

Evidence that my faith is alive

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good[a] is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

JAMES 2:14-26 ESV

When I Have Spiritual Life:

1. My actions are consistent with my new life

“Never forget, never forget that you have promised me to use this money to become an honest man... Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul. I take it away from dark thoughts and the spirit of destruction, and I give it to God.”

Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

“Good works do not make a person good, but a good person does good works.”

Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520)

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

EPHESIANS 2:1-3 ESV

When I Have Spiritual Life:

2. I refuse to settle for being a nominal Christian

¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

JAMES 2:17-20 ESV

“In the Denmark of my day, everyone was considered a Christian by birth, but it was Christianity in name only, not in life. That is what it means to ‘play at Christianity.’”

Søren Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*

“Only the one who believes is obedient, and only the one who is obedient believes. If you separate faith from obedience, you fall either into cheap grace or into legalism. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without repentance, grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living and incarnate Jesus Christ.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

When I Have Spiritual Life:

3. There are practices I can no longer be part of

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

GALATIANS 5:16-21 NIV

“Grant me chastity and self-control, but not yet.”

Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* (Book VIII)

When I Have Spiritual Life:

4. There is fruit in my life that cannot be ignored

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

GALATIANS 5:22-24 ESV

“There may be a non-Christian who does good works, but there cannot be a Christian who does not do good works.”

“Sir, if I believed what you and the Church of God say you believe, then even if England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would walk over it, on my hands and knees if necessary, and think it worthwhile, if by doing so I could save just one soul from that eternal hell.”

Charles Peace (1832–1879)