

James 2:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Analysis

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. As the body without the spirit (pneumatōs, πνεύματος) is dead, so faith without works is dead. The analogy underscores inseparability: spirit animates body; works animate faith. Without action, faith is a corpse.

Reformed spirituality insists on union of doctrine and life. James concludes the section with vivid imagery, sealing the argument that living faith necessarily acts.

Historical Context

This proverb-like statement would resonate with Jewish wisdom tradition. Diaspora believers witnessing martyrdoms understood death imagery; James urges them not to settle for lifeless orthodoxy while persecution demands vibrant obedience.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What would it look like if your faith lost its 'breath'?
2. How can you keep faith and action inseparable in daily life?
3. Who can help you monitor whether your faith remains alive?

Interlinear Text

ὥσπερ	γὰρ	τὸ	σῶμα	χωρὶς	πνεύματος	νεκρά	ἐστιν	
as	For	G3588	the body	without	the spirit	dead	is	
G5618	G1063		G4983	G5565	G4151	G3498	G2076	
οὕτως	καὶ	ἡ	πίστις	χωρὶς	τῶν	ἔργων	νεκρά	ἐστιν
so	also	G3588	faith	without	G3588	works	dead	is
G3779	G2532		G4102	G5565		G2041	G3498	G2076

Additional Cross-References

James 2:20 (Faith): But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

James 2:17 (Faith): Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

James 2:14 (Faith): What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (Spirit): Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Psalms 104:29 (Parallel theme): Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.