

THE COMMUNICATOR

Focus Evangelistic Ministries, Inc. PO Box 498 Danielsville, GA 30633

Faith Without Works Is Dead

The Bible says faith without works is dead, but what does that mean?

Is James telling us in James 2:17 that works really does belong in the gospel, despite that the other apostles said it doesn't?

The following are seven points from scripture that will help us understand what James meant in the phrase, "Faith without works is dead."

1. Salvation into eternal life is through faith in Jesus Christ and not by works. If this clear statement is abandoned, we will know practically nothing of the truths of scripture. Salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone is foundational truth.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." - Ephesians 2:8, 9

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." - Romans 4:5

2. Every believer in Christ is prepared, equipped and commanded to work.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." - Ephesians 2:10

3. The works that believers do are rewarded by God. This is true in a general sense because fruit-bearing work is accomplished by faith through walking in close fellowship with

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"From what did James want these believers to be saved? Judgment."

Jesus Christ. This lifestyle of fellowship is continuously rewarding. There is also the judgment of believers' works at the end of this age at the judgment seat of Christ.

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." - 1 Corinthians 3:14

4. There are negative consequences for believers who don't serve the Lord. This is true in a general sense because the believer who is lazy and unmerciful is not living in a state of harmonious fellowship with Christ. Further negative consequences will be experienced at the judgment seat of Christ.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." - 1 Corinthians 3:15

5. James wanted believers to work and avoid a negative judgment.

“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy...” James 2:12, 13

6. Faith will not save a saved person from the negative judgment that comes to unmerciful believers who don't serve the Lord.

The word saved means to protect or deliver from something. What did James want these believers saved from? Judgment.

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“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” - James 2:14

It is extremely important to interpret the word “saved” in the above verse. There are two important questions asked:

Q. *What does it profit if believers don't work?*
A. Nothing.

Q. *Can faith save a believer who doesn't work?*
A. No. The believer has already been saved into eternal life by his faith, but he will not be saved from a negative works judgment by his faith. No, an unmerciful, non-working believer will not be saved by faith from a negative judgment regarding works. It takes works to be rewarded; he doesn't have them.

So, the saving in James 2:14 is not about eternal life! It is about being saved from a negative judgment due to not working.

7. Faith without works is dead. What does this mean? It means this person has a faith that is not going, moving, acting, and doing. When a car doesn't go, we say the car is *dead*. It might even have a dead battery. In the same way, a dead faith is unproductive. James is trying to jumpstart a faith that has lost its charge. But he is not saying that the person was never born again.

The misinterpretation of James 2:17 leads to judging people who seem to not be serving the Lord as unsaved and hell-bound. It also backloads works into the gospel, which is heresy.

Eternal life is a gift of God's grace to those who believe in Christ. If the believer is not serving the Lord, it might be because of a dead faith that needs to be rebuked and charged.

**For a radio podcast version of this article, go to: <https://anchor.fm/fotb>*

The gospel is simply this: We are sinners, unfit for God. Our penalty is death, not deeds. Jesus completely paid the death penalty for each of us on the cross. He rose from the dead. That proves it. If you'll believe in Jesus, God will give you the gift of everlasting life. You will be forgiven and forever His.

***Romans 3:23, *Romans 6:23, *Romans 5:8, *John 3:16, *John 5:24, *Ephesians 2:8, 9**

The Grace For Life Institute Opened This Fall!

Our gap year program is up and running! We are super excited about this new ministry for graduates to prepare them to walk in grace for life. Thanks to our wonderful family of volunteers and donors, we were able to start classes in September. The students are hungry and excited about learning the Word of God, personal evangelism, stewardship, apologetics, practical life skills, and hermeneutics.

So many graduates are going to four years of college (or more) and graduating with no skills for life, no meaningful truth, no preparation for the future, and a faith that has been bedraggled by an ungodly academic culture. **The Grace For Life Institute** is an alternative to the status quo college experience.

I have learned more about the Bible, how to witness, and how to be a better follower of Christ in these past few months than I have in the whole rest of my life.

The Grace For Life Institute has helped me produce a stronger work ethic and made me better at time management. It also helped me see things from the Bible's perspective with things like finances, how to live life, and how to treat others.

Noel Ashworth
GFLI Student
Lavonia, Georgia

Some Current Ministry Needs

We have an urgent need for someone to install an HVAC system for us that has been donated.

We also need an "Icon" wood-burning fireplace insert, made by Heatilator.

Donations for our campers and GFLI students are gladly received and deeply appreciated.

All our ministries rely on the support of like-minded supporters who believe in this Bible teaching ministry. All gifts are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

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