

Did Paul and James Agree on Salvation?

Protestant Christians around the world believe that we receive salvation by grace alone through faith, as the apostle Paul taught. And yet, we also come across the words of James: “Faith without works is dead.” This seeming contradiction has led believers of every generation to wonder, “Do the things we do impact how God sees us? Do our works contribute to our righteousness?” Together, let’s examine the book of James as a whole to understand his teachings on grace and works in context. We’ll compare what we learn from James to what Paul teaches about the relationship between God’s grace and our works, and then consider what it means for our daily lives.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we’ll cover in the episode.

- What do you think most people mean when they use the word “perfect”?
- What do you already know about the apostle Paul, the apostle James, and the audiences to which they wrote?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [Did Paul and James Agree on Salvation?](#)

READ [James 1:1-8](#), [James 2:14-26](#), [Colossians 3:5-10](#), [1 Thessalonians 4:3-8](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- At the close of segment 1, host Scott Hoezee noted that “James wants us to be whole and complete people, lacking nothing” and that some older translations chose the word “perfect.” He reminded us that in the Bible, “perfect does not mean that you never sin, it just means you are consistent; you are not hypocritical; you don’t say one thing but do something else. It is to be a person of shalom, of integrity; someone whose word can be trusted by others.” Is this definition of “perfect” consistent with what you’ve been taught? Why or why not?
- In their discussion of [James 2:14-26](#), Scott and host Darrell Delaney argued that James emphasizes the connection between faith and deeds. Faith does not replace actions, and actions do not replace faith; rather, when good deeds accompany faith, there is completeness, and both work together in people who are wholly transformed in faith. Who do you know whose life demonstrates this well?
- Which passage from the book of James did Scott and Darrell reference to show that James agreed with Paul that salvation comes by grace alone? Which passages did they reference from Paul to show that Paul agreed with James that our behavior is important and demonstrates true faith? How does this support the claim Scott made in segment 2 that “Scripture interprets Scripture and the Bible never contradicts itself”?
- In segment 3, Darrell used the example of a chair to show how our good works demonstrate our faith. How was this example helpful to you? In what ways do your actions in daily life demonstrate your faith?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Matthew 13:53-58](#), [Mark 6:1-5](#), [James 3:1-12](#), [Matthew 5:1-12](#), [Genesis 15:1-6](#), [Genesis 22:1-19](#)

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, Scott and Darrell concluded that Paul and James agree on salvation: God's grace saves us and transforms us. Transformed by grace and with grateful hearts, we do the good works God prepared for us to do. Paul and James each phrase and emphasize their message differently, but they share a consistent theme. Close your time of reflection in prayer, thanking God for the ministry and teaching of both Paul and James, and the consistent message of Scripture.

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