

Lesson 10: Faith and Works

James spent a considerable amount of time in his book focusing on works and their importance. As we see in the selection from chapter 2 above he was adamant that works must accompany faith.

Read James 2: 19-20. What is the difference in the belief a demon has in God and what a Christian should have.

James then goes on to describe what men and women of great faith did to show their faith. Abraham was a man of great faith. He trusted God with all his heart. He believed in God's promises. He waited and received a child. He was 100 years old when Isaac was born. Then in Genesis 22, Abraham's faith is put to the test. God asks Abraham to sacrifice this son that he waited 100 years for. Read what Abraham says closely. "He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.""

We will worship and We will come back. Abraham was ready to do everything that God told him to and fully believed that no matter what, God would keep his promises and preserve his son.

He stepped out in faith to do what he believed. That is what we need to do. If we really believe what God said, our actions (works) must reflect what we believe and be driven by it.

Memory Verse:

James 2:26 "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."

Lesson 10: Faith and Works

LESSONS

1. God the Father
2. The Bible
3. God the Son
4. Prayer
5. Scripture Memory
6. God the Holy Spirit
7. Self Discipline
8. Respect for Authority
9. Quiet Time
10. Faith and Works
11. Your Testimony

Table of Contents

1. Introduction- 3
2. Week 1: Hebrews 11:1 - 3
3. Week 2: Matthew 17:20b - 4
4. Week 3: Psalm 19:1 - 6
5. Week 4: James 2: 14-17 - 7

Take some time and think about what you do for God. What are the works that you are doing for Him and why you are doing them.

On TV we occasionally see people pray something like "God if you get me out of this I promise I will do....." They keep promising works. I will go to church. I will help the poor. Yet this is not what God is looking for. Actions without a heart after God driving the actions really does not mean anything.

If you tell your Mom everyday that you love her (a work) but really don't mean it in your heart, does that help? Your actions must be driven by what you believe in your heart.

Memory Verse:

James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

V. Week 4

Key Concepts: Bring the two together.

James 2: 14-17 "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."

The Bible spends more time talking about our faith and God's works. But does that mean works are not important? No. Works are very important.

What is more, it is by our faith that God is who he claims to be that we are saved from our sins. Think about that. Say out loud John 3:16. What is our part of that verse?

We have to believe. That is it. No other requirements. God does all of the work. We receive salvation because of our faith. There is nothing that can be done to earn salvation.

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."

IV. Week 3

Key Concepts: What are Works?

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

We just finished talking about faith but what about works? Works are the actions that we do and how we live. Giving in the offering is a work. Helping others is a work. Going to church, praying, fasting and such is all a work. How you act is a work.

Most of the time in scripture when we see the word work it is used similar to how it is used in Psalm 19 above. It talks about what God has done. God has done mighty works for His people.

But what about our works? Are they important? Yes, but they are not the most important. God has many commandments in scripture that we should obey. Honor your mother and your father is one. Worship the Lord your God and serve him only is another. Yet God is not giving you a check off list of what to do in order to get to heaven. The Old Testaments contains 613 commandments that were to be obeyed. Yet in Psalms it is written "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

Temple sacrifices were one of the biggest commandments around when this was written. Yet here the psalmist is saying that it is not what is really important to God. God wants our hearts to be right.

Faith and Works

I. Introduction

Throughout scripture the terms faith and works are tied together. This chapter will examine each of these words so that you understand what each means and more importantly, how they fit together.

II. Week 1

Key Concepts: What is Faith?

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Faith is a personal element. A synonym for faith is trust. In the dictionary, faith is defined as "belief in something for which there is no proof" and "something that is believed especially with strong conviction" and lastly, "complete trust." Think about that definition. What is it that you believe in? In what do you COMPLETELY TRUST? Think of three things that you trust and put them below.

We have faith that gravity holds us onto the earth. We can't see gravity, but we sure can feel its effects. We have faith that wind exists. We can't see it but we see its effects as the trees move to it. Faith or trust in God is similar. We can't see or touch Him, but we can feel the effects of His presence in our lives. The fruit of the Spirit is a manifestation or result of our faith in God. Write out three of the fruit of the Spirit that we learned in a previous lesson and give an example of how it is an effect of our faith in God.

Read Habakkuk 2:4. What do you think the prophet was talking about?

Now take a look at Matthew 8:5-13. In this chapter we meet a Roman Centurion who has faith that Jesus can do what he claims he can do. By his faith, he asks Jesus to heal his sick servant and does not want Jesus to visit him. He KNOWS that Jesus can heal the servant no matter what.

Do you have that kind of faith? Do you trust God that much? How different our lives would be if we lived with that kind of trust in God.

Memory Verse:

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

III. Week 2

Key Concepts: Proving your faith.

Matthew 17:20b "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

We ended the last section with an awesome example of trust in God. Now compare it to the story in Matthew 17:14-20. We are often in the same boat as the disciples are here. We believe God but we hold back and are not complete in our trust. As a result,

we don't always see results that we expect to. Have you ever asked God for something but were not sure if you would receive it? Did you ever doubt God? Well guess what? You have much in common with the disciples. Men who saw Jesus face to face and saw the miracles that Jesus did had doubts too.

Jesus spoke in Matthew 17 of a mustard seed. It is one of the smallest seeds yet when planted and nurtured, it will grow into a very large tree. Just as our faith, when tested and we cling to it and continue to trust God will grow.

How do you grow your faith? Well that comes from the testing of our faith. This is not always fun. Read James 1:2-4 "Count is joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing."

In the verse above circle the words trials and testing. Write out what you think this means below.

Faith must be without reservations or doubts. This is hard. Especially when people who do not share your faith surround you. This testing of your faith that James talks about are the doubts that creep up in our minds. These can be challenges to our faith that unbelievers put in our path. Hopefully none of us will have to face a test like the one Simon Peter faced in Matthew 26:69-75. Arguably, Peter was Jesus' best friend. Yet he did not have enough faith to stand up for what he believed and knew was right. But this same man would later be imprisoned for his beliefs (Acts 12) and then put to death for them. He would not back down. What was the difference? We see the difference in Acts Chapter 2. Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit. From that point on, his faith explodes out and he becomes a great evangelist. He traveled across Israel to Babylon and then possibly to Rome on mission trips to tell others about Jesus.