

# *The Real Deal*

*PASTOR MIKE YODER • JAMES 2:14–26*

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?*

**James 2:14**

*Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food.*

**James 2:15**

*If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?*

**James 2:16**

*In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

**James 2:17**

*But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.*

**James 2:18**

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

**James 2:19**

*You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?*

**James 2:20**

*Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?*

**James 2:21**

*You see that his faith and his actions were working together,  
and his faith was made complete by what he did.*

**James 2:22**

*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.*

**James 2:23**

*You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do  
and not by faith alone.*

**James 2:24**

*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?*

**James 2:25**

*As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

**James 2:26**

**Faith without works is  
dead and cannot save.**

A living faith will authenticate itself in the production of works. There is no antagonism between faith and works. Works are an essential expression of faith.

**D. Edmund Hiebert**

Genuine faith acts with compassion  
when faced with practical needs.

*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?*

**1 John 3:17**

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*

**1 John 3:18**

*“By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”*

**Matthew 7:16**

*“Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”*

**Matthew 7:17**

*“A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”*

**Matthew 7:18**

*“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

**Matthew 7:19**

*“Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”*

**Matthew 7:20**

Genuine faith manifests itself  
in observable works.

Stressing the necessity of personal holiness should not undermine in any way our confidence in justification by faith alone. Faith and good works are both necessary. But one is the root and the other is the fruit.

**Kevin DeYoung**

In everything he does, faith is the main ingredient. Just as a motor produces power because an electrical current flows into it, so a Christian produces good deeds because true faith empowers him.

**D. Edmund Hiebert**

Genuine faith transcends right beliefs.

Dead orthodoxy has absolutely no power to save and may in fact even hinder the person from coming to living faith.

**Peter Davids**

Tragically, Hell will have its share of people who are monotheistic, Trinitarian, orthodox, and lost.

**R. Kent Hughes**

Genuine faith takes risks  
because of trust in God.

Abraham's faith was not confined to a mental reorientation at the time of his conversion or to an occasional verbal profession but it was an active force, constantly at work along with his deeds.

**Douglas Moo**

Abraham's faith is perfected — brought to maturity — through his works. Our faith is unfinished without the expression of works.

[Abraham's] works did not earn his justification; they were simply the fruit and the outward evidence of his faith. Had there been no works, Abraham would not have been justified; but that would have been because the absence of works would have meant that he had no real faith.

**D. Edmund Hiebert**

*By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son,*

**Hebrews 11:17**

*even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”*

**Hebrews 11:18**

*Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.*

**Hebrews 11:19**

Abraham was a patriarch, Rahab a prostitute. He was moral, she was immoral. He was the original Jew, she a Gentile woman. He was upwardly mobile, she lived in the gutter.

**R. Kent Hughes**

*By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.*

**Hebrews 11:31**

Genuine faith represents not the enemy  
of works but their very wellspring.

*You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.*

**James 2:24**

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*For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.*

**Romans 3:28**

James is not arguing that works must be *added to* faith. His point, rather, is that genuine biblical faith will inevitably be *characterized by* works.

*Through Him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for His name's sake.*

**Romans 1:5**

*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

**Galatians 5:6**

If a sinner can get into relationship with God only by faith (Paul), the ultimate validation of that relationship takes into account the works that true faith must inevitably produce (James).

**Douglas Moo**

Paul was rooting out “works” that excluded and destroyed saving faith; James was stimulating a sluggish faith that minimized the results of a saving faith in daily life. Both James and Paul view good works as the proof of faith — not the path to salvation.

**D. Edmund Hiebert**

Paul's teaching about faith and works focuses on the time *before* conversion, and James' focus is *after* conversion. Paul was fighting against tradition that promoted a false works salvation. James was fighting against a "lite" faith that minimized the necessity of works after coming to Christ. Paul says works cannot bring us to Christ. James says after we come to Christ they are imperative.

**R. Kent Hughes**

We don't work *for* our salvation; we work *out* our salvation.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —  
and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God —*

**Ephesians 2:8**

*not by works, so that no one can boast.*

**Ephesians 2:9**

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

**Ephesians 2:10**

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,*

**Philippians 2:12**

*for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.*

**Philippians 2:13**

We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.

**Martin Luther**

**Faith without works is  
dead and cannot save.**