

**Faith Alone**  
**James 1:22-25**

**God's grace saves us through faith, but does it save us through faith alone?**

Faith comes not through some miracle but through hearing the word of God according to **Romans 10:17**. **John 20:30-31** says, *“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”*

That faith is necessary for us to be saved is undisputable, but some say that we are saved by faith alone. Does God require more than faith for a person to respond to God's will. The answer will lie with scripture, so let's go to go Word!

It was the Lord Jesus himself who in **Mark 16:16** said, *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”* And in **Jn. 8:24** he said, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* **Hebrews 11:6** puts it this way, *“And without faith it is impossible to please Him”* So there can be no doubt that unless you believe in God our Father and Jesus as His Son, we will die in sins.

The apostle Peter told Cornelius about Jesus Christ in **Acts 10:43**, *“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”* Paul in **Romans 5:1-2** puts it this way, *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”*

Scripture clearly declares that faith is absolutely necessary for us to be saved from sin. But the necessity of faith doesn't mean that other things

are not also necessary. If I say I need oxygen to survive, that does not mean I don't also need water, food, and shelter. No one would say they live by oxygen alone. In the same way, when scripture says that faith is necessary for salvation, it does not rule out the need for other things to have life in Christ.

I have talked to people who believe they are saved by faith alone. This doctrine makes Christianity convenient for a lot of people, because they rely on passages about faith, but often ignore what other Bible passages say. People who hold to "*faith alone*" will start saying you don't have to do anything but believe, but the Scriptures do not limit what God requires of us to "*faith alone*." It is true that we are saved by faith, but it is not the whole truth. Scriptures, in fact, tell us that we are saved by many things.

For instance, many of these "*faith alone*" believers will back down when I read **Eph. 2:8**, where it says, "***For by grace you have been saved through faith.***" They have no problem accepting this passage. This passage tells us that not only is faith required by God's grace as well. These means it takes more than just man's faith to be saved, it takes God's grace as well.

And if you ask, "Do you have to love God in order to be saved?" They are also stumped. There are many passages that teach the necessity of love to be right with God. **1 Cor. 16:22** teaches us that, "***If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come!***" The word "***accursed***" means to be lost or condemned eternally. The Bible clearly teaches the necessity of love for the Lord.

The Lord Jesus himself in **Mt. 10:37** teaches, "***Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.***" The Lord doesn't merely ask us to love Him, no, He asks us to put him first, even above our father and mothers.

**Mark 12:28-30** reads, *“And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”* God requires our wholehearted love and will settle for nothing less.

So, if I ask a person who says he believes in faith alone whether love is necessary to be saved and please God, he must take it back. You see, faith without love won't please God.

I have also asked these *“faith alone”* believers, **“Do you believe it is necessary for a person to repent?”** Once again, Jesus himself, said these words in **Luke 13:3**, *“No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”* So serious was the Lord about repentance, that in the sermon on the mount he said, *“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell”* (**Mt. 5:29-30**).

In Paul's sermon on Mars Hill, he preached to the Stoics of Athens, he concluded with these words, *“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead”* (**Acts 17:30-31**).

Having seen what Scripture says about love and repentance, can anyone deny that God thinks it is necessary for man to love God and repent to be saved. If this is true, then we are not saved, by *“faith alone.”*

**One might also ask, is obedience to God necessary to be saved?** The Bible in **Hebrews 5:8-9** clearly teaches, *“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...”*

And then there is **John 3:36**, *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”* The contrast here is not between whether one believes or not, but whether one believes enough to be obedient. If he won't obey, he really doesn't believe. If he doesn't obey, he won't see eternal life; but the wrath of God will remain on him. The bible never treats obedience as if it were optional. To say that we are saved by *“faith alone,”* and have no need to obey clearly contradicts the teaching of scripture.

Here is something else the Lord requires, **denying oneself and taking up the cross.** In **Luke 9:23-24**, the Lord Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”* According to Jesus, denying self and taking up the cross is not optional.

Now when I bring up the need for obedience these *“faith alone”* believers begin to talk about *“works of salvation.”* And they begin to argue that we are saved by faith and not by works. I know **Eph. 2:8-10** says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*

I am not suggesting that a person can earn his way into heaven by his works. You can't earn salvation as it is a gift of God. *But let us not suppose this gift is unconditional.* God has the right to place conditions

on His gift of grace. God distinguishes those who will receive His grace from those who will not by placing conditions.

Do you honestly believe that the small effort you put into obeying God, earned your gift of God's grace?

**What God asks of us to receive His great mercy and grace are not meritorious works to earn salvation.** Meetings God's conditions doesn't mean salvation is not a gift. Faith is certainly a condition for receiving that gift. What we need to understand is that loving God, repenting of sin, and obeying the Lord. They don't obligate God to save you; **they are only responses of faith to meet God's conditions** and don't save you without the grace of God. No, they are merely conditions that God has required for you to receive His marvelous gift.

Hugo McCord, a Bible scholar and teacher from Oklahoma Christian, described faith as a "package" word. He said believing includes far more than agreeing something is true. The word "**faith**" describes all that man does in response to God's grace. Faith is more than a mental act. Here is an example, **Gal. 3:26-27** says, "***for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***" According to Paul the concept of faith included being baptized and clothing ourselves with Christ. The Bible never, never, never contemplates the idea of being a believing Christian without being baptized as well.

In **Mt. 7:21** Jesus said, "***Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.***" Having a relationship with the Lord, takes more than just mere faith; the person who talks faith but fails to live out his faith with love is actually fooling himself. In **1 John 2:4-6**, the Bible says, "***Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to***

*walk in the same way in which he walked.”* The doctrine of salvation by faith alone, although popular, does not come from God, but from man. God wants more than faith; He wants everything that’s in your heart and in your life.

God tells us in **John 12:42-43**, *“Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.”* This secret faith that fails to confess Christ and fails to show the love for God, does not please God. If they thought that faith alone would save them, they were merely deceiving themselves.

This is why James, in **James 2:18-20** said, *“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. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?”*

Today, will you not put your faith into action by confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God? Will you not turn away from sin that clings so closely to you, and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins? It is here where the Lord washes away your sins in the blood of the Lamb, (**Acts 22:16**). Will you not take up your cross daily and follow Him, loving Him and loving others? When you place your faith in Jesus and are baptized, the Lord will add you to His church and remember, the Father created you in Christ for good works – don’t just talk your faith, live it, with all your heart.