

“Faith and Works”

Greg Wendschlag January 12, 2020

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. ²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” James 2:14-26

The Controversy over Faith and Works

- Paul: Teaching against those who demanded **works** to be saved.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Eph. 2:8-9

- James: Teaching against those who reduced salvation to an **intellectual** pursuit alone.
- Paul and James both teach faith and works are **inseparable**.

There are Two Kinds of works – Gal. 5:19-22

- Works of the **flesh** – deeds according to your sinful nature
- Works of the **Spirit** – deeds according to the Spirit of God

The relationship between Faith and Works

1. If you’re a Christian there ought to be **behavior** that expresses your faith.

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?..... In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

2. Faith cannot merely be **intellectual** or emotional.

“But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”

3. Those recognized for having great faith were so recognized by **what they did**.

“You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?”

- Abraham – Genesis 22
- Rahab – Joshua 2; 6:17

“You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.”

4. Deeds are the **natural fruit** of Jesus in your life.

“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”

Faith is a conviction of the inner man that can only be seen as authentic when it influences the outward actions of the one who possesses it.