

# Fueling Station #9: Living a life of faithfulness: belief vs. faith?

## Pitfall: “works salvation”

-“Faith w/o works is dead”



Intro: The Bible makes clear that the works of Jesus “saved” us, justifying us before the Father God. Yet it also speaks even more about the “works” that should stem from this that earn a future salvation of the soul, called glorification inheritance.

Let's look at a very controversial passage in the Bible and shed some light on it now that we understand the different “works” presented to us.

“**What good** is it, my brothers, if someone **says** he **has faith** but does **not** have **works**? Can that faith save him?”

James 2:14 ESV

Let's first look at the word for faith/belief:

### **Strong's Concordance**

**pisteuó: to believe, entrust**

**Original Word:** πιστεύω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** pisteuó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (pist-yoo'-o)

**Definition:** to believe, entrust

**Usage:** I believe, have faith in, trust in; pass: I am entrusted with.

### **HELPS Word-studies**

4100 pisteuō (from 4102 /pístis, “faith,” derived from 3982 /peithō, “persuade, be persuaded”) – believe (affirm, have confidence); used of persuading oneself (= human believing) and with the sacred significance of being persuaded by the Lord (= faith-believing). Only the context indicates whether 4100 /pisteuō (“believe”) is self-serving (without sacred meaning), or the believing that leads to/proceeds from God's inbirthing of faith.

\*It is very important to define words in context to how God defines them from the examples in the Bible. The translation of this greek word loses in my opinion, some significant

understanding if we use the word “believe” instead of “Faithful”. Anyone can cognitively believe something but it never translates into action. But if you apply the word “faith” this requires a persuasion, and a trust that translates into an active faith or better yet “living” a life of faithfulness. The Apostle Paul uses the lack of obedient faith in connection with the Israelites hoping to receive the Promise Land with the word “unbelief”.

“For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with **those who sinned**, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to **those who were disobedient**? So we see that they were unable to enter because of **unbelief**.”

Hebrews 3:16-19 ESV

\*”Even the demons ‘believe’ and shudder”

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

1 John 1:6 ESV

\*written in the Present tense and active voice equals the word “practice” that is used by the Apostle John in many instances.

### **Strong's Concordance**

**ποιέω: to make, do**

**Original Word:** ποιέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** poieó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (poy-eh'-o)

**Definition:** to make, do

**Usage:** (a) I make, manufacture, construct, (b) I do, act, cause.

### **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**

to make or do

Apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary; to make or do (in a very wide application, more or less direct) -- abide, + agree, appoint, X avenge, + band together, be, bear, + bewray, bring (forth), cast out, cause, commit, + content, continue, deal, + without any delay, (would) do(-ing), execute, exercise, fulfil, gain, give, have, hold, X journeying, keep, + lay wait, + lighten the ship, make, X mean, + none of these things move me, observe, ordain, perform, provide, + have purged, purpose, put, + raising up, X secure, shew, X shoot out, spend, take, tarry, + transgress the law, work, yield. Compare

\*Practice is a key word used by the Apostle John to define either living a life consistent with obedience to God in the Spirit or a life being lived consistent with obeying the flesh. He also goes on to warn about sins that lead to death.

\*what type of salvation is this?

I want to suggest that there is a “main” overall understanding based on the broader context of salvation and a “secondary” understanding based on the immediate context. We will look at two different ways to put the emphasis on the word “him” and show the accuracy and harmony of both. In the immediate context of James argument between the rich and the poor, the “him” can refer to the “poor” guy in need of food and clothing. Can the type of faith that does not

give him food and clothing, can that faith “deliver” him from hunger and cold and help him know God? The answer to this question is no that type of faith cannot “save him”.

The broader context is James offering the “crown of life” to those believers who remain steadfast in the faith by performing good works and persevering through the trials of life.

“Count it all joy, **my brothers**, when you meet **trials** of various kinds, for you know that the **testing of your faith** produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking in nothing**. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has **stood the test** he will **receive the crown of life**, which God has **promised to those who love him**.”

James 1:2-4, 12 ESV

So “can that faith save him”, where the emphasis is put on the man making a decision to perform a “good” work of faith in helping the poor which I will suggest is part of the trials of life. This broader context shows clearly that the “works” that lead to reward also called “glorification salvation” is the main theme to the twelve tribes of “brothers” who are running their race in Jesus Christ!

“Therefore, **my beloved**, as you have **always obeyed**, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling, for it is God who **works in** you, both to will and to **work for** his good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:12-13 ESV

\*We cannot “workout” something we don’t already possess. Again in the broader context of the book of Philippians, Pauls teachings throughout his epistles to the church, and the entire new covenant teachings, we can see clearly the same concept. That “good” works that please God receive a future “salvation” of rewards and inheritance. Please notice also the personal application of “your own” salvation.

“**Brothers**, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But **one thing I do**: forgetting what lies behind and **straining forward** to what **lies ahead**, I press on **toward the goal for the prize** of the **upward call** of God **in Christ Jesus**.”

Philippians 3:13-14 ESV

\*This same theme remains incredibly consistent throughout the New Testament instructions and incentives to the church of God!

““**I know your works**, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. **But I have this against you**, that you have abandoned the love you had at first...**But I have a few things against you**: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. “**I know your works**, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. **But I have this against you**, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.”

Revelation 2:2, 4, 14, 19-20 ESV

\*a few examples of our Lord evaluating is own body the church.

\*If we always rightly divided the difference between the two different types of works and the different types of salvation there would be no confusion and only freedom, harmony, and union!

\*clearly we have been called through the “work” of Jesus to be Gods workmanship performing the “good” works that He promises to compensate us for in the end. One of the greatest warnings to the church by the Apostles are to miss out on receiving this “wage” and experiencing the deep regret that follows. So to wrap up, the wages of sin is death to inheritance, but the wages of faithfulness is “well done” enter into the joy of your master! In a future “myth” busting episode we will focus on the difference between “works of the Law” and “works of faith”.

