

Excursus on Faith and Works

Which statement is true: Good works are necessary for salvation OR Good works are injurious to salvation

Which statement is false: Good works are necessary for salvation OR Good works are injurious to salvation

This is one of the crux issues of all time.
The Reformation (RC vs. Reformers),

Post-Reformation

The contemporary church (e.g., Lordship salvation debate)

Texts on Works/Deeds

Jn. 5:28-29; 14:12; Rom. 2:5-10, 12-16; 3:20, 27-28; 4:5-6; 9:11, 30-32; 11:6; Gal. 2:16; 3:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 5:9-10; 6:18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:5, 8, 14; Heb. 6:10; 10:24; Jas. 2:14, 17, 18-26; 1 Pet. 2:16; Rev. 2:5, 19, 26; 3:2; 20:12-13

Three Models of Faith and Good Works

Faith + works = salvation

Faith + 0 = salvation ≠ works (works may or may not be present)

Faith + 0 = salvation = works

Observations on Faith and Works

- 1. When we speak of faith alone, we mean that faith is the sole *instrument* of our justification, apart from works.**

Frame, “Yes, justification is by a living faith, not a dead faith, a faith that works rather than a mere profession. It justifies because its nature is to trust, in this case to trust the grace of God in Christ. That trust motivates us to please God and therefore to do good works. Since God has saved us from sin, this is the only appropriate response. *But salvation is not through the works, but through the trust that motivates them*” (*Salvation Belongs to the Lord*, 205).

Rom. 3:24-25, 28; 4:5, 6; 9:10-11; 9:30-32; 10:1-4; Gal. 2:16; 3:1-5, 10-11
2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5

- 2. Faith alone pleases God**

Heb. 11:6

Luther, “It is a further function of faith that it honors him whom it trusts with the most reverent and highest regard since it considers him truthful and trustworthy... So when the soul firmly trusts God’s promises, it regards him as truthful and

righteous. Nothing more excellent than this can be ascribed to God. The very highest worship of God is this, that we should ascribe to him truthfulness, righteousness and whatever else should be ascribed to one who is trusted” (Luther’s Works, XXXI. 350).

3. Faith is the line of distinction between good works and works of the law/flesh.

Gal. 3:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10

4. When we say that saving faith is accompanied by good works, we *do not* mean that faith is the *sole means or source* of good works.

(Good works are acts of obedience and righteousness and all attitudes, thoughts, affections and deeds that are Christlike).

Good works come from faith: Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3; Titus 3:8; Jas. 2:22, 26

Good works come from a renewed heart: 1 Jn. 2:29

Good works come from love to Christ: Jn. 14:15

Good works come from union with Christ: Jn. 15:5

Good works come from prayer: Jn. 15:16

Good works come from grace training us: Titus 2:11-12

Good works come from the indwelling Holy Spirit: Gal. 5:16, 22-23, 24-25

Good works come from gratitude: 2 Cor. 5:15

Good works come from a “by grace through faith salvation”: Eph. 2:8-10

Good works come from God working in us: Phil. 2:12-13

Good works come from looking to the life to come: 1 Tim. 6:17-19

Good works come from being instructed: 1 Tim. 6:18 (cf. Eph. 4:11-12)

Good works come from Christ’s redemption from us: Titus 2:14

Good works come from gentle wisdom: Jas. 3:13

Good works come from the Christian’s character as salt and light: Matt. 5:13-16

Good works come from the encouragements of other Christians: Heb. 10:24

Good works come from repentance: Rev. 2:5

5. Summary:

Works are necessary to salvation as a *consequence* of saving faith.

“There is an unbreakable connection between what we do and what we truly believe. . . What we do reflects our inner realities.” (Julian, *Righteous Sinners*, 124-125). Matt. 7:17-20; Jas. 2:14-26

Our works are *not the ground or basis* of our salvation, but our works verify and vindicate our faith. This is why judgment is “according to works.”

Which statement is true:

Good works are necessary for salvation

Good works are injurious to salvation

Which statement is false:

Good works are necessary for salvation

Or Good works are injurious to salvation