



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Living and Dead Faith

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The Epistle of James' (AD 45-50) likely author was James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, the leader of the Jerusalem church, the leader of the Council of Jerusalem and a humble man. While James is addressing the twelve tribes that had scattered to all parts of the world and attempts to be encouraging to the believing Jews who were struggling with trials and tribulations, he confronts the issue of the testing and fruit of a faithful Christian's walk and the wise Godly righteous reactions of him when grounded in total faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the relationship between faith and works? (James 2:14-20 NASB)

What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? (cf. 2:14)

Living faith leads to works. James continues sharing the issue of the testing of the believer's faith by relating that how he lives, his actions and fruits will provide evidence to others of his saving faith in God's grace found in the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1). Paul similarly confirms this when he says "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (cf. Eph 2:10) Jesus also said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (cf. Mt 5:16) James is sharing that a believer provides examples of his salvation and living faith to others through his active works. What is an example of dead faith?

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." (cf. 2:15-18)

No good works equals a dead faith. James provides an example and self evaluation of a person's living or dead faith. A person is presented with someone's desperate need for food and clothing and a dead faith response. While it may show a level of concern, it does not result in a living faith caring and action to address the need. A living faith will be a faith that the caring, loving, serving words will match subsequent actions. Is belief of God existence enough?

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? (cf. 2:19-20)

Satan and demons know of God and yet shudder, reject and rebel against Him. James is sharing that there is a difference between a dead faith in knowing of God and having living faith in believing and serving God, His Son and Holy Spirit. Paul shared, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;" (cf. Rm 10:9) Believers are to confess and believe in Jesus. Many with a dead faith may want Jesus as a savior but not their Lord. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter" (cf. Mt 7:21) While believers are saved solely by God's grace through faith and not of works (Eph 2: 8-9), that new life in Christ is made for good work and will be reflected in daily good works and actions that serve and glorify God.

For Your Consideration:

- Given your normal behaviors and actions, would someone be surprised to learn that you are a Christian?
- Do your actions match your words?
- Is Jesus Your Savior and Lord?

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS (SESSION OR HEARING DAYS) AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44

STATE STAFF AND LOBBYISTS: WEDNESDAYS AT 12:10PM, STATEHOUSE ROOM 44