

Faith, Then Works

James 2:14-20

Question: Is the faith of a believer useful without good works? (2:14)

- Who is James asking?

Addressing a common error

■ *Flawed interpretation of James 2:14-26—*

A person who claims to have faith, but does not _____ their faith through good works, does not have real faith at all, and thus is not eternally saved and will go to Hell.

■ *How can you know this is an error?*

1. Scripture does not _____ Scripture
 - a. Eternal salvation is offered freely, requiring no _____ in the sinner. (Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 3:5)
 - b. The work of Christ satisfied the justice of God in paying the _____ for every sin committed by all people of all time. (John 19:30, Isaiah 53:6, Hebrews 9:28, Hebrews 10:10-14, 1 John 2:2)
 - c. Eternal life is the present _____ of the believer, promised by God, who does not lie. (John 3:16, John 5:24, Titus 1:2, 1 John 5:11-13)
 - d. Thus, _____ never contribute to a person's eternal salvation, and no visible proof is required by God in order for Him to know who has believed in His Son. (Psalm 139:1, John 10:14)
2. Context demonstrates that James 2 is addressing the Christian's _____ with the Lord
 - a. James 1:2 introduced the theme of facing _____ in an honorable way.
 - b. James 1:21-22 introduced the theme of laying aside sinful ways of _____.
 - c. James 2:1 introduced the theme of representing _____ in Christ-like ways.

■ *Why is this an important error to clarify?*

1. For your own _____ in the assurance of your eternal salvation
2. For your ability to defend the truth of the _____

- **What is James asking?**

“profit” – (*ophelos*) *advantage, help*

- a. James 1:2-4 provides a goal for the believer to experience joy and _____.
- b. James 1:12 provides a goal for the believer to _____ hardship while continually loving God so as to be approved by God.
- c. James 2:1 provides the goal for the believer to represent our glorious Lord _____.
- d. James 2:12-13 provides the goal for the believer to live as though God is evaluating us by the standard of His _____.

“save” – (*sōzō*) *to deliver from harm*

- a. James 1:21 teaches that humbly receiving the word of God brings salvation from “all filthiness and overflow of wickedness,” referring to an _____ salvation from the power of sin.
- b. James 5:19-20 encourages believers to _____ one another to be saved from the error of a sinful life, which is a death-like existence.
- c. James 2:14 questions whether the power of mere words can bring salvation from the disapproving judgment of God (compare 2:12-13), as God can clearly see when our _____ is inconsistent with Him.

The question re-stated: Can we honestly say that a child of God who does not have any good works evident in his life is useful right now, or that _____ is working in his life?

Answer: NO! (2:15-26)

Argument #1 -

Obvious Uselessness of Beliefs to Meet Practical Needs (2:15-17)

- What is obviously absent without good works? (1 John 3:16-18)
- What is God’s purpose for your life if you are saved? (Ephesians 2:10)

Argument #2 -

Counter Example of Demons Shows The Uselessness of a Work-less Faith (2:18-20)

- The demons’ trembling illustrates the following reality: a person’s beliefs impact the way in which they behave. Thus, if your goal is to show your faith, doing nothing leads to failure to _____ your faith.

The answer restated: A child of God who is not bearing the fruit of good works is holding the faith in a way which is dead—separated from its _____.