

Faith without Works

Many in the religious world do not understand the relation between faith and works. The book of James shows that the faith that saves is a working, obedient faith. The works that save are our obedience to the commands God has given. The following points, which James makes, allow us to see that faith alone will not save us..

First, James declares that faith without works is unprofitable: "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he has faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him (James 2:14)?"

Second, faith without works is a mere saying that we have faith (James 2:14). It is easy to talk about faith, but this is not enough. We must demonstrate our faith by our works. Jesus said, "And why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say (Luke 6:46)?"

Third, James shows that faith alone does not save (James 2:14). His question, "Can that faith save him?" rhetorically asserts that faith alone cannot save us. Faith unaccompanied by the works, which God commanded, is powerless to save.

Fourth, faith without works is a dead faith. James said, "Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself (James 2:17)." In verse 26, James compares an inactive faith to a body without spirit: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."

Fifth, we must demonstrate our faith. In James 2:18, James said, "Yea, a man will say, you have faith, and I have works: show me *your* faith apart from *your* works, and I by my works will show you *my* faith. It is impossible to demonstrate our faith without works.

Sixth, the demons believe and shudder without any works at all. James said, "You believe that God is one; you do well: the demons also believe, and shudder (James 2:19)." Faith, such as the demons have, will not save us.

Seventh, faith without works is a barren faith. James said, "But will you know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren (James 2:20)?" All the great men and women of the Old Testament had a faith that worked (Heb. 11). James cites Abraham as an example for us today: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? You see that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect (James 2:21-22)."

James concludes, "You see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith (James 2:14)." We must believe and obey God.