

## *“Can you work your way into heaven?”*

Lately I have been creating sermons based on what I hear from people. Some who come into church and some out on the street. I think that some people think they know what the bible says because they have heard a saying supposedly from the bible and think by using them it may get them into heaven. Not many people take the time to look the passage up but feel good about boasting about it. They just use a phrase they have heard somewhere and think they are sharing God's word or doing good works.

Recently a person in church shared that someone had told them “You can't work your way into heaven”. They boastfully replied “The Bible says faith without works is dead” From James 17-26.

These verses alone do not say you can work your way into heaven in fact it says you can't. That you faith will show it's self in good works, and if you are not doing good works then your faith is dead.

It highlights that true faith produces good deeds as a natural expression, not as a way to earn salvation, but as evidence of a transformed heart. It

means that genuine, living faith isn't just intellectual belief; it's proven and completed by tangible actions of love, kindness, and obedience, showing our inner commitment through how we treat others and live our lives, much like a body needs a spirit to be alive. This does not mean that you can work your way into heaven it means you are already going to heaven if your faith is strong and your works reflect it.

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## Faith That Lives

### Scripture Reading:

*“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” —*

**James 2:17 (KJV)**

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

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### Sermon

People often ask, *“Can you work your way into heaven?”*

The Bible’s answer is clear: **No.**

But James gives us a warning just as strong — *faith without works is dead.*

James is not saying that good works **save** us.

He is saying that real faith **shows itself.**

You can say you believe in God.

You can know Scripture.

You can speak the language of faith.

But if that belief never moves your hands, never softens your heart, never changes how you treat people — James says that faith is lifeless.

Faith is like a body.

A body may look whole, but without breath, it is dead.

In the same way, belief without action may look religious, but it has no life in it.

Good works are not the **price** of salvation — they are the **proof** of transformation.

## James: Faith Without Works Is Dead

### Problem James addresses:

People who *claim* faith but show no change.

### Meaning:

- Faith that never moves
- Belief with no obedience
- Words without fruit

### James is saying:

“If faith is real, it will show up in how you live.”

? Works are **evidence** of faith

? Not the cause of salvation

? But the proof that faith is alive

### The Story

Imagine a man walking down a road when he sees someone collapsed on the ground, hungry and weak.

He stops, looks, and says, “*I believe you need help.*”

Then he keeps walking.

Another man comes along. He doesn't say much.

He kneels down.

He gives water.

He shares food.

He helps the man to his feet.

Both men may *believe* hunger is real.

But only one faith **did something**.

The second man didn't help to earn praise.

He helped because compassion was already alive in him.

That is the faith James is talking about.

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## **The Truth James Teaches**

James is not arguing against grace.

He is arguing against **empty belief**.

We are saved by faith — **but saving faith never stands still.**

It walks.

It serves.

It loves.

It obeys.

Works don't open heaven's door —

but living faith always leaves footprints on the ground.

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## **Closing Thought**

So no — you cannot work your way into heaven.

But if faith has truly taken root in your heart, it will grow branches of kindness, obedience, mercy, and love.

Now let's look at

? **Ephesians 2:8–9**

**“Works without faith are dead”**

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

*Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

While the phrase *“works without faith is dead”* isn't quoted word-

for-word, this verse (and others like it) clearly teaches the same truth: **works alone cannot give life or salvation.**

Because **faith that lives... works.**

And **faith that does nothing... is already dead.**

Now lets have a look at what Paul says regarding Faith and works,

### **Paul (Ephesians): Works Without Faith Are Dead**

#### **Problem Paul addresses:**

People trying to *earn* salvation.

#### **Meaning:**

- Moral effort without trust in Christ
- Religious activity without grace
- Doing good to gain approval

#### **Paul is saying:**

“You cannot earn what God gives freely.”

? Works cannot **save**

? Grace saves through faith

? Otherwise, the cross is unnecessary

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### **HOW THEY FIT TOGETHER (THIS IS THE KEY)**

They are **not opposites** — they are **guards on both sides of the road.**

**Error**

“I believe, but I don’t

**Scripture  
Correcting It**

**James**

## **Error**

## **Scripture Correcting It**

need to change.”

“I do good things, so I’m saved.” **Paul**

**Together they say:**

**We are saved by faith alone...  
but the faith that saves is never alone.**

- **James** tells us **how salvation behaves**
- **Paul** says **you can't earn what God gives you freely**

Faith is the **root**

Works are the **fruit**

A tree without fruit is dead.

But fruit taped to a dead tree doesn't make it alive either.

## **STRONG LINE**

“Works without faith can't save you —  
and faith without works can't stay hidden.”

“Faith alone saves... but saving faith is never alone.”