

Faith is a key doctrine in the Christian life.

- The sinner is saved by faith (Eph. 2:8-9)

Ephesians 2:8 - 10 (NASB)

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;

⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

- The believer must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7)

2 Corinthians 5:7 - 10 (NASB)

⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight—

⁸we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

⁹Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6)

Hebrews 11:6 (NASB)

⁶And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

DEAD FAITH (JAMES 2:14-17) - DEMONIC FAITH (JAMES 2:18-19) - DYNAMIC FAITH (JAMES 2:20-26)

Check yourself:

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NASB)

⁵Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

Psalms 139:23 - 24 (NLT)

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Correct yourself: *proof of salvation =*

Hebrews 12:14 (KJV) ¹⁴Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

2 Timothy 2:19 (NASB) ¹⁹Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”

Titus 1:16 (NASB) ¹⁶They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB) ¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

1 John 2:3 - 4 (NASB) ³By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1 John 2:3 - 6 (NLT) ³And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. ⁴If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth.

⁵But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. ⁶Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

1 John 3:9 - 10 (NLT) ⁹Those who have been born into God’s family do not make a practice of sinning, because God’s life[£] is in them. So they can’t keep on sinning, because they are children of God. ¹⁰So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers[£] does not belong to God.

Faith Results in Good Works—James 2:14-26

The remainder of chapter 2 is often cited to show that the teachings of James and Paul were completely contradictory.

- **James:** “Faith without works is dead.” (2:26 NKJV)
- **Paul:** “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law” (Romans 3:28 NIV); “A person is justified not by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 2:16 NRSV)

However, careful reading and understanding of both Paul and James will show that instead of contradicting, their writings really complement each other.

First, consider the writers’ viewpoints in light of the situations they were addressing in their letters. They were confronting different issues.

- **Paul** was responding to the Judaizers, who said works—such as circumcision and observing Jewish ceremonial laws—were necessary for salvation.
- **James** was responding to those who believed that mere intellectual agreement was enough to obtain salvation.

Second, there is a difference in the time frame in the believer's life as they make their statements.

- **Paul** began at the very beginning—at conversion. No one can ever *earn* God's forgiveness and salvation. We can only accept it.
- **James** spoke to the professing believer, one who has already accepted that forgiveness and salvation, explaining that the person must live a new life. No one can be saved by works; no one can be saved without producing works. We are not saved *by* good works, but *for* good works. James's point was not that works must be added to faith, but that genuine faith includes works.

Three Principles Of Faith

In chapter 2, James argues against favoritism and for the necessity of good deeds.

He presents three principles of faith:

1. Commitment is an essential part of faith. You cannot be a Christian simply by affirming the right doctrines, agreeing with the biblical facts, or even giving mental assent to the gospel (2:19). You must commit your mind and heart to Christ.
2. Right actions are the natural by-products of true faith. A genuine Christian will have a changed life (2:18). The gospel is a seed that will eventually prove its vitality by its fruit.
3. Faith without good works doesn't do anyone any good—it is useless and perhaps lifeless (2:14-17). If a planted seed never sends up a shoot and never ripens, how can someone claim it took root?

James's teachings are consistent with Paul's teaching that we receive salvation by faith alone.

- Paul emphasized the purpose of faith—to bring salvation.
- James emphasized the results of faith—a changed life.

Monday Morning: Action Step

Please perform a spiritual self-examination with a specific focus on one area where you are struggling.

Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 - 13 (NLT)

¹²DEAR FRIENDS, YOU ALWAYS FOLLOWED MY INSTRUCTIONS WHEN I WAS WITH YOU. AND NOW THAT I AM AWAY, IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT. WORK HARD TO SHOW THE RESULTS OF YOUR SALVATION, OBEYING GOD WITH DEEP REVERENCE AND FEAR.

¹³FOR GOD IS WORKING IN YOU, GIVING YOU THE DESIRE AND THE POWER TO DO WHAT PLEASURES HIM.