

Faith and Works



Real Faith — Real Works

What does James mean by ‘faith’ and ‘works?’ When we know the answer to this question—we will know God’s will for spreading the Gospel.

A. Faith and My Mouth *James 2:14-17*

This is the person who is TALKING about their faith—but they have NO works. Faith of the MOUTH alone is DEAD!
Mat 7:21-23; 1 Joh 3:17-18

1. **What does James mean by WORKS?**

There are two kinds of ‘work’ in scripture

a. Work of the flesh *Gal 5:19-21*

b. Work [fruit] of the Spirit *Gal 5:22-23*

So...when James says, “Faith without works is dead” he does not mean ‘works of the flesh.’

B. Faith and My Mind *James 2:18-20*

Demons believe, and yet are not saved.

Faith of the MIND alone is DEAD!

- Demons believe in the deity of Jesus. *Mark 3:11*
- Demons believe an eternal punishment for sin is coming.
Luke 8:31 Matt 8:29
- Demons know that Jesus is the Holy One of God.
Mark 1:23-24
- Demons believe that Jesus is fully man. *Luke 4:33-34*
- Demons knew Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. *Luke 4:41*
- Demons believe in submission to Jesus, Son of the Most High. *Luke 8:27-28*
- Demons teach a doctrine to counter the true gospel.
I Timothy 4:1
- Demons can distort the truth about Jesus, like “The Da Vinci Code.” *I John 4:2-3*
- Demons know who has true saving faith. *Revelation 9:4*
- Demons can know the future. *Acts 16:16*
- Demons know the gospel and can blind us from knowing it.
II Corinthians 4:4

C. Faith and My Works *James 2:21-26*

“It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.” John Calvin

1. Two illustrations of works that reflect faith!
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Rahab
2. A final test! *James 2:26*
 - a. A body without the spirit
It’s time to take your pulse!
2 Cor 13:5-8

Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26

:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

:15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

:16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? *Jam 2:22* Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And he was called the friend of God.

:24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

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

Going Deeper

Faith and Works (James 2:14-26)

These verses are perhaps the most controversial in James' Letter. Luther thought he saw an irreconcilable conflict between James' teaching on justification by works and Paul's insistence on justification by faith. These verses are commonly misused to support the heresy that we are saved by faith plus works, called "synergism." In other words, we must trust the Lord Jesus as our Savior, but that is not enough. We must also add to His redemptive work our own deeds of charity and devotion.

The section might actually be entitled "Justification by Works," because there is a sense in which we *are* justified by works. In fact, in order to grasp the full truth of justification, we should clearly understand that there are six aspects of justification.

- (1) We are justified by *grace* ([Rom 3:24](#)). This simply means that we do not deserve to be justified; in fact, we deserve the very opposite.
- (2) We are justified by *faith* ([Rom 5:1](#)). Faith is the human response to God's grace. By faith, we accept the free gift. Faith is that which appropriates what God has done for us.
- (3) We are justified by *blood* ([Rom 5:9](#)). Here blood is the price which had to be paid in order to procure our justification. The debt of sin was met by the precious blood of Christ, and now God can justify ungodly sinners because a righteous satisfaction has been made.
- (4) We are justified by *God* ([Rom 8:33](#)). The truth here is that God is the Person who justifies.
- (5) We are justified by *power* ([Rom 4:25](#)). Our justification is linked to the power that raised Christ from the dead. His resurrection proves that God is satisfied.
- (6) And we are justified by *works* ([Jam 2:24](#)). Works are the outward proof of the reality of our faith. They give outward expression to what would otherwise be invisible.

From this we see that the person is justified by grace, by faith, by blood, by God, by power, and by works. Yet there is no contradiction at all. These statements simply present different aspects of the same truth. Grace is the principle upon which God justifies; faith is the means by which man receives it; blood is the price which the Savior had to pay; God is the active Agent in justification; power is the proof; and works are the result.

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