

The Biblical Relationship of Faith & Works

I'm writing this essay because I've been seeing an uptick in the gospel compromising, false teaching that obedience is necessary to be saved. Nothing tempts me more to sinful anger ("irks my gourd" 😞) than this because a person who receives it is placed in a hopeless position before a holy God because His standard is sinless perfection. There is a proper biblical relationship between faith & works, but if you get it wrong/reversed, the consequences are nothing short of your eternal destination (life/torment). Pretty important. Examine what's below & carefully consider what is written. Thank you in advance!

▪First, scripture is overwhelmingly weighted with texts that clearly and repeatedly teach salvation is by faith alone..

Acts 16:31 NASBS

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 1:17 NASBS

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Romans 10:9 NASBS

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved

John 20:31 NASBS

but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing* you may have life in His name.

1 John 5:1 NASBS

Whoever *believes* that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

▪Not only that, faith is repeatedly shown to contradict works as a basis for salvation (incompatible)..

Galatians 2:21 NASBS

"I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, *then Christ died needlessly*." (That speaks loudly)

Romans 4:5 NASBS

But to the one who *does not work*, but believes in Him who justifies the *ungodly*, his faith is credited as righteousness

Galatians 3:2 NASBS

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit (salvation) by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Ephesians 2:8-9 NASBS

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [9] *not as a result of works*, so that no one may boast.

Romans 11:6 NASBS

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

▪The only text in the entire bible that appears on the surface to show salvation is also of works is James 2:24:

James 2:24 NASBS

You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

which is clearly written about people who *say* they have faith but have no works James 2:14:

James 2:14 NASBS

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

This is simply teaching that saving faith *always* transforms & produces works (because they are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit), but those works are not the basis for salvation. You see this clearly taught in other places:

1 John 2:4 NASBS

The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"

Ephesians 2:10 NASBS

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works* (not by), which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them (God has pre-ordained good works for *every* believer He saves)

This would also clearly contradict some in the "Free Grace" camp that teach a person can truly believe (be saved) and have no verifying works.

▪Another common challenge can arise from conflating descriptive verses (texts that describe what a true believer will necessarily "look like") with prescriptive verses (what needs to be done prior to salvation in order for salvation to occur). Some examples..

Matthew 7:21 NASBS

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, *but he who does the will of My Father* who is in heaven will enter." (This is the natural and necessary fruit of one indwelt by the Holy Spirit)

Romans 2:6-7 NASBS

who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: [7] to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life

("perserverance in doing good" is, again, the fruit of every true believer who has been saved by faith alone)

You interpret scripture in light of other (and all of) scripture. God doesn't contradict Himself. So when you harmonize scripture, it helps you understand the clear & proper meaning. Hence, God's Word teaches that salvation is by faith alone, but saving faith will **always** produce works/obedience (it will never be alone). So if a person claims to believe, but has no works, you challenge their profession of faith & call them to truly believe, not to begin to obey (God the Holy Spirit does that).

▪In addition, if salvation were in some part by works, then all of the texts that say we have no cause to boast would be rendered meaningless..

Ephesians 2:8-9 NASBS

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [9] not as a result of works, **so that no one may boast.**

1 Corinthians 1:29,31 NASBS

so that no man may boast before God... [31] so that, just as it is written, "Let HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

1 Corinthians 4:7 NASBS

For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, **why do you boast** as if you had not received it?

Etc, etc..

▪Finally, the reason salvation is by faith alone and cannot be by works is God's standard for eternal life is continuous, perfect obedience..

James 2:10 NASBS

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

Galatians 3:10-11 NASBS

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY (continuously perform) ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." [11] Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Crystal clear.

A believer is permanently imputed (credited) the perfect righteousness (obedience) of Christ when they believe (along with the forgiveness of sins that result from His work on the cross). Without that, you are hopeless before a holy God and, again, His perfect moral standard. For more on [that](#).

I know this can be confusing even amongst true believers. I hope this has been clarifying & helpful. Praise God He supplies all we need in the person & work of His Son, the Lord Jesus

Christ 🙏 And that is only received by humble faith.