

Sharing Holiness

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- There is a story about a lady that was a member of a church.
- Each week on the way to Bible study, she passed the Salvation Army citadel, where the sign read "Bell ringers needed."
- Regularly she prayed, "Lord, I want to do something, but not that.
- I freeze in the winter wind. Please let me do something else."
- As time passed the prayer changed: "Lord, I'm willing. Please confirm to me this is what you want me to do."
- Within the week, God had confirmed his direction with a child's simple toy.
- During a family meal at a restaurant, her young daughter opened a kid's meal to reveal a toy character boldly ringing a red bell.
- Stunned, the woman knew her answer. "Yes, Lord, I hear and will obey" was her humble reply (Wesley Bible Curriculum).
- When was the last time you were challenged by the Holy Spirit to help someone you didn't want to help?
- When was the last time you were challenged by the Holy Spirit to take a meal to someone in need or go visit someone in a nursing home, or serve food at a soup kitchen?
- Holy living is not something we keep to ourselves.
- True Holy living will touch those around us and that should help to drive us in our quest for a growing relationship with Jesus.
- The problem is most people are like the lady who didn't want to be a bell ringer.
- She made excuses for not wanting that position like not wanting to stand in the cold to ring a bell.
- We like to make excuses for not reaching out to people.
- We may say we are not smart enough or trained enough or other people can do the job better.

- The list can go on and on.
- So, today we will spend some time looking at what the Lord wants us to do about the people that surround us on every side.
- Let's first turn to James 2: 14-26 where we read this from Jesus' half brother, ¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. ²⁰You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless^[a]? ²¹Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"^[b] and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. ²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (NIV - www.biblegateway.com)

- Here we have James talking about how faith without deeds is dead.
- The Greek term for deeds here is "Ergon" which means work, deed, activity, task, doing (Strong's Concordance).
- When we hear the term "deeds" we usually add "good" to the front of that term.
- However, deeds can be any task, activity, work, or any deed that is the byproduct of your faith.

- In other words, doing deeds will not take the place of your faith. Paul states this in Ephesians 2: 8-9, “⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. (NIV – www.biblegateway.com)”
- This is very important here.
- Paul makes it very plain that doing deeds to help people will not give you a pathway to Heaven.
- The only way to Heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ.
- You have to be justified and made righteous by Jesus before you can enter Heaven.
- You can’t earn your way to Heaven and doing deeds will not make you justified and righteous.
- Remember, Jesus’ blood is what justifies you and His righteous through His Spirit is the only way you can be made righteous.
- If we go back to James, he is not changing anything that Paul had stated.
- James is only adding on by saying your faith in Jesus should be producing deeds.
- James talks about those who claim they have faith but no deeds.
- They claim to know God and James states that the demons believe there is one God as well and they shudder.
- Satan and his demons will never do deeds that help to build the Kingdom of God.
- We can do something that satan and his demons can’t do – do deeds for God.
- Now, I say do deeds for God for a reason.
- Deeds can be work, activity, task, or just doing something.
- When we embrace Holy living, our view of doing deeds should change.
- Anytime we did things for other people, we wanted credit for it.
- We wanted the people around us to know what items we are doing to help those around us.
- Our human nature likes doing good deeds because it likes the credit for it.
- Earlier this year, I did a presentation for the Loins Club in Stewartstown for York County Parks.
- I did a Power Point and brought pamphlets and talked about the parks.

- In the last newsletter the York County Commissioners published, they had an article about how one of the employees at the parks does presentations for different organizations.
- They had his picture in the article and everything.
- How great he is for doing such presentations.
- I wasn't mentioned in the article and I felt hurt.
- Then I started to think about why I felt so hurt and left out.
- It was because I let my human nature get the better of me.
- My pride was hurt and I thought I should have been mentioned as well.
- This is how we usually treat our deeds – through our pride.
- When we become a true follower of Jesus, our views of deeds start to change.
- The Holy Spirit starts to control our human nature more and more and we start to do deeds for Jesus instead of for ourselves.
- We don't want credit for it.
- In fact, we no longer do deeds so we can feel good about ourselves.
- That is pride as well.
- James tells us in verse 24 that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.
- If we are righteous, we will not want to take away the credit from Jesus who deserves all the credit for the deeds we do for Him.
- Plus, we can add that since we have this righteousness within us, we should want to do deeds for Jesus.
- The Barna Group have put out some statistics about church and volunteering.
- They say that 38% of practicing Christians strongly agree every person should volunteer regularly.
- What a horrible number yet they thought that number was good since the general public is at 19%.
- Barna states that many people view time is more important than money.
- In other words, it's easier to tithe to God than to give their time to God.
- Shouldn't we tithe our time to God just like we do with the money He has given us?
- Maybe I'm pushing the cart too hard here.

- James is telling us that if we say we have faith in Jesus, we should be wanting to demonstrate that faith so others can see Jesus by what we do or say.
- Our deeds are one way we can allow Jesus to work through us.
- What are we doing for Jesus?
- If we really love Him, we want to do deeds for Him.
- James states it right in verse 26 – As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.
- What do you do for Jesus?
- That can be cleaning bathrooms at church or mowing grass or being board member or giving some clothes to a needy person or dropping off food for a senior citizen and the list can go on and on.
- We should be doing more deeds for God than doing earthly deeds.
- Let's take another step up the ladder and see what Jesus says about doing deeds.
- Let's turn to Matthew 6: 1-4 where we read this from Jesus, **"6 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.** (www.biblegateway.com)
- Paul and James are only preaching Jesus when they talk about doing deeds.
- Jesus tells us to be careful how we practice our righteousness or alms depending on your Bible translation.
- The Greek term used means any act of generosity to someone in serious need, gifts of substance (Strong's Concordance).
- Jesus tells us that we are not to go around telling everyone about the deeds we are doing for people.
- God knows your motive for doing deeds.
- If you did deeds for people and don't want everyone to know about it because it might take away glory for Jesus, then you will be rewarded.
- Now, that doesn't mean we do deeds to get a reward.

- That's not showing love for Jesus.
- There's something else that really caught my attention while reading this piece of Scripture.
- In verse 2, Jesus says "so" when you give to the needy.
- Jesus doesn't say "if" you give to the needy.
- To me, this almost sounds like Jesus thinks we should be automatically doing this already.
- Part of our deeds is helping those in need.
- We should want to help those in need because that is part of Holy living – love your neighbor.
- Let's look at one more item and that can be found in Matthew 6: 19-21 where Jesus tells us this, ¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (www.biblegateway.com)
- We have come to the meat part of doing deeds as a Christian.
- The most important question we can ask ourselves when we want to do a deed for someone is what is our motive?
- Most people do deeds to gain treasure on this earth either by receiving human praise or some type of human gain either for a position or upgrade in a position.
- Jesus tells us that as His followers, we are not to store up our main treasure on this earth because it is only temporary.
- Heaven treasure is eternal.
- Treasure in heaven cannot be touched by the things of this earth.
- It's hard for us to get into this mind set because we can see our treasure on this earth either by bank statements or IRA statements.
- We can't see our heaven treasures.
- We must rely on our faith in Jesus Christ about our treasure in heaven.
- It's important to know where we are focused on either earthly treasures or heaven treasures because that tells us where our heart is.
- Plus, it tells the Lord where our heart is.
- If our heart is on doing earthly deeds, then our motive will be on ourselves or will be pride led.
- If our heart is on doing heavenly deeds, then our motive will be Jesus.

- We have to set our mind on doing deeds for people with the thought that Jesus will get the glory.
- We do this because of our love for Jesus.
- In closing, let's make sure that we spend time doing heavenly deeds for those around us because that is part of our faith in Jesus. Even if we are not able to physically, we can call someone or pray for someone in need. We do all of these heavenly deeds for the glory of Jesus. So, let's make sure our motive is right before we make the decision in doing a deed. Who are we trying to please?

The Strongest Strong's Concordance. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001.

Wesley Bible Curriculum 2025. Wesleyan Publishing House: Fishers, 2025