

Faith and Works

Faith Without Works is Dead: A Study on James 2:14-26

(My brothers, what [is] the gain if anyone says he has faith, but he does not have works? Is the faith able to save him? But if a brother or a sister is naked and may be lacking in daily food, and any one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but does not give them the things the body needs, what gain [is it]? So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself. 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 out of my works. You believe that God is One. You do well; even the demons believe and shudder. But are you willing to know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is dead? Was not our father Abraham justified by works offering up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith worked with his works; and out of the works the faith was perfected. And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, "And Abraham believed God, and it was counted for righteousness to him;" and he was called, Friend of God. You see, then, that a man is justified out of works, and not out of faith only. But in the same way Rahab the harlot was also justified out of works, having received the messengers, and sending them out by another way. For as the body is dead apart from the spirit, so also faith is dead apart from works.

James 2:14-26 has been a controversial passage down through the ages and continues to be controversial in some circles today. Some would say that this passage proves that the book of James is not inspired. Others say that this is the so-called "Arminian side" of Christianity that needs to balance out the so-called "Calvinist side." Some Arminians say that this disproves salvation by grace alone. None of these are true. This passage in James is a vital part of the inerrant, inspired Word of God, and it puts forth essential Christian doctrine. And it would not be controversial if people would understand the relationship between faith and works. Let us go through this passage step-by-step.

James 2:14. *My brothers, what [is] the gain if anyone says he has faith, but he does not have works? Is the faith able to save him?*

This verse is made up of two rhetorical questions. It is saying that there is no gain if anyone says he has faith but does not have good works. This professed faith is not the true faith that all believers possess. James is combating the heretics who were saying that one can believe the gospel and yet not have any good works to manifest that faith. It is a form of antinomianism. It is the "carnal Christian" heresy. Those who espouse this view are the ones who say that believers can live just like the immoral, irreligious world, but as long as they believe, they are saved, even though their works are evil. The Holy Spirit through James says that this is impossible. Someone who says he believes the gospel, even the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, but who has no accompanying good works, is not regenerate. God even says in Romans 6 that believers do not live in sin (v. 2), do not serve sin (v. 6), are slaves of obedience to righteousness (vv. 16, 18), and have their fruit unto sanctification (v. 22).

James 2:15-16. *But if a brother or a sister is naked and may be lacking in daily food, and any one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but does not give them the things the body needs, what gain [is it]?*

James gives an illustration of someone who is in need of food and clothing and someone who has the means to help that person. The person who has the means to help is saying to the person who is in need, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled.” What good have those words done the person who is in need? If one meets a person who is dying of thirst and tells him, “May you be blessed with a drink,” what good has it done that person who is dying of thirst? These are nothing but empty words. The person with means has done nothing to help the person in need.

James 2:17. *So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself.*

James shows how faith without works is like the person who says “be warmed and filled” but does not give the person any food and clothing. Just as the words are empty words, this supposed faith is an empty faith. It has no substance. If someone says he believes the gospel (and can even articulate the true gospel and his agreement with it) but lives in immorality or manifests a disregard for God’s commands or is not striving after obedience, his profession is an empty profession. This is the same with someone who says that he believes the gospel but who does not love the people of God; he really does not believe the gospel, as we see in 1 John:

The [one] claiming to be in the light, and hating his brother, is in the darkness until now. The [one] loving his brother rests in the light, and no offense is in him. But the [one] hating his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:9-11)

Here is one who says he is in the light, who says he has faith, but who hates his brother. God says that this person who claims to be a believer is actually unregenerate. His professed faith, with no accompanying love for the brothers, is dead.

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. The [one] not loving the brother remains in death. (1 John 3:14)

Love of the brothers is an inevitable fruit of regeneration. It is evidence of a believing heart.

Whoever has the means of life of the world, and sees his brother having need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue, but in deed and truth. (1 John 3:16-17)

Here is another rhetorical question. The one who has the means and knows his brother is in need, yet he does not love his brother by giving to him, does not have the love of God abiding in him. Love is not in word but in works.

If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one not loving his brother

whom he has seen, how is he able to love God whom he has not seen? (1 John 4:20)

Again, here is one professing to have faith but who hates his brother. God calls this person a liar. His profession of faith is a lie. It is a dead faith.

The book of 1 John shows us that love of the brothers is one of the primary evidences of a true faith. How is love of the brothers manifested? We love the same things our brothers love. We hate the same things our brothers hate. We love our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. We hate all false gospels that condition salvation in any way, to any degree, on the sinner. We speak peace to each other based on our common salvation. We do not speak peace to our brothers' enemies. We desire to fellowship with each other. We rejoice together in Christ and defend each other against the attacks of our enemies. We help each other in times of need.

Those who do not love the people of God show that they are not of God. For example, if a professing believer says that some who believe in universal atonement are his brothers in Christ, then he is speaking peace to the enemies of the people of God. This shows that he actually hates the people of God and that his professed faith is a lie.

James 2:18. *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 out of my works.*

Here James refutes those who say that works and faith can be ripped apart such that one person can have faith with no works and another person can have works with or without faith. He is saying, "Go ahead and try to show me your faith apart from your works." Remember that he is talking about one who claims to have faith but who has no accompanying works. Thus, James is saying that it is impossible for this man to show true faith when his works are evil, such as not loving the brothers. James counters by saying that he will show you his faith from his works. He is saying that his works are evidences of his faith. A faith with no evidences is not true faith.

James 2:19. *You believe that God is One. You do well; even the demons believe and shudder.*

James continues to speak to the person who professes to have faith but has no works to evidence his faith. He says that this person professes to believe in one God, not in many gods. In other words, this person professes to be a monotheist, not a polytheistic idolater. James then says, "Well, good for you – even the demons believe this, to the point of being afraid of God." He is saying that this person's profession of believing in one God is no more than what the demons believe. It is another way of saying, "Big deal!" or "So what!" Are we to be impressed when we see a person say, "I first want to thank God," or even "I believe in the one true and living God"? Are we to get all excited and say, "He's a believer!?" No. So what if a person says this. Millions of people say things like this who are on their way to hell. They do not mean a thing. If we were in this person's presence, we could start asking questions, but these statements in and of themselves are no evidence of a person's spiritual state.

Some people use this verse to say that orthodoxy is not important. They say, “You can have all the doctrine right, but that doesn’t mean you’re saved. Even the demons are orthodox. They have all the right doctrine.” It is true that people can profess to believe all the right gospel doctrine and still be lost; but if they believe all the right gospel doctrine, then they are obviously saved. There is no such monstrosity as a person who believes all the right gospel doctrine who is unsaved. This might lead some to accuse us of holding to the faith without works heresy. However, they miss an important point: If a person believes right gospel doctrine, then he will automatically bring forth good works. There is no such thing as truly believing right gospel doctrine and not having good works.

What about the so-called “orthodox demons”? This passage is not saying that the demons are orthodox. It is saying that they believe in one God and shudder. It is saying that the demons are monotheists. It is not saying that they believe right doctrine about salvation. They shudder because they only know the wrath of God. They do not know the mercy of God. Hebrews 11:6 says that “*the one drawing near to God should believe that He is, and [that] He becomes a rewarder to the ones seeking Him out.*” Believing that there is one God is certainly part of the equation, but there is much more to it than that. A believer not only knows that there is one God, but he knows who God is and what God has done in salvation. Romans 10:3 says that the one who is ignorant of the righteousness of God is lost. That means that one who does not know how God is just to justify the ungodly based solely on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ is lost (Romans 3:21-26). Those who have no knowledge of God as a just God and a Savior are praying to a god who cannot save (Isaiah 45:20-21).

James 2:20. *But are you willing to know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is dead?*

James calls the one who claims to believe in God but has no accompanying works an empty man. His words are empty, his profession is empty, and he is empty. James then reiterates to this vain man that his so-called faith is dead, as evidenced by the fact that it is not accompanied by works.

James 2:21. *Was not our father Abraham justified by works offering up his son Isaac on the altar?*

James now goes into an example of faith evidenced by works. Abraham, out of obedience to God, offered up Isaac on the altar. The rhetorical question that James puts forth states clearly that, in this act of offering up his son, Abraham was justified by works. Now the controversy starts spinning more rapidly. How could James say that Abraham was justified by works, when Paul said in Romans 3:28, “*Then we conclude a man to be justified by faith without works of Law*” and said in Romans 4:2, “*For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a boast, but not with God*”? Are Paul and James contradicting each other here? Not to those who believe the Bible. It is God the Holy Spirit through Paul and James who wrote these things. The same Holy Spirit wrote through James as wrote through Paul. God never contradicts Himself. God is One. He is in perfect unity with Himself. He is only truth. That is why none of the Scripture contradicts itself.

How are these verses reconciled? It is not difficult. James is talking about a different kind of justification than Paul is talking about. Paul is talking about justification as being declared righteous before God. James is talking about justification as proving that one's faith is real. 1 John 2:3-6 says this:

And by this we know that we have known Him, if we keep His commands. The [one] saying, I have known Him, and not keeping His commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that one. But whoever keeps His Word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. The [one] claiming to rest in Him ought so to walk himself as that [One] walked.

Our works are what prove our faith to be real. In this sense, we are justified by works. So Abraham, by faith, offered up Isaac, showing that he believed God's promise.

James 2:22. *You see that faith worked with his works; and out of the works the faith was perfected.*

The first part of this verse says that Abraham's faith worked with his works, and, by extension, our faith works with our works. Our works spring from our faith. Our works are fruits – results – of our faith. What does James mean when he says, "out of the works the faith was perfected?" Does it mean that the faith got better? Does it mean that Abraham believed the gospel more because of his works? No. It means that faith is shown to be complete by works. It is just another way of saying that faith by itself is not a true, living faith. It is only a true faith if it is a faith that produces works. Faith accompanied by works is the only true, complete faith.

James 2:23. *And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, And Abraham believed God, and it was counted for righteousness to him; and he was called, Friend of God.*

James quotes Genesis 15:6, just as Paul quotes it in Romans 4:3. James and Paul are in agreement. James then quotes Isaiah 41:8, where Abraham is called a friend of God. How did Abraham show that he was a friend of God? By his works of obedience. And his works of obedience sprang from his belief of God's promise.

James 2:24. *You see, then, that a man is justified out of works, and not out of faith only.*

This is the conclusion that James reaches from the Scriptures he quoted. A man is justified out of works, and not out of faith only. Does that sound heretical to you? If it does, then you are saying that God sounds heretical to you. The Literal Version (LITV) uses the phrase "out of" rather than "by." This is not only easier to understand but is a better translation. The Greek word translated "out of" is also translated "out of" in passages like Mark 15:46 that says that the tomb was cut out of rock, and in John 10:28, Jesus says, "not anyone shall pluck them out of my hand." There are many more biblical examples. The word can also be translated "by," "from," or "of," but even in most of these instances, "out of" makes sense. (If the LITV were consistent, it would have translated verse 21 to say that Abraham was justified out of works.) Again, God is saying

through James that our works are evidence of our faith. Our faith is proven by our works.

James 2:25. But in the same way Rahab the harlot was also justified out of works, having received the messengers, and sending them out by another way.

Rahab is given as an example of justification out of works. Her works showed that her belief in the God of Israel was real. Hebrews 11:3 says, “By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those disobeying, having received the spies with peace.” In Joshua 3:11, Rahab told the spies, “For Jehovah your God, He is God in the heavens above, and in the earth below.” She showed her faith by helping Israel.

(As an aside, some use the passages on Rahab to say that lying is permitted and even necessary for Christians in some circumstances when there is a “greater good.” They say that the Bible commends Rahab’s lying – that her lying was one of the works that evidenced her faith. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nowhere does the Bible say that Rahab’s lying was included in her acts of faith, because the Bible never contradicts itself. The Bible is clear that lying, in every instance, is sin. It is sin even when it is committed by a woman of faith whose other works during the same time frame were evidences of her faith. These verses do not say or even imply the horrendous notion that lying is considered a great act of faith.)

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

James compares the body-spirit connection to the faith-works connection. If you did not have a spirit inside you, what would your body be doing right now? It would be just lying there – it would be dead. All living human beings have spirits in them. Upon death, the spirit departs from the body. If there is no spirit, there is no life. The same goes for faith and works; if there are no works, there is no faith. If there is faith but no works, it is like a body with no spirit. It is dead. A body with no spirit is really not a person anymore. Faith with no works is really not true faith.

Do you see how important good works are? They are not an option. They are not something that some Christians have and other Christians do not have. They are inevitable and essential fruits of true faith.

Whenever we believers talk of things that are impossible for any believer to do (things that are necessarily indicative of lostness) or things that all believers without exception do (inevitable and essential fruits), the antinomians and false peace-speakers will invariably say that we are conditioning salvation on the believer’s doing or abstaining from doing certain things. This shows that they are ignorant of the vital distinction between conditions and fruits. What part do good works play when it comes to gaining salvation, maintaining salvation, or making one fit for heaven? ABSOLUTELY NO PART. Our works do not secure salvation in any way to any degree. Our works do not help us to maintain our salvation in any way to any degree. Our works do not make us fit for heaven or deserving of heaven in any way to any degree. The atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ is the only ground of salvation, from regeneration to final glory. Our good works flow from a heart that has been given faith, and our good works are

the response of a heart that loves the God who has saved us based on the work of Christ alone.

All God's people do have good works, no exceptions. It is not because the works form any part of the basis of our salvation, but it is because we are God's "*workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them*" (Ephesians 2:10). A heart that has been created to love God will do good works from that love. Let us who love God be diligent to show that love and to evidence our faith by our works. Amen.

Works Without Faith are Dead

We have seen that faith without works is a dead faith. But did you know that the Bible talks about dead works as well? Hebrews 9:13-14 says this:

"For if the blood of bulls and goats, and ashes of a heifer sprinkling those having been defiled, sanctifies to the purity of the flesh, by how much more [the] blood of Christ (who through [the] eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God), will purify your conscience from dead works, to serve [the] living God!

Paul uses another term for "dead works" in Romans 7:5; he calls them "fruit unto death":

For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members through the Law for the bearing of fruit unto death.

When the Bible talks of dead works and fruit unto death, what do these phrases mean? We first see that fruit unto death comes from those who are "*in the flesh.*" Who are those who are "*in the flesh*"? Let us look at Romans 8:5-13:

For the ones that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh. And the ones according to Spirit [mind] the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit [is] life and peace; because the mind of the flesh [is] enmity towards God; for it is not being subjected to the Law of God, for neither can [it be]. And those being in the flesh are not able to please God. But you are not in flesh, but in Spirit, since [the] Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone has not [the] Spirit of Christ, this one is not His. But if Christ [is] in you, the body indeed [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of the [One] having raised Jesus from [the] dead dwells in you, the [One] having raised the Christ from [the] dead will also make your mortal bodies live through the indwelling of His Spirit in you. So, then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh, for if you live according to flesh, you are going to die. But if by [the] Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

Paul contrasts those who are in the flesh with those who are in the Spirit. The ones who are in the Spirit are those who are alive. The ones who are in the flesh are those who are dead. Notice

that one cannot be in the Spirit and in the flesh at the same time. There is a heresy going around that a person can be “in the Spirit” one day and “in the flesh” the next. Romans 8 demolishes this heresy. Also note in verse 8 that those who are in the flesh are not able to please God. Take some time to think about this. Does Romans 8:8 say that those who are in the flesh please God some of the time? No – they are never able to please God, no matter what they do. Here is where we get into “dead works” and “fruit unto death.” They are the works of someone who is in the flesh. And they are not just some of the works of someone who is in the flesh; they are all of the works of someone who is in the flesh. No matter how good these works look to the world, these works are dead works and fruit unto death.

Compare Romans 8:8 to Hebrews 11:6:

But without faith it is impossible to please God.

Do you see the connection? God says that those who are in the flesh are not able to please God, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Those who are in the flesh are those without faith. Those without faith cannot do any truly good works. All their works are dead works and fruit unto death. Thus, works without faith are dead. So-called “good works” that flow from a person without faith are dead works. And since these works are not pleasing to God, what are they? They are hateful to God. They are an abomination to God.

Let us consider Romans 7:5 again. When most religionists think of fruit unto death, their minds will usually go to immorality. It is true that when those without faith perform acts of immorality, this is fruit unto death. But look at the context before and after verse 5:

So that, my brothers, you also were made dead to the Law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, to the One raised from the dead, so that we may bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members through the Law for the bearing of fruit unto death. But now we have been set free from the Law, having died to that in which we were held, so as for us to serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.
(Romans 7:4-6)

In verse 4, Paul talks of believers being made dead to the law. In fact, he says that one must be dead to the law in order to bear fruit unto God. In verse 6, he says that Christians have been set free from the law and do not serve in oldness of the letter but in newness of spirit. Is Paul talking about immorality here? When we read verse 5 in context, we see that bearing fruit unto death in this verse is not talking about immorality! Now if those who bring forth “fruit to God” are dead to the law, then those who bring forth “fruit unto death” are alive to the law! What does it mean to be alive to the law? Paul uses himself as an example. What was Paul doing when he was bringing forth dead works and fruit unto death? He says in Philippians 2 that he kept the law! He was zealous and moral. And all his law-keeping, all his zealousness, and all his morality were “fruit unto death.” Why? Because works without faith are dead. Paul, when he was Saul of Tarsus, did not have faith. He was alive to the law, and being alive to the law means to be void of faith. Saul of Tarsus was a law-abiding, God-fearing, religious man. Yet because he did not

have true faith, his works were dead. “Alive to the law” means that he thought that his law-keeping, his obedience, his morality, formed at least some part of the ground of his obtaining and maintaining salvation and favor with God. Thus, he was a debtor to do the whole law (Galatians 5:3). He was a slave to the law, because in it he thought he had eternal life. But once God regenerated him, what happened? He became dead to the law and free from the law. Does that mean that he then tossed out God’s commandments as his rule of life? By no means. As seen at the end of verse 6, Paul served God – he continued to strive to obey God’s commands – but he did it in newness of spirit rather than oldness of letter. Again, we see that before Paul was saved, he served in the letter of the law. This is not immorality; this is striving for perfect obedience. Before he was saved, he strove to obey every single jot and tittle of the law. But it was in oldness of letter. It was dead works. Why? Because works without faith are dead. He had the works, but he did not have true faith. What was the evidence that he did not have true faith? Was it that he went out and committed all kinds of immoral acts? No. The evidence that he did not have true faith was that he was zealous to obey God’s law out of the belief that his salvation was conditioned on his works. He thought that his good works were what made the difference between salvation and damnation. He was like the Pharisee in Luke 18 who was so proud of his works and who despised the tax collector because he thought that his good works were what made the difference between his own saved state and the tax collector’s lost state. But when God saved him and gave him knowledge of the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, he served God in newness of spirit. He realized that his law-keeping formed absolutely no part of the ground of his salvation and acceptance before God. He realized that it was the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone that made the difference between salvation and damnation. It was this knowledge that caused him to count all things to be loss in Philippians 3:8. After God regenerated him, his obedience was “*fruit to God*” rather than “*fruit unto death.*” God was pleased with Paul’s good works. They were works that sprang from true faith, rather than dead, empty works, that sprang from dead faith.

Do you see how it all fits together? In man’s natural, unregenerate state, all he can do is produce dead works and fruit unto death. He may be immoral and unconcerned, or he may be moral and zealous. He may have never set foot in a church building, or he may be diligent to attend every service and Bible study and be an active member or even a deacon or a pastor. But all his works are dead if he does not have faith. Those who do not have faith believe that their works form at least some part of the ground of their salvation, whether it be initial regeneration or maintaining salvation or entitlement to heaven. This includes everyone who believes that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, because they do not believe that it is the work of Christ alone that makes the difference between salvation and damnation; instead, they believe that it is the effort of the sinner that makes the difference. They do not have true faith in the true and living God. They do not believe the true gospel of salvation by the work of Christ alone. And since they do not have faith, their works are dead. Everything they do is an abomination to God.

But when God regenerates someone, He gives that person a knowledge of the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. All good works that spring from this faith are living works, not dead works. Their works evidence their faith. They love the brothers by not speaking peace to their brothers’ enemies. They have a true desire to

obey, motivated by a love for God out of the newness of the spirit, not out of the oldness of the letter.

Let us now consider the issue of making judgments in light of the two articles (“Faith Without Works is Dead” and “Works Without Faith are Dead”). I will give some scenarios to help illustrate the points.

Let us first go over judgments in light of the principle that faith without works is dead. Suppose Mr. Smith says that he believes in the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Suppose he says that he believes all of the doctrines of grace and considers anything opposing the doctrines of grace to be heresy. Now also suppose that he knowingly speaks peace to universal atonement advocates. His profession of belief in the gospel sounds orthodox, but his actions show that he hates the brothers. Here we apply the principle that faith without good works is dead. Mr. Smith’s faith is shown to be dead by his evil deeds. The same would apply if Mr. Smith’s profession sounded orthodox but he was a homosexual or an adulterer or any other kind of person that the Bible says is unregenerate.

Let us now go over judgments in light of the principle that works without faith are dead. Suppose Mr. Smith is a professing Christian who is the model citizen, whose outward life is impeccable, who worships according to the Regulative Principle, who advocates for modesty of dress, who home-schools his children, who does not let his children watch even the slightest hint of immorality on television, etc. Now also suppose that he believes that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception. We judge this person to be unregenerate, because all those works without belief in the true God, the true Christ, the true gospel, are dead, no matter how good they look outwardly.

Thus far in the two scenarios, I have talked about professing Christians. But what if we do not know what the person professes? What if all we see is that the person is living a life that is characterized by immorality? Is this enough to judge a person lost, without knowing what this person believes? Yes it is. Look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

Or do you not know that unjust ones will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous ones, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers shall inherit the kingdom of God. And some of you were these things, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.

Here God gives us a list of kinds of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God. If we see someone who is one of these kinds of people, then we already know without asking them that they do not have true faith. God gives us certain evidences that a person does not believe the true gospel without our having to talk with that person.

What if one of these people who are described in 1 Corinthians 6 turns out to profess belief in the true gospel? Would that change our judgment of this person? No. That gets into the principle

that faith without works is dead. An immoral person who professes to believe the true gospel and an immoral person who does not claim to be a Christian are both unregenerate. And if both are unregenerate as shown by their works, then what they profess is not going to influence our judgment of either one.

To conclude these two articles, the two principles put together show us that a true believer is one who has a true faith and good works, while an unregenerate person is one who has neither true faith nor good works. There is no such thing as a person who has a true faith and dead works or a person who has dead faith and good works. There is not a single Christian who does not have true faith. This means that there is not a single Christian who does not believe the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone.

There is not a single Christian who believes that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception. It is absolutely impossible. The reason it is impossible is that when God regenerates a person, He gives that person a knowledge that the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ is what makes the only difference between salvation and damnation.

There is also not a single Christian who does not have good works. There is no such monstrosity as a regenerate person with no good works. The reason for this is that God, when He gives us a new heart, causes us to do good works out of love for Him.

On the other side, there is not a single unregenerate person who believes the true gospel. Belief of the true gospel is something that is impossible for an unregenerate person to do. They walk in darkness. They are blind to the only ground of salvation. They are going about to establish a righteousness of their own. Even the tolerant Calvinists who profess to believe in the doctrines of grace and who can give you all the Scripture references for all the doctrines fit into this category. They say they believe the gospel, and at the same time, they say that universal atonement advocates believe the same gospel they do. This shows that they really do not believe the true gospel and that they are correct in saying that universal atonement advocates believe the same gospel they do, which is the false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner. There is also not a single unregenerate person who has good works. Everything that an unregenerate person does, from the vilest immorality to the heights of morality, is wicked and evil. They are under God's curse, and God hates them and everything they do. They constantly bring forth evil deeds and fruit unto death.

Let us always remember that faith and works are inextricably linked. If there are no good works, there is no faith. If there is no faith, there are no good works. And let us who are Christians rejoice that the blood of Christ has purged our consciences from dead works to serve the true and living God. Amen.

by Marc D. Carpenter
www.outsidethecamp.org