



Faith and Testing

The Test Marks of a Living Faith

Main point: Faith can be tested by its production of obedient, faithful works.

Expositional Outline

A. An arresting question (v.14)

¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

B. A hypothetical situation (vv.15-16)

¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

C. A sharp conclusion (v.17)

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

D. A subtle objection (v.18)

¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

E. A searching comparison (vv.19-20)

¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

Interpretative discussion questions:

- What is true saving faith?
- What are the differences between the works that James says are essential and those that Paul says are worthless?
- Can saving faith exist apart from works?
- How does Christian faith differ from the faith that demons have?

Applicational question:

- What are some of the ways that you as a believer can demonstrate your faith by your works?

Memory verse for lesson 9:

- **James 2:14**—*What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*



Insights on Our Testing:

Keith Brazier

"Not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."—**Ephesians 2:9-10**

Saving faith does not exist in a vacuum secured by a mere profession.

Scripture clearly demonstrates that faith is a product of salvation, and believers have been redeemed to be productive, fruitful, light bearing followers of Jesus Christ (*Phil.2:12ff; 2 Tim.3:17; Tit.2:14*). Our action is not emotionally driven; rather, it is a product of faith. Works are an expression of the faith. Our Father does not simply tell us that He loves us. His actions and His promises demonstrate, beyond the shadow of doubt, His commitment and love.

Christians illustrate their profession of faith by displaying obedience and by trusting and following Christ. Love and a willingness to pursue godliness drive action. This stands in stark contrast to religious acts and attitudes that portray an obligation to fulfill duties. Empty speech and insipid blessings fall markedly short of usefulness in the kingdom. Do you seek to sincerely meet the needs of the brethren or is "I'll be praying for you," your stock response? Is your renewed spirit still somewhat focused on serving yourself or do use your God given gifts and talents to edify others? Does the fruit that you bear match the root that you claim?

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.