

Wisdom of the Bible ~ Faith and Deeds ~ Scripture Verses

James 2:14-26 - ¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Matthew 7:26-27 - ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

1 John 3:16-18 - ¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

Ephesians 2:8-10 - ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Colossians 3:23-24 - ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Titus 3:8 - This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

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Discussion Questions

1. In James 2:14, James speaks of a person having faith without deeds and asks, “Can such faith save him?” Can it?
2. From a worldly perspective, why is it important to have deeds along with faith?
3. What does Jesus say about faith and works? (Matthew 7:26-27)
4. Proper motivation is important in understanding the value of our works. What are we being asked to do and why? (1 John 3:16-18) [Also see Q11.]
5. Give a modern example of the situation described in verses James 2:15-16.
6. Explain the meaning of James 2:18. (How can you show your faith without deeds?)
7. Doesn’t James 2:18 contradict Paul in Romans 3:28 when he writes “man is justified (saved) by faith without the deeds (works) of the law”?
8. What is the point of James 2:19? (Is only believing—or faith—enough?)
9. Chronology (the order of events) is important when it comes to faith and works. Explain it in simple terms. Note the sequence in Ephesians 2:8-10.
10. Is there a similar sequence of events in the stories of Abraham and Rahab as summarized in James 2:21-25?
11. What do you think of Paul’s description of our job and compensation package in 2 Corinthians 5:10, Colossians 3:23-24, and Titus 3:8. Are you motivated?
12. Think about:
 - A. Improper motives that get you involved in doing good works.
 - B. Excuses you have given the Lord for not being more involved in His service.