

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

(Proverbs 26:4-5)

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 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? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 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. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 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? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

James 2:14-26

James is not trying to explain how faith justifies, but rather to describe the character of the faith that justifies.

James describes two kinds of faith:

1. Faith without works (v.17)
2. Faith made manifest in works (v.18)

Faith without works

1. Faith without works cannot save (v.14)
2. Faith without works is merely words (v.14)
3. Faith without works is merely intellectual (v.19)

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. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

(Matthew 7:21-23)

Faith without works

1. Faith without works cannot save (v.14)
2. Faith without works is merely words (v.14)
3. Faith without works is merely intellectual (v.19)
4. Faith without works does not lead to love (vv.15-16)

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

(1 Corinthians 13:2)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

(Galatians 5:6)

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

(1 John 3:10-15)

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