

Demonstrating What We Believe

by Neil Anderson

Faith is not just a belief system, but a way of living that is demonstrated by our actions.

Scripture: John 3:16, Romans 1:25, 1 Corinthians 13:4, 1 Timothy 1:5, James 2:17

Topics: "Active Faith", "Obedience To God"

Description

Neil Anderson emphasizes the importance of active faith, illustrating that faith without corresponding actions is lifeless. He compares faith to love, highlighting that just as love is expressed through actions, true faith is demonstrated by the way we live. Anderson points out that even demons believe in God's existence but do not obey Him, emphasizing the need for genuine faith to be reflected in our actions and obedience to God.

Transcript

James 2:17

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself

Faith is an action word. We cannot passively respond to God. You may have heard the story of the circus performer who strung a wire over a river and proceeded to ride across it on a unicycle. When he returned, everyone applauded. Then he asked, "Who believes I can do that with a man on my shoulders?" Everyone responded in affirmation. He said, "All right, who will hop on?" The person who hops on is the person who really believes. Faith is not just giving credence to something or someone. Faith is demonstrated reliance upon something or someone.

Faith has the same operating dynamic as agape love. When we refer to love as a noun, we're talking about character: patience, kindness, etc. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). When we say that God is love, we are describing His character. Paul says the goal of our instruction is love (1 Timothy 1:5); therefore, the goal of Christian education is character transformation.

When love is used as a verb, it is expressed by action: "For God so loved the world that He gave . . ." (John 3:16). If we say we love someone and do nothing on their behalf, it's only sentimentality and not agape love. True love is expressed by meeting the needs of others.

Faith has a similar dynamic. When using faith as a noun, we're talking about what we believe. But if we're talking about faith as a verb, then it is expressed in the way we live. James says it like this: "Even so faith,

if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 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.' You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder" (James 2:17-19).

The devil believes in the existence of Jesus and knows that God's Word is true. But he doesn't seek to glorify Jesus or to obey Him. He seeks his own glory, being a rebel at heart (Romans 1:25).

We demonstrate what we believe by how we live our lives. If we believe it, we will do it. If we don't, then what we believe is just wishful thinking.

Prayer:

Lord, help me put feet to my faith every day and not rely on past accomplishments.

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