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Faith Without Works is Dead

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 /1913 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **February 4, 2018**

James 2:14-26

Introduction: As we look at the scriptures for this week's study, you'll see why I like the title the writers chose for this lesson. James spoke truths in this set of verses about "justification" and "faith" that is "DEAD" that are often misunderstood by well-meaning brothers and sisters who just missed the meaning intended by our Father. As we look at these verses, the most important thing to remember is James wrote this letter to people already BORN AGAIN: in the body of Christ: children of God (Yahweh). Therefore, anything being said to them is NOT meant to get them to DO the next thing required in order to be SAVED.

John 3:14-16, (*Jesus said*) And **AS** (just like) Moses lifted up the **serpent** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever **BELIEVETH** in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God **so loved** the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **BELIEVETH** in him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**.

1 John 5:1, Whosoever **BELIEVETH** that Jesus is the Christ **IS** **BORN** of God...

Acts 10:42-47, And he commanded us to **preach** unto the people, and to testify... that through his **name (authority)** whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the **Holy Ghost** fell on **ALL** them which **heard** the word. ...they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the **gift** of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them **speak with tongues**, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid **water**, that these should not be **baptized**, which **have received** the Holy Ghost as well as we?

Thought 1. They were **born again** and **filled**, the next split second, because of FAITH in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They received it as Peter shared the good news! And as you saw, they did NO WORKS, but, they were indeed "BORN OF GOD."

Ephesians 2:8-10, For by grace are ye saved **through FAITH**; and that not of yourselves: it is the **GIFT** of God: **NOT of WORKS**, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created **IN** Christ Jesus **UNTO** **good WORKS**, which God **hath before ordained** (decree [command, order]) that we should walk in them.

NOTE: ...**for good works:** That beautiful thing God is making of us is **active** in **GOOD** works. These are just as much a part of God's predestined plan as anything else is. These good works are valid **evidence** that someone is walking as one of God's chosen. "Works play **NO part at all** in **securing** salvation. But afterwards Christians will

prove their **faith** by their works. Here Paul shows himself at one with James." (Wood)
(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studylight.org/com/guz)

James 2:14, What doth it **profit (BENEFIT)**, my brethren, though a man say he hath **FAITH**, and have not WORKS? can **FAITH SAVE** him?

Faith defined 4102, pistis Pronounced: *pis'-tis* from 3982; **PERSUASION**, i.e. **Credence** (belief); **moral conviction** (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God, especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, **CONSTANCY** in such profession; --assurance (certainty, confidence), **BELIEF**.

Works defined 2041, ergon Pronounced: *er'-gon*: from a primary (but obsolete) ergo (to work); **TOIL** (as an effort); by impli., an act:--**DEED**, **DOING** [action], **labour**.

Save define 4982, sozo Pronounced: *sode'-zo* from a primary sos (contraction for obsolete saoz, "safe"); to save, i.e. deliver or protect (literally or figuratively): -- heal, preserve, save (self), **DO WELL**, be (make) whole.

Thought 1. This is the entire definition of the Greek word for "SAVE." As you can see, there are a number of meanings from which to choose. Therefore, the question is which one, or ones, **FIT** the scripture at which we are looking. This is where the help of the Holy Spirit comes in, as we examine the **CONTEXT** of the discussion being held with the people to whom James is talking.

Remember, in this verse, he called them "BRETHREN". As a matter of fact, he used this term all through this letter to confirm the fact that they already **ARE Christians!**

James 1:1-2, James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren....

Therefore, this truth makes "DO WELL" the obvious meaning intended! He's speaking of our faith. first, **BENEFITING** us, then, others. He begins to make clear the truth that **EXCEPT** we, **BY** faith, **DO** certain **WORKS**: engage in certain **ACTIONS**, lead by the Holy Spirit giving us God's wisdom, our faith is doing **NOTHING** for us, or anybody.

James 2:15-17, If a **brother** or **sister** be **naked**, and **destitute** of daily **food**, And one of you SAY unto them, *Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye GIVE them NOT those things which are NEEDFUL to the body; what doth it profit (BENEFIT)?* Even so **faith**, IF it hath **NOT works (toil, an act, deed, doing)**, is **DEAD**, being alone.

Dead defined 3498, Transliterated: nekros Pronounced: *nek-ros'* Text: from an **apparently primary nekus** (a corpse [something that is no longer **ACTIVE** or full of animation]); **dead (literally or fig.; also as noun): --dead** (lacking in commercial **ACTIVITY**: **IDLE** [inactive; **doing nothing**]).

Thought 1. Again, the key to understanding what he said is in the word "PROFIT", meaning "BENEFIT." Then, he just plainly says, without **WORKS**, our faith is **IDLE**, inactive; doing **NOTHING!** But, God "ordained" us to **DO** "good works." Eph. 2:10

Furthermore, calling to memory certain scriptures, and seeing the definition of "DEAD", we **KNOW** that "faith" is **NOT** of death. It is spiritual, from God and of the things that pertain to "LIFE and godliness." (2 Peter 1:1-3)

Psalms 119:130, The **entrance (opening** [interpreting: **EXPLAINING**]) of thy **WORDS** giveth **light (illumination** [enlightening of the understanding by knowledge, or the mind by spiritual light]); it giveth **UNDERSTANDING** unto to the **simple (foolish)**.

Romans 10:17, So then **FAITH** cometh by **HEARING**, and **HEARING** by the word **OF** (from, or **ABOUT**) God.

Hearing defined 189, akoe pronounced ak-o-ay' from 191; hearing (the act, the sense (UNDERSTANDING) OR the thing heard).

Thought 2. So, Rom. 10:17 says: So then faith cometh by UNDERSTANDING, and UNDERSTANDING by the word FROM or ABOUT God. Remember, Rahab's faith came from hearing ABOUT God's (Yahweh's) works to deliver/protect Israel. Jos. 2:1-11 Therefore, Hebrews 11 testifies to the "GIFT of FAITH" she received from Yahweh by including her in, what is sometimes called, "The Hall of Faith." Even though the Greek word for "gift" in Ephesians 2:8 is not the same word for "gift" in James 1:17, the TRUTH to remember is they BOTH come FROM God (Yahweh).

James 1:16-18, Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every **good GIFT** and every perfect GIFT is **FROM ABOVE**, and cometh **DOWN FROM** the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will **begat (breed forth)** he us with the **WORD** of TRUTH...

Thought 3. Again, looking at James 1, we see the "faith" they have is a "GIFT" from God through which, he "begat" them as his children with LIFE. What he wants now is us to "SHOW" our faith by doing the good deeds he's ordained.

James 2:18, *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: SHEW me thy faith WITHOUT thy works, and I will SHEW thee my faith BY my WORKS.*

NOTE: The appeal of James is clear and logical. We can't "SEE" someone's faith, but we can SEE their works. You can't **SEE** faith without works, but you can demonstrate the **REALITY of faith BY works.**

(Source: David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible classic.studylight.org/com/guz)

James 2:19-20, *Thou believest that there is one God; thou **DOEST well (morally good):** the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou **KNOW,** O vain man, that **faith** without **works** is **dead (IDLE [inactive; doing nothing])?***

Thought 1. Again, he acknowledges their salvation in Christ and that they have done what is "morally good": believing that there is one God. But the devils also believe the same truth. And out of knowing what Yahweh can do to them, they tremble!

Then he says Christians who are NOT PROFITING anybody by putting their FAITH to WORK, are just LIKE the demons who do NOT help anybody either!

However, salvation is only for humans, so "belief" by the demons cannot help them by making them creatures of life: new creations. They will forever remain creatures of death: void of the LIFE of God; in Satan's kingdom. On the other hand, because of our faith, we have been translated into God's kingdom with LIFE in us, being new creations IN Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Therefore if any man be IN Christ, he is a **new creature** old things are passed away; behold (SEE), **ALL things** are become NEW. And **ALL** things **ARE** of God...

James 2:21, *Was not Abraham our father **JUSTIFIED** by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*

Justified defined 1344, to render (to cause to BE or become: MAKE) (i.e. **SHOW** or regard as) **JUST** or **innocent: RIGHTEOUS.**

Thought 1. Since there are TWO definitions for the Greek word, "justified", we'll need the help of the Holy Spirit to determine which ONE makes known what God meant.

The answer lies in first knowing when God said that Abraham believed him, and that it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Genesis 15:6, And he **believed** in the Lord; and he **counted** it to him for RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Genesis 22:10-13, And Abraham **stretched** forth his **hand**, and took the **knife** to SLAY his son. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay **not** thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou **fearest** God, **SEEING** thou hast **not** withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Hebrews 11:17-19, By **faith** Abraham, when he was tried, **offered** up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy **seed** be called: **ACCOUNTING** that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a **figure**.

Accounting defined 3049, to take an inventory, i.e. estimate (lit. or fig.): conclude, reason (to think logically), **reckon** (think, view, add it up).

CONCLUSION: So, we can see that because Abraham believed God, first, it was counted to him as righteousness. However, years later he was **SHOWN** to be **RIGHTEOUS**, when he had obeyed the Lord and offered up his son. So, the correct definition of "justified" to be chosen is the one that says, "**SHOW**" as just or innocent: righteous.

James 2:22-23, *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith **MADE PERFECT?** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham **believed** God, and it was **IMPUTED** unto him for **righteousness**: and he was called the Friend of God.*

Made was added by the translators

Perfect defined 5048, to complete [finished: having reached the normal or expected end].

James 2:24, *Ye see then how that by **works** a man is **justified** (**SHOW just or innocent**), and not by **faith** only.*

Thought 1. Once again, since we know he's trying to persuade Christians to DO the works that God has commanded, his reasoning is NOT about being "made" righteous by faith.

James 2:25-26, *Likewise also was not **Rahab** the harlot **justified** (**SHOW just or innocent**), by WORKS, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is **dead** (IDLE [inactive; doing nothing]), so **faith** without **works** is **dead** (IDLE [inactive; doing nothing]) also.*

Thought 1. He wraps up his point about Christians should DO "works" that "SHOW" they have faith by reminding them of how Rahab the prostitute "SHOWED" the faith she had in God. As we know, she believed that Israel would take Jericho, so she helped the spies. Then, she struck a deal with them because she had helped them and would keep secret their business about coming back to do battle and defeat Jericho's army.

James then concludes his reasoning by reminding them once again that their bodies are can DO NOTHING to "profit" (benefit) anyone, once their spirit leaves it. He then says it's also true that neither does "faith" without "WORKS" "profit" (benefit) anyone.

This wisdom from our Father was given to strengthen them, and help grow them UP, renewing and enlightening their MINDS to give them a good understanding, which would cause them to obey God's command to DO good WORKS as they have the opportunity. (Galatians 6:9) In DOING so, their WORKS will **SHOW** their faith.