

Faith Is Not Just a Mental Assent

Faith is not just some mental assent or repeating a prayer for salvation. *Mental* assent is an enemy of true Biblical faith.

Mental Assent is defined as *a subtle form of self-deception, just one step removed from the demonic leaven (yeast) of hypocrisy.*

Mental assent is believing something with your mind, but does not come from your heart. What a person believes in his mind does not produce what is in his heart. However, what you believe and hold in your heart, you will put into practice, *“for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies...”* (Matt. 5:19)



DOING GOOD WORKS
matters!

The post-Reformation teaches that salvation is ‘by faith alone’. They insist that final judgment does not depend upon human effort, meaning, doing works of righteousness – to live rightly. Their idea of ‘faith’ is defined as *believing in* and *trusting in* Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life” (See Westminster Confession of 1646

AD, Article XIV, section III).

Anyone opposing the post-Reformation’s idea of ‘faith’ are seen as those who are relying on their own efforts, character, and conduct to obtain favor with God.

According to post-Reformation we either:

1. trust in what Christ accomplished for us
or
2. trust in our ability to live in a way that will obtain a positive final judgment.

According to them, the second alternative is an impossibility so one must accept the first option. So what Reformed Theology has done is develop an antithesis between ‘faith’ and ‘human effort’. This is why we often hear today, “It’s not of works! It’s not of works!”

The post-Reformation concept of faith is just about complete opposite of what the New Testament believers meant by the word. **Never was faith the opposite of human effort.**

The early believers in the New Testament give us a more accurate concept of ‘faith’.

When we read ‘faith’ towards Christ, the early believers generally understood it to mean *faithfulness to Him*. When we read ‘believing in’ it is generally meant *being faithful to Him*. To be faithful to Jesus, one must **DO** something. Being faithful to Christ is being loyal, obedient and persevering. All this requires human effort! God may influence us, but God is not going to do it for us!

Nowhere in the New Testament did the believers see a contrast between this faithfulness and human effort to live by Jesus’ teaching. Being faithful to Jesus is being committed to Him,

obeying His teachings, and by following Him as our example. To the New Testament believers, **living rightly and being faithful to Christ were one in the same.**

The post-Reformation antithesis between faith and conduct as opposing principle of salvation show a radical departure from the teachings of Christ and the early believers.

Many professed Christians today, like Martin Luther, would like to burn the book of James. They might as well do the same for the book of Hebrews, Jude, the book of Revelation and ALL the New Testament for that matter.

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

Faith without works is not faith at all. According to James, faith itself is a WORK. **The two are synonymous.** It is a faith working by love. (Gal. 5:6) It is never 'faith alone'.

Do we really believe that Abraham sat back and did nothing? *Abraham believe God and it was counted to him as righteousness* (Rom. 4:3; Gen. 15:6). Abraham:

- Obeyed God (Heb. 11:6)
- Walked in the steps of faith (Rom. 4:12)
- Did the deeds of faith (Rom. 4:13; John 8:39)
- And was accounted righteous by his faith (Rom. 4:22)
- This faith is judged according to its deeds (John 5:28-29; Rom. 2:7-8)

There is no such thing as 'faith alone' apart from the works of righteousness. Anyone who takes the New Testament seriously knows that it exhorts us to moral conduct. We are to avoid doing evil and do that which is good. Why? Because the early believers teach us it forms the basis for final judgment. We will be judged according to our deeds (works). We either have good works (living rightly) or dead works (living sinfully).

When Paul tells us no one is saved by works, he is talking about adherence to the Mosaic Code, he was **not** opposing moral conduct because moral conduct certainly has everything to do with a positive judgment in the end.

Does the following not sound familiar?

- "Let the wicked forsake his ways" (Isa. 55:7).
- "Wash yourselves, purify yourselves. Put away the evil of your doings from My sight; stop doing evil" (Isa. 1:16).
- "Turn from your evil ways, amend the evil of your doings" (Jer. 26:3,13).
- "Go and sin no more" (John 5:14, 8:11).
- "Depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19; Matt. 7:21-23).
- "Awake to righteousness and sin not" (1 Cor. 15:34).

Man continues to reap what he sows and will be judged according to the deeds done in the body whether good or bad. (Jn. 5:29; 16:27; Ro. 2:6-8; 14:10; 2 Co. 5:10; Gal. 6:7-9; 2 Thes. 1:7-8; 1 Pe. 1:17; Rev. 22:12).

We are capable of obedience but this does not mean our obedience is capable of atoning for our past sins. Our repentance is proven by our deeds and faith working by love (Acts 26:20; Gal. 5:6) Christ forgives us of our past sins, and in the end all of us will be judged accordingly (John 5:28-29; Rom. 2:7-8)

We must remain faithful.

“Obtaining the end of your faith [faithfulness], the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:9)