



## [James 2:14](#)

(14) What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

## [James 2:17-18](#)

(17) Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (18) 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.

## [James 2:20-24](#)

(20) But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? (22) Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? (23) And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, '*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*' And he was called the friend of God. (24) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

*New King James Version*

Some of the wrong thinking about works is derived from Martin Luther's teaching that [salvation](#) is by [faith alone](#), a statement that does not appear in the Bible. It is true that [God](#) gives salvation through His [merciful](#) gift of [grace](#). However, James says that a person's faith is proved by his works ([James 2:14-26](#)). If a person has no works, he is actually proving that he has no faith.

People who denigrate [Christian works](#) must be rigidly ignored because God pointedly assigns work to all Christian converts. [Ephesians 2:10](#) pointedly states, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ [Jesus](#) for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." God has prepared, ordained, and assigned these works

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beforehand. They are requirements and must be accomplished to the level and quality God judges as right and good. At the same time, these works are the very purpose for which the Christian is called and converted. Even though the works do not earn one salvation, God's calling, regeneration, and assignment of works are given so that we are prepared to live that same way of life for all eternity.

The works that we do—the way we live our lives—prove our [conversion](#), that our faith in Christ is real and makes the witness that glorifies God. Thus, we must understand these truths regarding works:

- 1) God has *never* intended that works save anybody. Jesus is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of [the world](#). God knew beforehand that we would need a Savior for salvation.
- 2) Doing the works provides practice in God's way of life, thus helping to ingrain His way as part of our character.
- 3) Doing the works is a witness before the world, and by them God is glorified. These are their major purposes.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Two\): Works](#)

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