
JAMES 2:14-17

An Autopsy on Faith



EVALUATING UNPRODUCTIVE FAITH (2:14)

14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

- The fact that salvation is the free gift of God's grace, not a combination of God's activity and man's, is confusing.
- Jesus taught that salvation was the work of God for man, not man's work for God.
 - Matthew 11:25–27
 - Mark 2:16–17
 - Luke 8:9–10
 - John 1:12–13
 - John 6:63
- The Apostle Paul also made the same point – salvation is the work of God for man not man's work for God.
 - Romans 3:28
 - Ephesians 2:8–9

EVALUATING UNPRODUCTIVE FAITH (2:14)

- Jesus and Paul are not saying that those saved by grace can be void of works – the fruit of walking in truth and righteousness.
 - John 8:31–32
 - John 15:8
 - Ephesians 2:10
 - Philippians 2:12–13
- James is not saying anything contrary to the teaching of Jesus, Paul, and Peter.

EVALUATING UNPRODUCTIVE FAITH (2:14)

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?”

- There is no benefit to saying one has faith and has no works.
- There are people in churches today that **say**, *“I have faith,”* but the practice of their lives is not one of consistency in truth and righteousness or concern and compassion for others.

“Can that faith save him?”

- Is a faith that does not empower walking in truth and righteousness and does not inspire concern and compassion for others true saving faith?
- The assurance the deceived find is tied to what they believe, a prayer they prayed, a card they signed, and/or a surface connection with church ministry.

ILLUSTRATING WORTHLESS FAITH (2:15-16)

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,

- James gives an illustration of a brother or sister in the church that is hurting and needy.
- The reaction to the realization of the need of another believer is to SAY, “May you be free from worry. Enjoy the warmth of needed clothing and partake of a good meal.”
- Even though they SAY such things, they do not give them either clothing or food, they only mouth the words as though they had.

■ I John 3:17–18

“what good is that?”

- The empty words are pathetic and are a mockery of the needy in that situation.
- It is as if they are taking credit for doing something because they said something.

CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT (2:17)

17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- People can say, *“I believe in Jesus. He is the Son of God and Savior through His death on the cross. He died to appease the wrath of the Father, grant me forgiveness of sin, give me new affections and new direction in life.”*
 - These are the words of a Christian absent the life of a Christian.
 - A fruitless faith is not an option as long as you say the right words.
- Fruitless faith is the evidence that no spiritual life exists and Christless eternity in hell is all they can hope to receive.
 - John 15:1-5
 - 2 Corinthians 13:5
- All talk and no action – this is not the fruit of saving faith.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Do you have an accurate understanding of Jesus and gospel truth, but a life void of the fruit of transformation and faith?
- Are you willing to nurse the deception?
- If your life does show the fruit of saving faith, are you humbly praising God for His work?

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