









**Leader:** *Whether or not you use the Go Deeper portions in the lesson, you should read Romans 4 for yourself, so you're clear on these points. Here's a possible sum-up.*

*In Romans 4, the apostle Paul uses the exact same verse from Genesis to make what seems to be the opposite point, that Abraham was considered righteous because of his faith, not his works. This has led many people to assume that James and Paul were in sharp disagreement on this matter. But what was Paul talking about, and what is James saying here?*

*Paul makes the point that, when Abraham was "considered righteous" in Genesis 15, the Jewish law had not yet been given, nor was the ritual of circumcision observed yet. So this code of conduct and ritual that would later define righteousness for the Jews—it didn't exist yet. There was only his faith.*

*But what kind of faith was it? That's what James wants to know. Was it just believing that God existed? No, it also involved acting on that belief. It was faith with works. But James isn't talking about following rituals or keeping the law. He's talking about letting your faith propel you to feed the hungry. Faith brings you into a relationship with God—He becomes your "friend" (see James 2:23)—and so you do the things that express your love for God.*

**Do you think it's significant that the faith of Genesis 15 came several chapters before the works of Genesis 22? Does faith generally come first?**

Take a look at verse 25. **Why would James go on to talk about Rahab?**

**What do you know about Rahab? What was her occupation?**

**How did she get herself mentioned in the Bible?**

*Background:* Rahab was a prostitute in the Canaanite city of Jericho. She sheltered the Israelite spies and aided in the conquest of the city. In the process, she expressed faith in the God of Israel.







