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Wisdom for Living: Faith and Works

James 2:14-26

**Introduction**

- The book of James focuses on the practical outworking of faith.
- Chapter 1 – The Testing of Faith
- Chapter 2:1-13 – The Impartiality of Faith
- Chapter 2:14-26 – The Partner of Faith
- *A Power Couple* – a couple consisting of two people who are highly valued, intensely influential, and immensely significant, each in their individual right.
- *Faith & Works is God's power couple in the life of the believer.*

**Background**

There are some who would suggest that James' teaching conflicted that of Paul, when in fact, they were addressing different situations:

<b>Paul</b>	<b>James</b>
Refuting Jewish legalism that said one had to observe the law's requirements to be saved.	Opposing the twisting of faith in Christ that said no expression of works was necessary for the saved.
When using the word, "justified," Paul was discussing being saved from sin and declared in right standing with God.	When using the word, "justified," James was discussing vindication and authentication.
Regarding "works," Paul referred to the works of the law.	Regarding "works," James referred to the works that faith produces.

**Paul's position:** one is declared righteous by God through faith in Christ and apart from the works of the law.

**James' position:** one's faith in Christ produces works that authenticate the genuineness of that faith.

## Faith & Works: God's Power Couple

### The Explanation of Faith & Works (2:14-17)

- *What does it **profit** – to gain a benefit*
- *If someone says he has **faith**– persuasion, belief and moral conviction of religious truth or the truthfulness of God*
- *But does not have **works** – acts, or deeds; corresponding action or visible fruit to demonstrate an inward conviction*
- *Can faith **save** him? – Can that kind of faith deliver, preserve, and make him whole? **This statement is often erroneously viewed as suggesting that salvation comes through works.***
- **2:14 TLB** – *Dear brothers, what's the use of saying that you have faith and are Christians if you aren't proving it by helping others? Will that kind of faith save anyone?*
- **2:14 MSG** – *Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it?*
- **2:14 DVJ** – *My fellow believers, what benefit is there to us being persuaded of the truthfulness of God and having religious convictions if we don't have corresponding deeds and visible fruit to demonstrate on the outside what we say we believe on the inside?*
- **Eph. 2:8-10** – *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*
- **Matt 25:40 NIV** – *Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me.*
- ***Faith without works doesn't profit** – it does not produce evidence that is of benefit to others or to the Lord.*
- ***Faith without works is dead** – it is a profession without a practice, which is the like a body without breath.*
- ***Works do not save us, but those who are saved should produce evidence!***

## The Expressions of Faith & Works (2:18-22)

Faith is demonstrated through works –

- Show me your faith **without** (*separated or apart from*) works, and I will show you my faith **by** (*because and by reason of*) my works.
- **Matt. 5:16** – Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good works** and glorify your Father in heaven.
- **2 Tim. 2:20-21** – But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every **good work**.

Faith is completed by works –

- *Faith and works* **work together** – synergy; to cooperate, collaborate, and co-labor
- Through this collaboration, faith is made **perfect** – complete, accomplished, matured, and brought to a successful conclusion.

### **The Examples of Faith & Works (2:23-26)**

- **Justified** – to render or show to be righteous or just; root = to be equitable in character or act (used in verses 21, 24, and 25)
- Abraham – the friend of God (upright) – See Gen. 22:1-14)
- Rahab – the harlot (outcast) – See Josh. 2:1-21)
- Abraham was an upright patriarch while Rahab was a prostitute on the opposite end of the social and moral scale. However, they were both equally justified on the same basis, that being their willingness to act upon what they believed about God.
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