not your feelings, that demonstrate faith.

The Bible says in James 2:15-17: "If a brother or sister is naked and lacking daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' and yet you give them nothing that the body needs, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." James is clear: If you go up to someone in need and simply share a platitude, you are demonstrating a fake faith.

Real faith is more than an idea to debate.

For some people, their faith is an intellectual game. It's a theology to be studied and a doctrine to be debated. They'll talk all day about God without letting Him impact their lives. You can't see faith, but you can see its impact. If you don't see the impact of their theological concepts, their faith means little.

Someone as big as God can't come into your life without him altogether changing it. If you grab a 220-volt wire of electricity, you would know it instantly. The same is true for your relationship with God. It will change your life, not just your intellectual commitments.

Real faith is more than just a truth you believe.

Your congregation can be 100% right on everything it believes yet be light years away from biblical faith. James gives us a

great example of this: “You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless?” (James 2:19-20, NLT).

Good doctrine puts you in the company of demons. Just because the people in your congregation believe the right things about God doesn’t mean they have a meaningful faith that will last through tough times.

So what is real faith?

Real faith is more than what we say, feel, debate or believe.

Real faith is what we *do*. Teaching your congregation biblical facts without giving people the tools to apply what they’re learning isn’t just bad practically. It’s dangerous. It leads to pride and God’s judgment.

Our communities are crying out right now to see the kind of action-orientated faith that comes from teaching people to live out what the Bible says. Let’s help the people in our churches develop and demonstrate a faith like that. {eoa}

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