

Living Faith

Key Verse: *“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

—James 2:26

Selected Scripture:
James 2:14-26

FAITH IS NOT CONSIDERED

alive unless it manifests itself. Thus, in our lesson, James tells us to show our faith by our works. (vs. 18) We should be looking for opportunities to give evidence of our faith by way of sacrifice and service to the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren.

All such works will show that our faith is alive and, over the course of our Christian walk, will give proof of our zeal and love for the Lord.

As we seek to show our faith by our works, we are to remember that all of our activities of sacrifice and service for the Lord's cause must be properly motivated. Our zeal for works is not to be based upon pride, nor any desire for fame or the praise of men. Rather, it should come solely from an honest and sincere heart—the same motivation that moved us to give ourselves to God in consecration. Humility in service, without fanfare, is the best recipe for success in developing a living faith.

Although outward works are important and necessary, the inward work of adding various fruits and graces of the spirit to our foundation of faith is of even greater importance. (Gal. 5:22,23; II Pet. 1:2-8) We have been given many precious promises of good things to come. One of these is the glorious hope of having part in the “first resurrection.” (Rev. 20:6) This will require a change of nature from the earthly to the heavenly, and

is a work that begins now as we strive to put on the character likeness of Christ Jesus our Lord.

“Ye are washed, ... ye are sanctified, ... ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (I Cor. 6:11) This Scripture indicates that, although we must have a living faith, the greatest portion of work relative to our success in the narrow way is accomplished in us by the power of God, in the “name of the Lord Jesus.” A daily appreciation of all that the Heavenly Father and his only begotten Son have done for us, and continue to do on our behalf, should stir within us a keen desire towards full and complete obedience.

We are part of a wonderful “household of faith.” (Gal. 6:10) In this spiritual family arrangement we have many opportunities to serve, and to be served. To fully take advantage of this aspect of our living faith requires that we keep in close contact with fellow-members of this spiritual family. We should have both faith and trust in our brethren, knowing that they have the same aims, desires and goals that we have. Humility, patience, forgiveness and love should be foundation principles of our dealings with the household of faith, and as we show our faith by our works on behalf of one another. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, ... even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”—Col. 3:12-14

Paul summarizes what truly constitutes a living faith: “Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”—Eph. 4:15,16 ■