

Are You Of Use Or Value?

The Bible states in James 2:18 - But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Many Christians today try to build their faith through good deeds or consider their deeds a substitute for faith. And yet, the Word of God tells us clearly in James 2:17, "---faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead." Faith and deeds should be inseparable.

Our works should always be based on our faith in Jesus Christ and love for Him, not our use to Him.

In Luke 10: 38-42, we read the story of Jesus at the home of Martha and Mary, "As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, He came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had been made. She came to Him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

In this story we see that Mary was more interested in her relationship with Jesus (faith) than her sister Martha's commitment to preparing the food (use). It is so much easier for us to work for God (like Martha) than live a life that is fully surrendered to Him (like Mary).

Oswald Chambers in his devotional "My Utmost for His Highest" states that, "In Christian work our initiative and motivation are too often simply the result of realizing that there is work to be done and that we must do it. Yet that is never the attitude of a spiritually vigorous Saint. His aim is to achieve the realization of Jesus Christ in every set of circumstances."

In Matthew 23:1-5 - Jesus said to the crowds and to His disciples: "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see:---"

We see in this portion of scripture that the Pharisees portrayed a measure of faith in God, but they were more interested in rules (legalism) than manifesting godly fruit (works). They were more concerned about how they were viewed by man than how God saw them. They exhibited righteousness on the outside, but on the inside they lived like the un-godly. In fact, Jesus in verse 23 of Matthew 23, called them, "whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean."

Our value to Jesus is never in what we DO for Him or our USEFULNESS to Him, but in who we are to Him. As believers, we DO NOT have an option to choose faith or works. If our lives are totally surrendered to the Lord, then out of our love for Him, our works will be reflective of our inner relationship with Jesus and nothing will prevent us from doing the works He has put before us. As a result, others will see the Jesus in us and desire to know Him.

WHEN OUR PRIORITIES ARE RIGHT, OUR VALUE TO HIM EXCEEDS OUR USEFULNESS TO HIM.