

CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

Living The Way

James 2:14-18 (ESV)

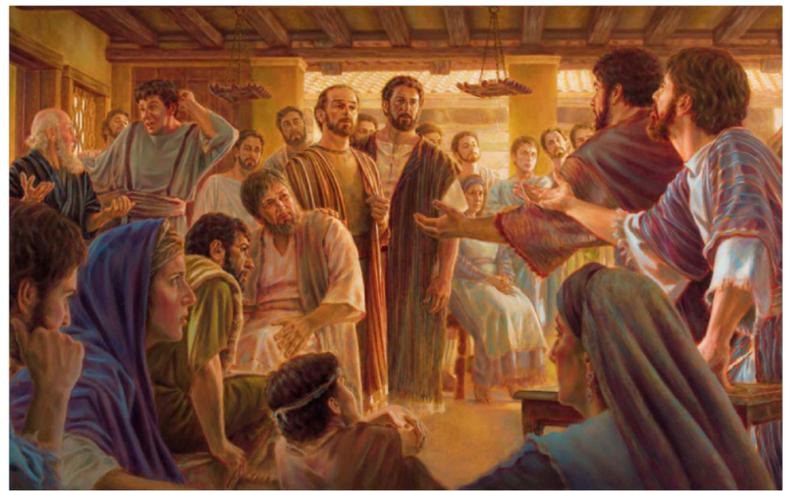
What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled, without given them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

So also by faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Suppose someone disagrees and says, "it is possible to have faith without doing kind deeds."

I would answer, "prove that you have faith without doing kind deeds, and I will prove that I have faith by doing them."

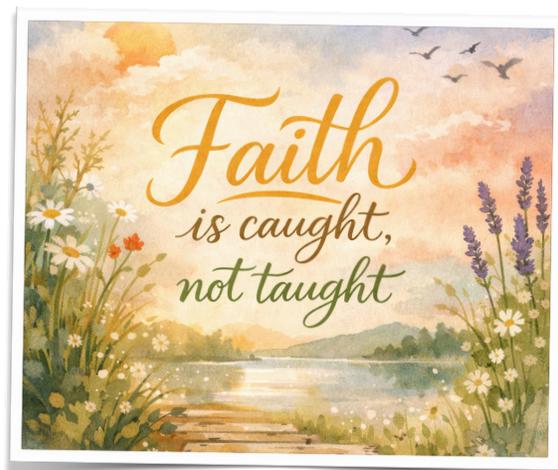


Followers of The Way

In this our final week of this study, we are turning towards living the life of a believer where every day is punctuated by our faith, not just Sundays.

We explore what it truly means to "live the way" - to embody faith in every corner of our lives, not just in our gathering, prayers, or classes. Living the Way isn't a program or a ritual, it's a daily rhythm, a lifestyle, a commitment to allow faith to shape how we interact, care and show up in the world around us.

In the first generations



of the early church, long before the word “Christian” was used regularly, the followers of Jesus were collectively known as Followers of The Way, because Jesus was “The Way”. The term was used for several centuries until it fell out of vogue in the early Middle Ages, as the term Christian fully took hold. In the 20th century, some communities have started using it again to denote their faith as a way they lived their lives, rather than a title that was beginning to take on problematic meanings.

Living the Way in Real Time

Living The Way today means more than belief or ritual, it’s about how faith flows into everyday life. It shows up in how we care for neighbours, mentor someone younger, welcome a stranger, or simply maintain a daily rhythm of prayer and reflection. It’s visible in ordinary actions that carry extraordinary meaning, in the moment between meetings, meals, or forms of worship. The earliest followers of The Way embodied their faith by sharing meals, teaching one another, and tending to the needs of their communities. Today we are called to do the same - not by imitating the past exactly, but by finding ways to make our faith real, present, and relational in the context of our neighbourhoods, workplaces, and homes.

Communal Living

Communal living has a long history, both before and after the entrance of Christianity. Pre-Christian examples include certain Hebrew sects that shared property and resources, and Philosophical schools in the Greco-Roman world, like Stoics or Pythagoreans, emphasized shared study, daily routines, and mutual accountability. Later movements included monastic communities in the Middle Ages, carrying forward similar principles of shared work, prayer, and care.



Living Faith in Community

The following resources and examples show faith lived beyond walls, from structured spiritual rhythms to intentional living communities and children’s homes. Each includes links so participants can explore further.

Community Organization with Shared Living or Communal Living

Catholic Worker Movement	Houses of hospitality; shared meals and communal living. Focuses on care for the poor, prayer, and service.	catholicworker.org
Taizé Community (France)	Ecumenical monastic community with prayer, music, and reconciliation. Welcomes visitors globally.	taize.fr
L'Arche Communities	People with and without intellectual disabilities live together, practicing inclusivity, shared care, and daily rhythms.	en.wikipedia.org
Simple Way (Philadelphia)	Neighborhood-centered, justice-focused urban community emphasizing hospitality, shared meals, and relational engagement.	thesimpleway.org
Focolare Movement	Global, lay-based, and ecumenical; encourages daily shared rhythms of prayer, unity, and relational presence.	focolare.us
Beguine Communities / Low Countries	Historical women-led communal houses focused on prayer, charity, and independent spiritual life. Modern adaptations exist informally.	en.wikipedia.org

Third and Fourth Orders of Monastic Rules designed for those who have not taken vows of poverty or celibacy

Rule of St. Clare	Written by St. Clare for the <i>Poor Clares</i> , emphasizing radical poverty, prayer, and communal care. Women can follow these rhythms in lay life through Third/Fourth Orders.	porziuncolaproject.com
Third Order of St. Francis (Secular Franciscans)	Lay men and women adopt Franciscan values—prayer, service, and simplicity—while living at home, working, or in school.	en.wikipedia.org
Third Order of St. Dominic	Lay members follow Dominican spiritual rhythms in their daily life without living in a monastery.	en.wikipedia.org
Benedictine Oblates	Laypeople adopt Benedictine rhythms of prayer, work, and service while remaining in the world.	uscatholic.org
Order of Julian of Norwich (Modern)	Inspired by the 14th-century mystic, lay and monastic members follow contemplative rhythms in everyday life.	orderofjulian.org

Organizations that provide forms of communal living with children

Christian City – The Children’s Village	Family-style cottages where children from difficult backgrounds live with trained house parents. Emphasizes safety, education, and Christian values.	christiancity.org
Christian Care Center – Together at Home	Provides safe, nurturing residential care for at-risk children, with spiritual support, counseling, and daily rhythms.	christiancarecenter.org
Christian Home for Children (Cherokee, TX)	Offers cottage living, Bible teaching, and community for children who need care outside their families.	chc4kids.org
Kurn Hattin Homes for Children	Historic Christian residential school/home providing shelter, education, and community from childhood through adolescence.	en.wikipedia.org
Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH)	Network of homes in Latin America offering children orphaned or abandoned a family-style living community with schooling, healthcare, and lifelong support.	en.wikipedia.org
Casa Viva	Places children into safe, caring families via church networks, emphasizing family-based care over orphanages.	en.wikipedia.org
Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO)	Global alliance supporting foster care, adoption, and community-based child care through hundreds of Christian organizations.	cafo.org



Works Righteousness

Our reading in James reminds us that faith without action is dead. If we say we believe but do nothing to help those in need, our faith is incomplete - not because our actions earn God's love, but because real faith naturally produces works. During the Reformation, leaders like Martin Luther noticed that many Christians were being taught that salvation depended on performing enough good deeds, indulgences, or religious rituals. This approach, often called Works Righteousness, risks turning faith into a checklist rather than a living relationship with God. Protestants emphasized that salvation is a gift of grace, received through faith, and that our actions are the natural fruit of that faith - not the currency that earns it. Helping others, sharing a meal, mentoring or praying are all expressions of a living, active faith. Faith without action is like a tree without fruit: it exists but isn't not fully alive. True faith flows from the heart outward, showing itself in everyday acts of love and care.

Living the Way in Your World

Faith doesn't stop at the door of the church, the classroom, or the meal table. "The Way" continues every day in small choices we make and the ways we show care, presence, and generosity. These are some ideas and things to focus on as you discover your own life is a living expression of faith - accessible, relational, and ongoing.

1. Spot the church around you

- Your neighbourhood, workplace, or home can be your "church"
- Look for opportunities to practice kindness, hospitality, and service. Small gestures matter: A shared meal, listening to someone's story, helping a neighbour

2. Try one new rhythm

- Pick one daily or weekly practice from the Rules, Orders or communities we explored
- Even short, consistent rhythms build a lifestyle of living faith

3. Connect with a community

- You don't have to create something new, you can step into what is already happening like Taizé or L'Arche
- Join a Third/Fourth Order locally or online
- Volunteer or engage with children's homes or neighbourhood-based Christian initiatives

4. Share your story

- Faith grows when it is shared. Reflect and teach others, a conversation, a small story, or even writing a note to someone about your experience living "The Way" in daily life

5. Reflect and Journal

- End each week with a short reflection: What did I notice about my faith in action? How did small choices impact the people around me? What rhythms or practices felt sustainable and life-giving?

This week consider:

Faith and life are intertwined in a cycle: the more we practice living faithfully, the more faith we discover within ourselves. Church without walls doesn't mean abandoning structure or ritual - it means allowing our daily lives to become the space where faith is lived and witnessed. Some days that looks like tradition rhythms: prayer, study, shared meals. Other days it might be creating your own practices that fit your context: walking with awareness, serving a neighbour, telling a story, or listening deeply.

Every choice every small act of care, feeds the next. The rhythms we create, the communities we nurture, the stores we share, they shape our hearts and the world around us. Faith grows not because it is enforced, but because it is embodied. Living The Way is less about what we do inside a building and more about how our lives become a continuing practice of love, presence, and connection - a faith that spirals outward, indigent others to participate simply by watching listening, and joining in.

**FAITH IS NOT FINISHED WHEN THE MEAL ENDS,
WHEN THE PRAYER IS SPOKEN, OR WHEN THE
CLASSROOM IS EMPTY. IT CONTINUES IN HOW WE
LIVE AND LOVE EACH DAY.**



Beguinaiges

Brugge, Belgium in spring.

In these streets and courtyards, women once lived as Beguines and men as Beghards. Cultivating a life of devotion, service, and shared rhythms without the walls of a convent. Every home, every meal, every quiet act of care contributed to a community rooted in faith and presence. This primarily woman's lay community spread across many countries in northern Europe, and their buildings are still used today as residences and guest homes.

This is the Church Without Walls in action: ongoing, relational, and embodied in everyday life. Just as the Beguines lives and spaces shaped the cities of the past, so too can ordinary rhythms, hospitality, and care shape our own neighbourhoods and communities today.

