



# FAITH WORKS

---

JAMES 2:14-20 BIBLE STUDY

DANNY SCOTTON, JR





# GOD: THE ULTIMATE PATRON



- **Every good and perfect gift is from above**, coming down from the **Father** of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. (Jas 1:17, NIV)
- He causes his sun to rise on the **evil** and the **good**, and sends rain on the **righteous** and the **unrighteous** (Mt 5:45b, NIV)
- Who has ever **given** to God, that God should **repay** them?” 36 For **from** him and **through** him and **for** him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen (Rom 11:35-36, NIV)
- “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Ex 20:2, NIV)
- For, in this way, God loved the world: that He **gave** the one-of-a-kind Son, so that everyone who is [continually] faithful [*pisteuō* (verb form of the noun *pistis*)] to Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16, AT)





## CONTEXT: FAITH IN ACTION



- 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, 3 knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces perseverance. 4 And let this perseverance bring about [its] perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete – lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:2-4, AT)
- So be **doers of [the] word** and not only hearers – deluding yourselves (Jas 1:22, AT)



## JAMES 2:14 CAN PHONY "FAITH" SAVE?



- What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have "faith" but does not have works? Can such "faith" save them? (Jas 2:14, AT)
- What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? **can faith save him?** (Jas 2:14, KJV)
- What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? **Can faith save you?** (Jas 2:14, NRSV)
- What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? **Can that faith save him?** (Jas 2:14, ESV)
- What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?** (Jas 2:14, NASB)



## JAMES 2:14 CAN PHONY “FAITH” SAVE?



- What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? **Can such faith save them?** (Jas 2:14, NIV)
- For we maintain that a person is justified by **faith apart** from the **works of the law**. (Rom 3:28, NIV)
- 19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will **save them from death** and cover over a multitude of sins. (Jas 5:19-20, NIV)





# THE ONLY KIND OF FAITH THAT WORKS, IS FAITH THAT WORKS



- **A)** James 2:15-17
  - Workless “faith” **does not work** for **people** in need (e.g., the needs of the needy aren’t met) (15-16)
  - Summary (refrain): “faith” without works is **dead** (17)
  - **B)** James 2:18-20
    - Workless “faith” **does not work** for justification before **God** (e.g., even demons believe *that* God exists) (18-19)
    - Summary (refrain): “faith” without works does not work (20)
  - **B’)** James 2:21-24
    - Genuine faith **does work** for justification before **God** (e.g., Abraham believes *in* God; shows radical obedience) (21-23)
    - Summary (refrain): a person is justified by faith that works – not “faith” that does not work (24)
- **A’)** James 2:25-26
  - Genuine faith **does work** for **people in need** (e.g., Rahab aids the Israelite spies) (25)
  - Summary (refrain) : “faith” without works is **dead** (26) (Chiasm from Motyer, 108)



## JAMES 2:15-17

### WORKLESS “FAITH” DOES NOT WORK FOR PEOPLE IN NEED



- If a brother or a sister is poorly dressed and lacking daily food 16 and one of you (all) says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and well fed," but does not give them what is necessary for their body, what good is it? 17 In the same way also, “faith” by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (Jas 2:15-17, AT)
- 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 and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, **how can the love of God be in that person?** 18 Dear children, let us not love with **words or speech** but with **actions and in truth.** (1 Jn 3:16-18, NIV)
- Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. (Rom 12:13, NIV)



JAMES 2:18  
WORKLESS “FAITH” DOES NOT  
WORK FOR JUSTIFICATION  
BEFORE GOD (B)



- But someone will say, “You [the opponent] have ‘faith’, and I [James] have works.” Show me your “faith” without works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (Jas 2:18, AT)





JAMES 2:19  
WORKLESS "FAITH" DOES NOT  
WORK FOR JUSTIFICATION  
BEFORE GOD (B)



- You believe that God is one, you do well! Even the demons believe that – and shudder! (Jas 2:19, AT)
- 4 Hear [שמעו] (*šāma* ')], O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Dt. 6:4-5, NIV)



JAMES 2:19  
WORKLESS “FAITH” DOES NOT  
WORK FOR JUSTIFICATION  
BEFORE GOD (B)



- What do you want with us [**demons**], Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the **Holy One of God!** (Mk 1:24, NIV)
- Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the **Son of God.**” (Mk 3:11, NIV)
- 6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.  
7 He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, **Son of the Most High God?** In God’s name don’t torture me!” (Mk 5:6-7, NIV)





JAMES 2:20  
WORKLESS “FAITH” DOES NOT  
WORK FOR JUSTIFICATION  
BEFORE GOD (B)



- Oh, you want to know – you foolish [**empty**] person – that “faith” without works doesn’t work? [*argos*] (Jas 2:20, AT)
- Theist = believes there is a god. **A**theist = does **not** believe there is a god
- ἀ (“non-”) + ἔργον [*ergon*] (“work”) → ἀργός [*argos*] = **not working**





# FAITH WORKS



- 21 Was not our father 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 [works] were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did [works]. 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 considered righteous by what they do 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. (Jas 2:21-26, NIV)





# THE ONLY KIND OF FAITH THAT WORKS, IS FAITH THAT WORKS



- **A)** James 2:15-17
  - Workless “faith” **does not work** for **people** in need (e.g., the needs of the needy aren’t met) (15-16)
  - Summary (refrain): “faith” without works is **dead** (17)
- **B)** James 2:18-20
  - Workless “faith” **does not work** for justification before **God** (e.g., even demons believe *that* God exists) (18-19)
  - Summary (refrain): “faith” without works does not work (20)
- **B’)** James 2:21-24
  - Genuine faith **does work** for justification before **God** (e.g., Abraham believes *in* God; shows radical obedience) (21-23)
  - Summary (refrain): a person is justified by faith that works – not “faith” that does not work (24)
- **A’)** James 2:25-26
  - Genuine faith **does work** for **people in need** (e.g., Rahab aids the Israelite spies) (25)
  - Summary (refrain) : “faith” without works is **dead** (26) (Chiasm from Motyer, 108)



# FAITH WORKS



- “Not everyone who **says** to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Mt 7:21, NIV)
- Whoever **claims** to live in him must **live as Jesus did**. (1 Jn 2:6, NIV)
- “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? (Lk 6:46, NIV)
- 19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will **save them from death** and cover over a multitude of sins. (Jas 5:19-20, NIV)