

Faith Works Through Love
International Bible Lesson
James 2:14-26
Sunday, February 16, 2014
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“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”
(James 2:26—KJV).

“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead” (James 2:26—NRSV).

God gives faith in Jesus Christ so believers can do the works of God. The scribes and Pharisees in Jesus’ day only performed the works that their laws and traditions demanded; however, since their works focused on their obeying laws and traditions, they became increasingly self-centered. They lost their love for God; they felt they lived under God’s judgmental eyes; they judged others, and they ceased to care for the needy. Christianity teaches that those who trust in and follow Jesus Christ will automatically do good works and bless others. Jesus Christ leads the way and shows the work to be done, and His followers go and do His will. They go and do because they love Jesus and appreciate everything He has done and continues to do for them. Prior to knowing Jesus Christ as Savior, people never know if they have done enough good works to please God. When they come to know Jesus as their Savior and King, they know that His sacrificial death for them made possible God’s just and merciful forgiveness and granted them eternal life. For this reason, those who follow Jesus can turn their focus from self-centered works and look to God with hearts of devotion. They pray and ask God how they can best use the gifts He has freely given them to help the needy. They can work to help others find the joy and freedom from slavery to sin that they have found through faith in Jesus Christ. True faith in Christ supernaturally moves Christians to live for God and do the works God has planned, prepared, called, and gifted them to do.

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Thinking Further

1. What type of love should true faith in Jesus Christ inspire within true believers?
2. According to James, what unreasonable or senseless response does the person who says he has faith, but has no works, give to the hungry person who has no food?
3. If someone's faith is nothing more than intellectual belief, how might that make a difference in the way they live? Can you think of some examples?
4. Hebrews 11 describes faith: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). What did this assurance and conviction of some of those listed in Hebrews 11 lead them to do?
5. How is faith brought to completion by works?