



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Faith is Found – Part 1
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Main Idea – When God’s Word says that faith without works is dead, it is telling us to combine actions with spiritual behavior. They must work together; one without the other accomplishes little.

Faith Must Produce Actions, and Actions Must Be Accompanied by God’s Word

- We must help others in their place of need. We are not doing God’s work if we simply pray for people while we also have the ability to help them materially in their need. **James 2: 14-18 – What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus 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 without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.**
- Likewise, it doesn’t accomplish anything long-term if we only give philanthropically. Our gifts should be accompanied with prayer and the expression of God’s Word.
Matthew 26:11 – For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.
Isaiah 55:11 – So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

Begin Your Faith Journey Toward Your Destiny

- The Old Testament patriarch Abraham is known as the father of our faith. Abraham knew God’s promise for his life, but he did not know how he would get there. Nevertheless, he took actions based on the faith knowing that God would lead him to the destiny.
- **Hebrews 11: 8-9 – By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;**

- Another popular phrase that says something similar is: “Faith is walking out on a limb and cutting it off and then watching the tree fall.”
- There is no short-cut to our destiny. Each step prepares us for the ultimate purpose. We usually don’t know the route the journey will take when we follow God in faith.

Be honest With Yourself Before Beginning the Journey

- It’s impossible to begin a journey toward something without knowing your present location.
- It’s impossible to begin a journey following God without being honest about your current condition.
- Studying the Bible and listening for the guidance of the Holy Spirit will help you understand your current condition. Like GPS and a map, God will help you locate your current place, and will guide you as you go.

Faith as a Verb

- **James 1: 23-24 – For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.**
- In **John 15: 1-8**, Jesus described himself as a vine, and we believers as branches. The fruit comes out of the branches, not the vine. Every unproductive branch gets pruned. Jesus was telling his followers they needed to produce something.
- The Greek word for *abide* in verse 4 is “meno”, which *is a verb*.
- The Greek word for *faith* is “pistis”, which *has a verb form* “pisteuo” – to think to be true. It is an action word.
- If faith does not have movement, it isn’t faith.

Jesus is Serious About This

- In **Mark 11: 12-14** Jesus cursed a fig tree that did not have fruit available when he needed it. If the figs are a metaphor for works, and the leaves on the tree are a metaphor for faith, the tree was of no use to Jesus because it was not producing works and faith at the same time.
- **Matthew 7: 21-23 – Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’**
Luke 6: 46-49 – “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them,

I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”

- Works and faith - working independently without each other - are not likely to bring someone to faith.
- If we are serious about following Jesus to our destiny, we should combine good works with the good Word we share.

God is the Source of Good Works

- God the Father took action. He sacrificed His Son.
- In the process of accepting Jesus as Savior, God gives us the essential faith and we then take action by confessing it. **Romans 10: 9-10 – that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**
- Express your faith to others while showing it by your actions.
- Do nice things for others as you express your faith.
- God is the source of both the faith and the works.

Reflective Questions for Faith is Found – Part 1

1. For the past 2000 years, some Christians have been troubled by the New Testament verses in James that say “faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead.” Why is this sometimes confusing for people?
2. Why is it impossible for someone who has genuine faith to remain inactive from doing good things for others?
3. If Jesus said, “the poor you have with you always” why would He still place such a great importance on us helping them if we’re not going to solve the problem of poverty?