

## Faith and Works

In the world today, there are a number of so-called religious bodies that say that believing in the sonship of Jesus Christ is the only thing one needs to do in order to count oneself in a saved condition. Verses are pulled from context that seem to absolve a person from having to do anything else to be considered one of God's children. "You can't work your way to heaven," they'll say, and they'll be right. However, faith accompanied by works is necessary in order to be considered His.

James takes this viewpoint in **James 2:14-26**. This is what he says in verses **14-17**:

**"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 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? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."**

There are a number of things James says about faith in the verses following. First, a person can show others their faith by what they do. If one truly believes in the saving power of Jesus Christ, then he will live his life following Jesus' commands and example. Paul says the same thing in Ephesians 2:8-10. Paul tells the Ephesians there that a person is saved by grace through faith. It is, however a working faith. Because of what God did by sending His Son to the cross to save us, and our belief in the saving power of that sacrifice, we will naturally do what God intends for us to do. Paul says there:

**"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)**

Faith alone is not enough. That faith should cause us to DO.

Second, James tells us that if we rely on faith in God alone, we're no better than Satan's demons. They KNOW there is a God, but they certainly don't let their faith cause them to work for the reward that faith points to.

Third, James says that faith justifies, but not without "doing" something. (**verse 24**) Both Abraham and Rahab showed their faith by what they did. Abraham is probably the best example of active faith, being mentioned in **James 2, Romans 4, and Hebrews 11**. Faith in God's promises caused him to leave his home and go to a place he had never been, one that God had told him his descendants would inherit. Faith caused him to be willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. His willingness, to the point of raising his knife, proved that he believed God would raise Isaac from the dead in order to fulfill the promise of the Messiah being born through Isaac's bloodline. James, as well as others, said that Abraham's active faith caused God to consider him righteous.

Three additional statements from **James 2** drive home the point that it is necessary to prove one's faith by doing God's will:

**“Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.”  
(Verse 18)**

**“You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.” (Verse 24)**

**“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” (Verse 26)**

When someone tells you that a person is saved by faith alone, tell them that the faith they are talking about must be one that produces good works. If someone tells them that they can do good works and not profess faith in Christ and still be saved, tell them that it is faith in Christ that must cause them to act in a way that is pleasing to God. You can't have one without the other.