

The Heart, To Believe, To Walk And To Act



Foundations (Day 91)
by Derek Prince

We may briefly consider, in order, each of the four examples which James gives and see how each illustrates this principle.

First, James speaks of the Christian who sees a fellow Christian naked and hungry and says to him, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but nevertheless does not offer him either food or clothing.

Obviously, this man's words were not sincere. If he had really desired to see the other person warmed and fed, he would have given him food and clothing. The fact that he did not do it indicates that he did not really care. His words were an empty profession without any inward reality. So it is when a Christian professes faith but does not act according to that faith. Such faith is insincere, worthless, dead.

Second, James speaks of the demons, who believe in the one true God but tremble. These demons have no doubt whatever about the existence of God, but they know also that they are the unrepentant enemies of God, under His sentence of wrath and judgement. Therefore, their faith brings them no comfort, but only fear.

This shows that true, scriptural faith is always expressed in submission and obedience to God. Faith that continues stubborn and disobedient is dead faith that cannot save one from God's wrath and judgement.

Third, James gives us the same example of faith as that given by Paul in Romans 4 – the example of Abraham. Abraham believed God, and it was "accounted ... to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

Living faith in God's Word came into Abraham's heart. Thereafter, this faith was expressed outwardly in a continual walk of submission and obedience to God. Each act of obedience that Abraham performed developed and strengthened his faith and prepared him for the next act. The final test of Abraham's faith came in Genesis 22, when God asked him to offer up his son, Isaac, in sacrifice (see also Heb. 11).

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> "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac… accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead." (Heb. 11:17-19)

By this time, through continual exercise in obedience, Abraham's faith had been developed and strengthened even to the place where he really believed that God could raise up and restore his son to him from the dead. This faith in Abraham's heart found its outward expression in his perfect willingness to offer up Isaac, and it was only the direct intervention of God that kept him from actually slaying his son.

Concerning this, James says:

> "Faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect." (James 2:22)

We may therefore sum up Abraham's experience as follows: His walk with God began with faith in his heart in God's Word. This faith expressed itself outwardly in a life of submission and obedience. Each act of obedience strengthened and developed his faith and made him ready for the next test. Finally, this interworking of faith and works in his life brought him to the climax of his faith – to the point where he was willing even to offer up Isaac.

Devotional

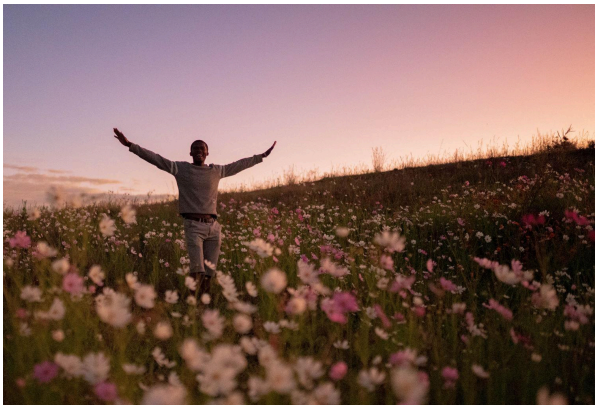
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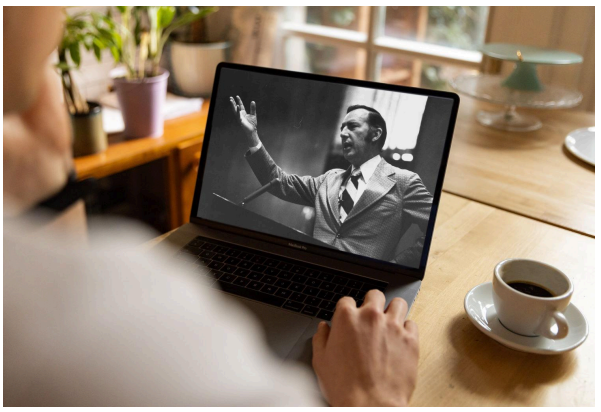
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