

Dead Faith, Part 1

John MacArthur

I. Introduction.

- A. Text: James 2:14-20
- B. We are not what we say, we are what we do.
- C. Faith plus nothing equals nothing.
- D. People with dead faith always substitute words for deeds.
- E. There is a kind of faith that does not save. (Matthew 3; 5:16; 7; John 2; 8:30-31)
- F. Valid saving faith has always been validated by fruit. (John 15; Matthew 7)
- G. Intellectual belief is not enough.
- H. There is a series of tests that can evaluate whether one's faith is living or dead. Works is one of those tests.
- I. James was writing to Jews who believed that they could earn their way into heaven by works. After accepting Christianity they started rejecting the need for works.
- J. There are certain characteristics of dead faith.

II. Dead faith is identified by an empty confession.

- A. Real faith produces endurance, an eager hearing of the Word of God, compassion for the needy, etc.
- B. The one who has no life flow has no product. (John 15)
- C. Jesus can evaluate faith by the product of that faith. (Romans 2; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:19)
- D. While salvation is not by works there is an exchange of masters. We are only saved when we become a new creation.
- E. We are called to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith. (2 Corinthians 13:5)

III. Dead faith is marked by false compassion.

- A. A faith with no fruit is a dead faith. (1 John 3:17-18, Matthew 25:31)
- B. Assurance is a gift. We were saved to produce virtues that assure us of our faith. If assurance is a constant battle, salvation may not be there. (2 Peter 1)
- C. The kind of faith demons have that is orthodox only produces no peace. Yet even demons tremble, which is more than a dead faith. (Romans 3:18, 2 Peter 2:20)

IV. Dead faith has no profit. (Acts 8:13)

Application Questions:

1. How are the truths that works do not save and faith without works is dead compatible?

2. What does intellectual-only faith look like?

3. How can we address those we fear only have an intellectual faith in a way to stir true faith in them? Explain.
