

Faith and Deeds – James 2:14-26

James reasoned with the believers that even the demons claim to believe that there is one God, and they profess this with trembling. Yet the demons are not saved, simply because they speak their belief in God. The same is true for believers. To simply say they believe in God puts them at the same level with the demons. Good works are an outward display of the inward faith. This kind of faith is alive; it is a saving faith.

Read James 2:14-26

Throughout this passage, James uses the word “faith” ironically to refer to a faith that is a mere intellectual acceptance of certain truths without trust in Christ as Savior or submission to him as Lord.

V. 14 - Notice that James doesn't say "if a person has faith," but "if a person claims to have faith." In other words, if a person claims to be a Christian but doesn't have any works to validate that claim, is that person's faith real? (Matthew 7:21-23)

The faith that saves has one distinguishing quality -- saving faith is a faith that produces obedience, it is a faith that brings about a way of life. – Billy Graham

Read Luke 6:43-45. How are we recognized? What is the proof that there is something different about us as Christians? How could we possibly answer Luke 6:46? (Matthew 25:21)

V. 15 & 16 - What good does it do just to tell someone who is cold and hungry to be warm and full. It's of no value whatsoever, and it's useless! So then why wouldn't we think the same of someone that says they are a Christian but never shows any other proof of their faith?

The Greek word *erga* means to work, to toil, an act, deed, action.

Salvation is received from God by _____. Read: Ephesians 2:8-9, but also verse 10

James is not teaching that we are saved by works, but that our works spring up naturally from our faith.

Read 1 John 3:17-19. What does the Bible say about how our hearts are set at rest in the presence of God?

V. 18 - James is trying to get across, "if you can have saving faith without accompanying works, show me." The presence of good works is the only reasonable verification of saving faith.

V. 19 - John MacArthur states: "James implies that demonic faith is greater than the fraudulent faith of a false professor, for demonic faith produces fear, whereas unsaved men have no fear of God before their eyes."

V. 23 - Though Abraham was saved by faith in God, how did he show the evidence of his faith? (Hebrews 11:8; 11:17)

Abraham believed (had faith-Gen 15:6) that Sarah would have children that would inherit the earth. Abrahams then offered up Isaac, which was a proof of the genuineness of his faith. Chronology is important when it comes to faith and works. Explain this.

Read Matthew 20:28 – Notice the example set by Jesus.

Read Romans 3:28 Does Paul's teaching contradict that of James?

Paul speaks against those who are trying to be saved by deeds.

James speaks against those who confuse mere intellectual knowledge with true faith.

Faith means surrender and commitment to the claims of Christ. It means an acknowledgment of sin and a turning to Christ.

In the reading of Hebrews 11 ("The Hall of Fame of Fame"), each Godly example is preceded with the words: "By faith" [individual]... , and then an account of how they demonstrated their faith.

What do these accounts say about how "Hall of Fame" level faith is acknowledged / recognized?

It's been said: "Love is a verb". Explain this.

Look up: 1 John 4:8-12 – What is the "love/verb" in this passage? And what is the instruction?

Read John 13:34-35. What do our works demonstrate?