

Faith Without Works Is Dead

Key Verse: *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”*
—James 2:17

Selected Scripture:
James 2:14-26

TODAY’S LESSON BRINGS

to our minds the realization that it is not only important to have a strong faith, but also that the application of that faith in our daily lives, by means of works, is essential. Earlier in his epistle, James admonishes, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.” (James 1:22) Blessed are we, if, having seen and understood the Lord’s grace and goodness manifested towards us, we obediently follow in daily living the spirit of James’ instructions. A fundamental aspect of our calling by God is that of bearing fruitage. Jesus said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” (John 15:8) The development of the fruits and graces of the Spirit, as we walk in the narrow way of self-denial and sacrifice, is a key aspect of the “works” which should emanate from our foundation of faith.

For all who seek to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, the basis of faith and its resulting works is the divine Word—its doctrines and principles. Each must build his faith structure upon that true foundation which only is revealed through the Scriptures. Through the prophet, God said, “He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.” (Jer. 23:28) The Apostle Peter later states: “Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances

of God.” (I Pet. 4:11, *New American Standard Bible*) To have God’s approval requires more than just calling ourselves Christians. It necessitates that we know something of his plans and purposes, and based on that, speak the “utterances of God” by developing character fruitage in conformity with his will.

Faith is defined as a conviction respecting things not proven to the physical senses, but received on the basis of “substance” and “evidence.” (Heb. 11:1) Thus, those desiring to obtain true faith will inquire and seek for solid authority as the basis for their convictions. Faith is not credulity, and does not jump to conclusions with no investigation. Rather, it examines, considers and studies to ensure that it has a solid foundation for its existence. Paul said, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—II Tim. 2:15

It is our faith, the Apostle John says, which will ultimately bring us victory. (I John 5:4) However, this will be gained only by those who shall, to the best of their ability, “work out” their salvation. (Phil. 2:12) Along the way, God will test us by our works as to the strength of our faith. Hence, our success necessitates faith and works operating together. “Wilt thou know, ... that faith apart from works is barren?”—James 2:20, *American Standard Version*

It is through Christ Jesus, and our relationship with him, that we have the opportunity of developing faith and works. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13) We also have the promises of God found in his Word that reassure us as to the ultimate results of faith which manifests itself through works. Indeed, all our services to the Lord are valuable chiefly as working proofs of our faith. “This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.” (I John 2:25) Let us be found worthy to claim this promise, knowing that God has called us to show our faith by our works, and by our cooperation with him in all ways. ■