

Introduction

New Testament faith is not complete without actions that correspond to the Word of God. James, in writing to Jewish believers, describes biblical faith as that which produces Godly action:

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does (James 1:19-25, NIV).

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 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? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

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. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 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. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

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? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead (James 2:12-26, NIV).

Weymouth translates James 2:14 as,

What good is it, my brethren, if a man professes to have faith, and yet his actions do not correspond? Can such faith save him? (James 2:14, Weymouth New Testament in Modern

Speech).

Hearing the Word

One should hear the Word of God with the heart (Luke 8:18). He should be quick to hear (James 1:19) and he should listen constantly (James 1:25). Solomon exhorts,

My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Proverbs 4:20-23, NIV).

One should hear the Word of God alone, for this is the only way one can be saved (Romans 10:17). The Apostle Peter states,

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God (1 Peter 1:23, NIV).

However, not everyone has heard the Word of God and has faith:

And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith (2 Thessalonians 3:2, NIV).

One must beware of substitutes for God's Word such as traditions of men (Colossians 2:8; Matthew 15:6) and doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1).

Saying the Word

It is essential to speak only the Word of God. To do otherwise, is to side with the enemy, even if it is unintentional.

Doing the Word

According to the passage in James quoted above, the believer's actions must correspond with his faith. Since faith is based solely on the Word of God, the believer's actions must necessarily correspond with the Word of God. Works complete, or perfect faith. James teaches essentially the same message as Jesus. Jesus, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, taught:

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 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. The rain come down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." (Matthew 7:24-27, NIV).

If one hears and does, he has New Testament faith.

If one hears and does not do, then there are at least three possibilities:

- 1. One has rejected the truth.**
- 2. One has only mental assent instead of faith.**
- 3. One has genuine faith but is not exercising it.**

In all three possibilities, one is acting on false information. By having actions that correspond with our faith, our faith is perfected or completed. When we observe ourselves living the life of faith, our self-esteem will rise.

Assignment: Ask the Lord to reveal any areas where you may not be acting in line with God's Word. Ask for grace to begin acting in line with God's Word.

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Chapter 8 of my eBook, *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*.

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Completed Faith

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