



By biblical standards, faith is more than a feeling. Here's how Jacob (aka James) writes it:

"Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." James 2:18b

Are you putting FEET to your FAITH? Today we discover why this is a command to the Christian..

Our Faith is to be a **FAITH THAT WORKS**. It's more than what we SAY, but what we DO.

It's about **Putting Feet to Your Faith**.

BIG TRUTH: Our Walk AMPLIFIES our Talk

1) LIPS + LIVES = CREDIBILITY

2) LIPS - LIVES = HYPOCRISY

If we put faith/trust in Jesus, then why don't we LIVE for him?

James 2:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? **Can that faith save him?**

Martin Luther thought Paul was teaching salvation by faith alone and Jacob (AKA James) was teaching salvation by faith AND works. We must see that the **DISTINCTION** between what Jacob and what Paul mean is NOT a **CONTRADICTION**.

- Paul taught the need for repentant faith and the inability for good works TO SAVE. Our good works don't impress God and He doesn't grade on a curve. Paul makes clear that we are saved by **GRACE** alone, through **FAITH** alone, in **CHRIST** alone (Eph. 2:8-9). But Paul clearly believes that true faith leads to good works, as he writes about that in **EVERY LETTER**.
- James is teaching about the reality that **Real faith has Feet attached**. People who have been genuinely saved want to live like they **ARE** genuinely saved.

James 2:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, **what good is that?**

The answer? It is **NO GOOD**. We must put FEET to FAITH.

The Apostle John says something similar in one of his letters

1 John 3:16-18 (NIV) 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**.

James 2:17-18 (ESV) ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is **dead**. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." [Then Jacob issues this challenge] Show me your faith apart from your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works**.

Actions are different than **intentions**. It's one thing to SAY something & another to DO something. And one way or another...

Our Walk AMPLIFIES our Talk

It either adds to our CREDIBILITY or points to our HYPOCRISY.

And just like many of the Jews in the 1st century, we can point to our **sound theology**. But our behavior either backs up what we believe or shows we are just blowing smoke.

James 2:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder [NET, NLT = tremble]! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that **faith apart from works is useless**?

Did you know that DEMONS have sound theology? They KNOW what the Scriptures say & who the God of the Scriptures is. **God is ONE**, not many. God is the Creator & Judge of all things. Yet, Demons TREMBLED in the presence of Jesus, even begging Him NOT to throw them into the place of punishment (Luke 8:26-33) .

✿ Think of FAITH & WORKS as being 2 the wings of a bird. With only one functioning, the bird will never fly. But with 2 wings working together in concert, the bird can lift & soar into the sky. **FAITH apart from WORKS is useless**.

2 Examples from Jewish History

James 2:21-23 (ESV) ²¹ Was not **Abraham our father** justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? [see Gen. 22] ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Your works don't save you. Jesus died on the cross to do that. But **your good works give evidence that you ARE saved**. This is what Jacob is pointing to. Abraham didn't just SAY, "Okay God, I'll trust You." He TRUSTED GOD, even when the command was strange - offer your son Isaac on the altar. Of course God stopped that from happening and provided a substitute for the sacrifice - a vivid picture of how Jesus would be OUR SUBSTITUTE to SACRIFICE.

Abraham's obedience showed that he trusted God. **He put FEET to FAITH**.

The Other Side of the Spiritual Spectrum

James 2:25 (ESV) ²⁵ And in the same way was not also **Rahab the prostitute** justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? [see Jos. 2]

Rahab lived in Jericho and protected the 2 Jewish spies who were being hunted down.

Rahab the prostitute protected them. She even said these words,

Joshua 2:11 (ESV) "for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath."

Rahab the prostitute was Judaism's ultimate proof of God's forgiveness and the power of repentance.¹ She is also *the great-great-grandmother of King David*, and part of the family tree of Jesus himself (Matthew 1:5)!

James uses two extremes, *Father Abraham* and *Rahab the Prostitute*, to prove his point. Both become examples mentioned multiple times in the New Testament, of people who put FEET to FAITH.

And what was true for them, is true of us...*Our Walk AMPLIFIES our Talk.*

Driving the Point Home

James 2:26 (ESV) ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also **faith apart from works is dead.**

When a person dies, the **body** stays but the **spirit** is gone. Jacob's audience had seen this many times. God designed the body & spirit to function as ONE. So too, FAITH and WORKS were intended to work together. Just as the **body apart from the spirit is dead**, so **faith apart from works is dead.**

JUST IN CASE you think that Jacob is teaching something different than Jesus did, look at the conclusion of what we call "the Sermon on the Mount". Jesus warns,

Matthew 7:21 (ESV) "Not everyone who says to me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**"

Our Walk AMPLIFIES our Talk

What does your WALK say about your TALK? Is your TALK CREDIBLE or HYPOCRITICAL.

- What would it take to weld our beliefs and behavior to make them one? What if we would really become **CREDIBLE CHRISTIANS!!!**
- **HYPOCRITICAL CHRISTIANS:** confess your sin to Jesus AND to another BELIEVER. THEN ask that brother/sister to pray for you and remind you of your CURRENT decision in the FUTURE.

Discussion Questions

1. What challenged, concerned, or encouraged you from today's teaching? What questions did it leave you with that we can address?
2. Do Paul and James contradict each other when they talk about FAITH & WORKS? Why or why not?
3. Why do Paul and James both use Abraham as an example of FEET to FAITH?
4. List the ways that Rahab is an opposite of Abraham, yet the same.
5. Today's BIG TRUTH was: *Our Walk AMPLIFIES our Talk.* Give an example (without using names) of how you have seen this to be true.
6. What would you say to the person who claims to know Jesus yet has no desire nor demonstration of following Him? What is the eternal danger of not confronting that person with the truth according to James, Paul, & Jesus?

¹ Robert James Dr. Utley, *Jesus' Half-Brothers Speak: James and Jude, vol. Volume 11*, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 40.