

# Justification by Works?

[James 2:18-26](#)



In our last study in Galatians we spent some time looking at the phrase in 5:6 that says, “*But faith which works through love.*” To expound on and explain how faith works through love, we spent some time looking at James, chapter 2, which teaches that “dead faith” is faith without love. We looked at verses 14-17 and tried to explain how James uses the word “save.”

During the question and answer time, the question was asked, “What does James mean when he says that Abraham was justified by works?” That is a good question, so we’ll spend our time this morning attempting to answer it.

The key to understanding James is to understand how he uses the Greek word sozo, translated “save.” James does not use “save” to speak of eternal redemption, he uses it to mean “physical deliverance from temporal judgment.” James is telling his readers how to save their lives from the damage that sin brings:

**James 2:14 (NASB)** *What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*

James is asking, “What will be the physical, temporal benefit to a Christian who doesn’t act on what he believes?” Our faith will not save us from the temporal judgment of God on our sinful actions. God judges sin.

One of the major causes of confusion in understanding faith as simply believing comes from a failure to see the biblical distinction between a believer and a disciple. Compare these two verses:

**John 5:24 (NASB)** *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*

This teaches quite clearly that everlasting life comes to all who believe in Christ. Now compare that with:

**Luke 14:33 (NASB)** *So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.*

Is forsaking all a condition of eternal life? Eternal life is a free gift, but discipleship is costly—forsake all. Discipleship involves commitment and sacrifice. So, being a disciple must be different than being a Christian. You become a Christian by believing the truth. It is belief of the truth, nothing more and nothing less that separates the saved from the damned.

Now, someone is bound to ask, “If we receive eternal life simply by believing, why should we bother to live a holy life?” By this question would they mean to be saying that living a holy life “earns” their way into heaven? Believers live a holy life out of love and gratitude for all God has done for them.

I think that most Christians tend to base their personal relationship with God on their performance, instead of on His grace. Most Christians are legalistic in their walk with God.

Do you understand that **nothing you ever do will cause Him to love you any more or any less?** You are loved and accepted through the merit of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ rendered perfect obedience to God, and you have received His righteousness by grace through faith:

**Romans 5:19 (NASB)** *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

Why do you do what you do? Do you do it out of a love for God? The person living by grace, lives holy out of a loving response to the abundant grace of God already manifested in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NASB)** *For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;<sup>15</sup> and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*

It is the love of Christ that compels us to no longer live for our selves, but for Him. The word “controls” here is the Greek word *sunecho* (soon-ekh'-o), which means: “to hold together, i.e. to compress, constrain, hold, keep in.”

So, gratitude should be our primary motive, but secondarily, we should live holy to not bring God’s temporal judgment. James is stressing the importance of works, which we have defined as love in the life of a believer. Without works, walking in love, our faith will die:

**James 2:26 (NASB)** *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

Two weeks ago we looked at verses 14-17 - so, today we’ll resume our study at verses 18. Here James introduces the words of an imaginary objector to his ideas:

**James 2:18-19 (NASB)** *But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.*

Both of these verses belong to the objector. The response of James only begins in verse 20. The literary format James uses here was familiar in ancient times from the Greek diatribe. The diatribe was a learned and argumentative form of communication. The two phrases “But someone may well say” (verse 18), and “But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow” (verse 20) clearly show that the diatribe format is being employed. These two phrases bracket the words of the objector in verses 18 -19.

In a large majority of the Greek manuscripts of this epistle, we read “by” in verse 18 in the place of the word “without.” The literally Greek would read like this:

You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith from your works, and I will show you from my works, my faith. You believe that there is one God; you do well. The demons also believe; and tremble (Jam. 2:18, 19).

The objector is in effect saying that faith and works are two distinct entities. “It is absurd to see a close connection between faith and works. For the sake of argument, let’s say you have faith, and I have works. Let’s start there. You can no more start with what you believe and show it to me in your works, than I can

start with my works and demonstrate what it is that I believe.”

The impossibility of showing one’s faith from one’s works is now demonstrated (so the objector thinks) by this illustration: “Men and demons both believe the same truth (that there is one God), but their faith does not produce the same response. Although this article of faith may move a man to ‘do well,’ it never moves the demons to ‘do well.’ All they can do is tremble. Faith and works, therefore, have no built-in connection at all. The same creed may produce entirely different kinds of conduct. Faith cannot be made visible in works!”

Gordon Clark’s question is appropriate: *“The text says the devils believed in monotheism. Why cannot the difference between the devils and Christians be the different propositions believed, rather than a psychological element in belief?” In other words, the text does not say that the demons believe in Christ as Savior, or even that they believe in Christ as Savior and Lord. Those who use the illustration of the demons’ faith to prove the existence of a false intellectual faith that does not redeem are “comparing apples with oranges.”*

Even if demons believed the truth of the gospel, they cannot be redeemed. Christ did not die for demons, but for man. Demons cannot be redeemed, and that is why they “tremble.” Judgment was certain for them.

Are faith and works in the Christian daily experience dynamically related? Does faith really die without the sustaining energy of works? “Such thoughts,” the objector is saying, “are contrary to reality.” He maintains that there is no visible, verifiable connection between faith and works. They are telling James that faith and works are not really related to each other in the way you say they are, James. So don’t criticize the vitality of my faith because I don’t do such and such a thing.

Now, in verses 20-26, we have James reply to the objector:

**James 2:20 (NASB)** *But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?*

“Foolish fellow” — what a stupid argument, how foolish you are to make it. Are you willing to know that faith without works is useless? A “useless faith” would be faith that does not respond to its environment:

**1 John 3:16-18 (NASB)** *We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.<sup>17</sup> But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.*

Useless faith is a faith that does not love. Love is action, love is obedience to God’s laws. Useless equals barren or unproductive. [The Textus Receptus](#) uses the word “dead” in verse 20, but the modern critics generally accept the reading “barren” as most likely the true meaning. There is a subtle play on words here in the Greek, *ergon* - arge, which is: “works - workless.” If you don’t work, your faith is barren.

**2 Peter 1:5-8 (NASB)** *Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge;<sup>6</sup> and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;<sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true*

*knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The word “useless” that Peter uses here is often used of things from which no profit is derived. Faith without works is “useless.” Jesus teaches this very idea in:

**John 15:1-4 (NASB)** *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

Jesus is talking to the eleven disciples here; Judas has already gone. The subject is fruit bearing, which is walking in love. Jesus says in verse 3, “You are clean,” which is speaking of their redemption. Then in verse 4, he tells those who are redeemed to “abide in Him.” To abide is to follow or remain in Him, it is to be a disciple.

**John 15:5-8 (NASB)** *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. 8 "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.*

Here we see that the Christian who abides in Christ will produce much fruit— walk in love. Failure to abide results in chastening, judgment in time. Those Christians who bear fruit are His disciples.

**Matthew 13:22 (NASB)** *"And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Here we see a believer whose faith dies, and they “become unfruitful.” Luke gives us insight into the fact that this person was, in fact, a believer:

**Luke 8:13 (NASB)** *"And those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.*

To prove his point, James uses the illustration of Abraham in verses 21-24. If one could not see the dynamic interaction between faith and works in Abraham’s famous act of obedience, he could not see it anywhere. Abraham had a living faith because he acted on what he believed:

**James 2:21 (NASB)** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*

When James says, “our father,” he is **not** using it as a term that speaks of the Jews racial tie to Abraham. In the New Covenant, Abraham is **only** the father of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ:

**Galatians 3:7-9 (NASB)** *Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached*

*the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

James says that Abraham was “**justified by works.**” This would have caused [paroxysms](#)! Abraham was the father of faith. To be “justified” is to be right with God. In our study of Galatians we have seen that Paul taught that Abraham was justified by faith alone:

**Galatians 2:16 (NASB)** *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.*

Paul also makes it clear in Romans 4 that justification is by faith alone:

**Romans 4:1-8 (NASB)** *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: 7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."*

So, Paul says that justification is by grace through faith, and he uses Abraham as his illustration, and he quotes Genesis 15:6. But James is saying justification is by **works**, and he also uses Abraham as his illustration, and he too quotes Genesis 15:6. How do we reconcile this? I think that the key to understanding this is in:

**Romans 4:2 (NASB)** *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God.*

Notice the phrase “**but not before God**”; you cannot be justified by works before God, only by faith. But you can be justified before men by works. I’ll explain this further in a little while.

When you believe the gospel, the righteousness of God is imputed to you. In Romans 4:3, Paul quotes Genesis 15:6:

**Romans 4:3 (NASB)** *For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

When you trust in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to you:

**Romans 4:6 (NASB)** *just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works:*

Imputed means: “to deposit to your account.” It is a gift of God’s grace. We were all bankrupt, we stood before God with nothing in our account. God, by a sovereign choice of His will, deposited Christ’s righteousness in our account when we believed the gospel.

**Genesis 15:6 (NASB)** *Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.*

That is how it has always been, Old and New Testament; we are made right with God by his grace. He dispenses that grace to us, and we respond by believing and are saved, works are not involved. Does James believe this? Yes, he does - in James 2:23 he quotes Genesis 15:6. Well, what then, does James mean in:

**James 2:21 (NASB)** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*

Listen carefully! James says here that he was justified when? When he offered Isaac on the altar. **That was forty years after the time when he is said to have believed God.** if works are necessary for justification, Abraham went forty years believing God without being justified.

This problem is resolved by understanding that there is “another” justification, and it is by works. There is a justification before **God** by faith. And there is a justification before **man** by works. It should be clear that James and Paul are **not** using the word “justified” in the same sense. Remember our hermeneutical principle: determine carefully the meaning of words. James uses the word “justified” in the sense of: “**vindicate.**”

W. Wiersby writes, *“By faith he was justified before God, and His righteousness declared: by works he was justified before men, and his righteousness demonstrated.”*

L. Strauss writes, *“There is one’s justification before God, and one’s justification before the world of men.”*

George M. Gutzke writes, *“James uses the word justified with a different emphasis than Paul did. When James writes about justification, he is referring to the experience of a person being made acceptable before God in actual practice. It is one thing to be cleared from all guilt because Jesus died for us. It is another thing to have our way of life acceptable in the sight of God.”*

There are two kinds of justification. Abraham was justified by faith before God, but he was also justified by works before men. The only way we can demonstrate our faith before men is by our love:

**John 13:34-35 (NASB)** *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

**Galatians 5:6 (NASB)** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.*

Living faith is demonstrated in love.

Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 15:6, and he was justified by works in Genesis 22 which was forty years later. Let's look at Genesis 22. Before Isaac's birth Abraham had nothing to rely on but a promise:

**Genesis 15:5 (NASB)** *And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

What did Abraham have to verify that promise? He had a very old wife that was barren and had never had children. He himself was old. He had nothing to believe in but a promise. And then Sarah became pregnant, and Isaac was born. Now he had more than a promise, he had Isaac. After the birth of Isaac, Abraham was in danger of leaning on Isaac. He and Sarah had finally had a son. Abraham had believed God, but could he put his faith into action?

**Genesis 22:1 (NASB)** *Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*

God tests Abraham's faith; would it act or would it die?

**Genesis 22:2 (NASB)** *And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."*

God made a promise to Abraham that he would have a son forty years earlier. He finally got his son, and now he was told to kill him. Would he act on his faith and obey God? As a parent, how would you respond to this? I would need many signs for conformation. But notice Abraham's response:

**Genesis 22:3 (NASB)** *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

Abraham's faith in the covenant keeping God was alive, and he acted. This is an incredible act of faith. God had made Abraham a very specific promise of blessing to the whole world through Isaac. Abraham might have thought, "I don't know how God is going to keep His promise if I kill Isaac, but that is for Him to work out, my responsibility is to obey."

**Genesis 22:5 (NASB)** *And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you."*

Isaac was the one essential link between the aged couple and the fulfillment of God's promise of a great posterity. Abraham says, "We will come back to you." He had faith that somehow God was going to work this out.

**Genesis 22:7-8 (NASB)** *And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.*

Abraham tells his son that God will provide the sacrifice — this is a prophecy of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. You know the rest of the story or you can read it if you don't. Abraham put his son on the alter, raised the knife to kill him, and God stopped him and provided a ram for the sacrifice.

This was an incredible act of faith on Abraham's part. He believed God's promise, and he acted on what he believed and was justified by his works.

The word “**justified**” can be used in one of two ways:

1. To declare and treat as righteous.
2. To vindicate, to show or demonstrate as righteousness.

**Luke 7:35 (KJV)** *But wisdom is justified of all her children.*

**Luke 7:35 (NASB)** *"Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."*

Paul uses the first and James the second. So, James is using the word “justified” to speak of vindication or a **demonstration of his righteousness**.

**James 2:21 (NASB)** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*

Here we see that Abraham was justified WHEN he offered Isaac on the alter. Remember, this was forty years after his justification by faith. Then he goes on to say:

**James 2:22 (NASB)** *You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;*

One might conclude from this that the main factor in reaching the goal was works, so this can't be referring to the first use of justification — to declare righteous. Works strengthen his faith and give it vitality. “**Perfected**” is: “matured.” Our faith is matured by works. As clearly as faith had generated obedient activity, so too, had obedient activity generated a richer faith. When you act on what you believe, your faith will grow.

Abraham had a conviction that God could overcome a metaphorical “deadness” exhibited by his own body:

**Romans 4:19 (NASB)** *And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;*

Abraham moved with the assurance that, if necessary, God could actually resurrect his son's body from a deadness which would be all too painfully literal.

**Hebrews 11:17-19 (NASB)** *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that*

*God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.*

How much faith does it take to believe in something that's never happened? He knew that the seed wasn't Isaac, but that the seed would be called through Isaac. It is very possible that Abraham was aware that this One who would come would be one raised from the dead. For he saw Isaac as a potential figure, symbol, type of that One who would come.

Could Abraham have believed God and not acted to offer Isaac? Yes. Do you believe that God sovereignly controls all things? Do you believe that [Romans 8:28](#) is true? Yes, but do you always act on what you believe? No!

**Point:** Like Abraham, we, too, have been accounted righteous before God by faith. Yet, that original confidence in God can be expanded and developed by a life of active obedience.

**James 2:23 (NASB)** *and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.*

Who are the friends of God? Jesus tell us:

**John 15:14 (NASB)** *"You are My friends, if you do what I command you.*

Friendship is based upon obedience. Because of his living faith, Abraham was called the friend of God.

**James 2:24 (NASB)** *You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.*

The shift to the second person plural shows that the argument with the imaginary opponent has been dropped, and he returns to the point. James never speaks of justification by faith **and** works; it is either faith **or** works.

In verse 24, James is saying that justification by faith is not the only kind of justification there is. James does not say that justification by faith cannot exist apart from justification by works. If this was true, it would have been forty years before Abraham was justified.

Next, James moves to the illustration of Rahab:

**James 2:25 (NASB)** *And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?*

In this illustration, he returns to his fundamental theme of saving the life from judgment. Abraham and Rahab were as different as they could be; Jew/Gentile, man/woman, good/evil, God fearer/pagan. But Rahab was like Abraham in that she acted on what she believed.

**Joshua 2:1-14 (NASB)** *Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. 2 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." 3*

*And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 "And it came about when it was time to shut the gate, at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." 6 But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof.*

*7 So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate. 8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9 and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. 10 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 "And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.*

*12 "Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, 13 and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." 14 So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the LORD gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."*

By acting on what she believed, “Your God, He is God in Heaven above and on earth beneath,” she literally, physically saved her own life. She would have died with the inhabitants of Jericho had she not acted on her faith. By her “love,” she saved her own life and the life of her family. Josephus accredits Rahab’s safety to her good deed.

James’ readers could do the same thing, save their lives, if they were committed doers of the word. So can we. If it was a case of escaping physical death, which sin could so greatly hasten, faith alone could not save anyone. But faith that worked could. Do you see the connection between faith and works? There is a vital connection. Life preservation is at the core of this whole passage.

What kind of works vindicate faith? As we said in our last study, **love** is the work of faith:

**Galatians 5:6 (NASB)** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.*

Abraham and Rahab both laid their lives on the line for what they believed. Their love caused them to be willing to sacrifice all for what they believed. Their faith was alive!

James closes his argument with this:

**James 2:26 (NASB)** *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

“For just as” is literally: “just as even so.” In this analogy, in both cases, if the second member is missing, the result is death. A person’s faith, like his body, can die. James’ point: works are actually the key to the vitality of faith. His point is not that a vital faith is the key to works. When love separates from faith, that faith becomes lifeless and useless. When our faith dies, we lose our fellowship with God and come under temporal judgment.

Abraham’s obedience to God was an act of love:

**John 14:15 (NASB) *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.***

Rahab’s risking her life was an act of love:

**John 15:13 (NASB) *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.***

Biblical love is defined as obedience to God and sacrificial service to a neighbor. **Love is the spirit that keeps faith alive.** The Corinthians were believers, but they lacked love and were temporally judged because of it.

How would you characterize your faith? Is it living or dead? Are you a doer of the word or only a hearer? A dead faith is in danger of temporal judgment. It is a living faith that preserves the physical life and brings temporal blessings.

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