

FAITH AND WORKS

“Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do” (Ja. 2:18)

Faith, like God, is invisible. No man has seen God at any time (Jn. 1:18). Jesus, however, made God visible by becoming flesh. **“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory . . .” (Jn. 1:14).** Jesus “showed” us what God is like, and our deeds “show” what faith is like. You cannot see the wind, but you can see what the wind does!

The book of Hebrews reminds us that “by faith” we “understand” that what is “seen” was made out of what was not “visible”. While the physical creation is only temporal, God has condescended to become part of it to leave us an example that we might follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

James uses practical examples to illustrate the importance of demonstrating faith by works. For example, if a “brother or sister” is naked or hungry, faith is of no value to them unless you “do” something to meet their needs (Ja. 2:14 – 17). Hebrews 11 is called the “Faith Chapter” of the Bible and this chapter lists heroes and heroines of the faith who invariable “did” something to demonstrate their faith.

- Abel showed his faith by the offering which he made.
- Noah showed his faith by building an ark.
- Abraham showed his faith by leaving his home and living in tents.
- Etc.

James said that Abraham also showed his faith by offering his son Isaac upon the altar (Ja. 2:20 – 24). Another obvious example of Abraham showing his faith by actions involves the birth of Isaac. Isaac, as you know, was not virgin born. Yes! Abraham believed that he would have a son by Sarah, but that never would have happened by “faith only”. Abraham had to “do” something for Sarah to get pregnant. Please prayerfully consider the way Paul described it: **“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Rom. 4: 18 – 22).**

When a man “works” for something his wages are not a “gift” (Rom. 4:4). Salvation, however, is a gift! In this regard Christianity is unique. We do not have to wait until we die and our “good deeds” are compared with our “bad needs”. We can know if we are saved now. Christianity is like a marriage. The commitment to get married comes first and it's consummation comes later. Abraham was justified by faith before he impregnated Sarah or offered Isaac upon an altar! His obedience in no way caused him to boast because he knew that without God he would have accomplished nothing of eternal significance.

Lucifer in heaven and Eve in Eden decided that they could determine on their own what was right and wrong! They could “do” what they wanted to do without considering the will of God. This is the very essence of sin. Sin is “I want, what I want, when I want it”. The essence of godliness was also demonstrated in a garden when Jesus prayed to God: **“Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. I Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39).** Please do not be ignorant of the devil's devices (2 Cor. 2:11). To fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13).

The first time the Gospel was preached the people said **“Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).** Peter replied: **“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38)**

They demonstrated their faith by what they did, and we can do the same. If you truly believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God, then it is time for you to “repent and be baptized”!