**(Column # 20, for June 13, 2016)**

**Dead Faith vs. Living Faith**

**The Bible speaks often of “faith.” What is faith? The Apostle Paul answers this question in Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is the assurance that what we hope for will come about and the certainty that what we cannot see exists.” (ISV.)**

 **For what do Christians hope? They hope for a heavenly eternal life with their Savior, Jesus Christ. Even though we cannot see this heavenly existence now, there is evidence that this hope will come about. Some evidences of the supernatural realm of God are the experience of enjoying life as a human being. Life cannot be produced in a laboratory; it cannot be understood by man, but man enjoys it and has no doubt about whether or not he is alive. Another evidence of the supernatural realm of God is the universe which apparently has no end and could not have produced itself; it could have come only from the supernatural realm. This point is made frequently by the poet David in the Psalms. A non-existent physical object cannot produce itself. This truth is self-evident. Therefore, faith is a strong belief in something or someone, and that belief is based on evidence beyond our comprehension.**

**Now, the Apostle James explains the relationship between faith and works. James says, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26). Faith without works is a dead faith because the lack of works reveals an unchanged life or a spiritually dead heart. There are many verses that say that true, saving faith will result in a transformed life, and that faith is demonstrated by the kinds of works we do. How we live reveals what we believe and whether the faith we profess to have is a living or dead faith.**

# James is not saying that we sinners are saved by works; he is saying that once we experience conversion, good works will naturally follow just as fresh water naturally flows from a spring in the rock. What is conversion? Conversion, a supernatural experience, means that our motives have changed from pleasing self to pleasing Jesus and following Him. In Ephesians 2: 8, 9, Paul makes this fact clear when he writes: 8For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

# You see friend, one conversion has taken place in our lives, we no longer find pleasure in sin (disobedience to God.) We find joy in serving our Master, Jesus.

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| The following verses reveal this truth. In Hebrews 10:26, Paul writes: “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.” (NIV.) |
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**Jesus, Himself, said that we are known by our fruits. Faith in Christ always results in good works. The person who claims to be a Christian but lives in willful disobedience to Christ has a dead faith and needs salvation. Many profess to be Christians, but their lives and priorities indicate otherwise. Jesus put it this way: “By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?’ Then I will declare to them solemnly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers’” (Matthew 7:16–23).**

**Leaving Christ after knowing Him is very dangerous. Paul writes in** [**Hebrews 6:4**](http://biblehub.com/nasb/hebrews/6-4.htm)**-6, “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again** **to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.”**
Peter pens, “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. **For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.” (**[**2 Peter 2:20**](http://biblehub.com/nasb/2_peter/2-20.htm)**, 21.)**

**Therefore, from this study we have learned that:**

1. **We are saved by grace.**
2. **After experiencing conversion, we leave the old life of sin and follow the new life of joy in following Christ.**
3. **Also, the new life of conversion will produce the fruits of Christ: Galatians 5:22 reads**, But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.” (NLT.)
4. **Faith is the assurance that the promises of God will come about as does our life and as did the universe.**

Yes, “Faith without works (fruit) is dead.”