

**shew thee** my faith by my works.”  
(James 2:18)

God does not need “**proof**” of our faith. He knows our hearts!

The **justification** spoken of in this chapter is **to other people!** “**Show me**” your faith without works, and I will “**I will show you**” my faith by the outworking of it...by the evidence that my faith produces!

Our works “**prove**” to others that our salvation is genuine. It demonstrates that Jesus is alive in us.

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### What Are These Works?

Another vital question to examine in this context is, “**What are the examples of these works that James is speaking of?**”

It was stated earlier that this chapter is often used to endorse keeping the law of Moses. But when we study the examples of “**works**” that James uses, we quickly see that they are **not** the law of Moses, and in fact, they could be viewed as **contrary** to the law of Moses.

The first example - **Abraham**

*“Was not Abraham our father **justified by works**, when he had **offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**”*  
(James 2:21)

**Child sacrifice!** This example of “**works**” that “**justified**” Abraham is stated to be when he offered his son as a sacrifice!

Most of us know the story. We know that God did **not** allow Abraham to kill Isaac. However, this verse tells us that Abraham’s obedience, his justification work, was **when** he offered Isaac.

This example is most assuredly, **not** an endorsement of legalistic obedience to the law of Moses. Child sacrifice is **against** the law!

The second example - **Rahab**

*“Likewise also was not **Rahab the harlot justified by works**, when she had received the messengers, and had **sent them out another way?**”* (James 2:25)

This reference is also **not** an endorsement of the law of Moses. It points out that this “**worker of good**” was a **harlot** (contrary to the law of Moses) and that she was justified when she received the spies and sent them out secretly.

How did Rahab receive the Israelites? She took them in and hid them. Then she **lied** to protect them.

Suffice it to say; her actions were **not** led by obeying the law of Moses.

These examples should **not** be considered as patterns to follow as universally approved by God or even as models to mimic. Instead, they should be viewed for exactly what they are: **illustrations of FAITH in ACTION!**

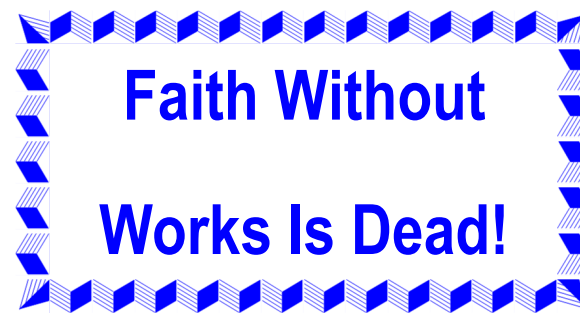
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### Faith Without Works - Conclusion

Simply stated, works are not legalistic compliance with the law of Moses.

Works are Jesus Christ living in us!

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*“Even so faith, if it hath not works, **is dead**, being alone.”* (James 2:17)

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

*“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?”* (James 2:14)

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### DEAD! Faith Without Works Is DEAD!

It should be undeniable that “works” in a believer’s life, is **critical** to saving faith. **Dead faith** is a crucial subject to consider.

But doesn’t the Bible say that we are saved by grace through faith and **not of works?**

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (9) **Not of works**, lest any man should boast.”*  
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!

However, we must not forget the next verse, which tells us that God’s plan for us includes **works**. Genuine salvation will produce good works.

*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*

# FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD!

unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

Doing **works** is not the problem! We should be doing good **works**. The problem lies in WHY and HOW we are performing these **works**!

WHY - If the reason for our **works** is to “obey the law of Moses,” or to “earn favor with God, or to “prove our love to Him”...we are SELF-motivated.

When our good works are the result of **Jesus** in us, and when it is because we are **dying to self** daily and God is glorified through a life surrendered to Jesus, we are **Holy Spirit led**.

HOW - the **wrong** method of obedience is through **herculean self-effort**.

The **correct** method of obedience is a result of **death to self** and **Jesus living in us**, not self-effort.

*“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet **not I**, but Christ liveth in me...” (Galatians 2:20)*

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## By What Law?

Legalists will often use James chapter 2 as justification to command people to “keep the law of Moses.”

*“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt **love thy neighbour as thyself**, ye do well:” (James 2:8)*

Nowhere in the Bible is the law of Moses described as the “**royal law**.” Who is it that said we should “**love our neighbor as we love ourselves**”? Jesus said that!

Jesus is the **King** of kings! The commandments of Jesus are, in fact, the “royal law” that James refers to. **NOT** the law of Moses.

*“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**.” (Matthew 22:37-39)*

The reference in James to the “**royal law**” should be evident that it is not an endorsement of keeping the law of Moses, but is instead an endorsement of a **Spirit-led** life.

Another answer to the question of “by what law?” can be found in this (and many other passages).

*“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. **By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.**” (Romans 3:27)*

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## God’s Definition Of Obedience

Often people teach that believers must obey. While faithful Christians will not argue against obedience, the real question is, “**What is obedience?**”

Legalists usually define obedience as “keeping the commandments,” and by this, they typically are referring to the **Ten Commandments**, but is that how God defines “keeping His commandments”? After all, isn’t God’s definition, the one that counts?

God’s definition of “keeping His commandments”:

*“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, **because we keep his commandments**, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (23) And **THIS IS HIS COMMANDMENT**, That we should **BELIEVE** on the name of his Son **Jesus Christ**, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” (1 John 3:22-23)*

Faith in Jesus **IS** “keeping God’s commandments”!

Jesus’ definition of the “works of God”:

Jesus Himself taught the same.

*“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might*

*work the works of God? (29) Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God**, that ye **BELIEVE** on him whom he hath sent.” (John 6:28-29)*

Focusing on diligent self-effort to obey God is **very wrong**! True **FAITH** in Jesus Christ is **obedience** to God.

Real faith in Jesus will result in godly works! How could Jesus live through us, and we **not** live holy?

It is only when **self** takes over, and **self-effort** is stressed that we are, in fact living ungodly lives.

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## Justified To Whom?

*“Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified**, and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)*

This verse, and other parts of the Book of James, can cause issues for believers, if not understood in context.

Does this verse (and others) mean that we are **NOT SAVED** if we do not do works?

Does this **contradict** Ephesians 2:8-9 (quoted earlier), which tells us that we are saved by grace through faith, **NOT OF WORKS**?

Definitely not!

The question we need to look at in the context of James chapter 2 is, “**To whom are we justified?**”

If we ask this question and seek the answer from the context of the passage, the answer becomes clear. There is nothing in James chapter 2 that states we are “**justified to God**” by our works!

The Scripture is clear that we are justified to **people** by our works!

*“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: **shew me** thy faith without thy works, and **I will***