

Lordship FAQ

IS ETERNAL LIFE FREE OR IS THERE A CATCH?

Good question.

The Bible says the gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23). Although all who call themselves Christians say it is necessary to believe in Christ as Savior to go to heaven, many add it is also necessary to make Christ the Lord of your life.

But consider the difference:

Christ becomes your Savior when you believe (Acts 16:31), but Christ becomes your Lord when you serve (Luke 6:46)

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Acts 16:31

Why do you call Me "Lord, Lord," and not do what I tell you?

Luke 6:46

Having Christ as your Savior makes you God's child (Galatians 3:26), but having Christ as your Lord makes you God's disciple (John 8:31).

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith.

Galatians 3:26

Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in Him, "If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples..."

John 8:31

Christ becomes your Savior through no effort on your part (Ephesians 2:8,9), but becoming a disciple requires putting forth great effort (Luke 9:23).

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God - not because of works, lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:8,9

And He said to all, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Luke 9:23

Eternal life is based upon the sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 9:26), but discipleship requires the sacrifice of the believer (Romans 12:1).

...He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Hebrews 9:26

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice...

Romans 12:1

Jesus said, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47).

What does it mean to believe? Simply that you are putting your confidence in Christ alone to get you to heaven rather than your own efforts. After all, how can Jesus be your Savior if you're trying to save yourself?

Some may object and quote where Jesus said, "Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Even though it seems as if Christ is saying it's not enough just to believe in Him to go to heaven, He is, in fact, teaching that those who think they must do more than believe will be condemned. He went on to say, "On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?'" (Matthew 7:22). It is clear these individuals who said, "Lord, Lord," thought they were going to be accepted into heaven because of what they had done for Christ. But it is not what we do for God that gets us to heaven, it's what He did for us when He died on the cross. Thus, it's not those who say "Lord, Lord" (i.e. those who have made Him the Lord of their lives), who will enter heaven, but those who do the will of His Father. What is the will of the Father? Jesus said, "For this is the will of My Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40).

IF FAITH ALONE SAVES, WHY DID JAMES SAY "FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD"

James is not talking about how to gain eternal life, but rather rewards and blessings from God. Eternal life is given as a gift because of the work of Christ, but rewards are given because of the work of the believer.

In fact, having eternal life is conditioned upon not working to receive it! The Apostle Paul wrote, "And to the one who does

not work but trusts Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5).

There is no contradiction between Paul and James, it's just that James is dealing with having faith in God for things other than one's eternal destiny.

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Here's proof. Compare these two verses about Abraham ©

Paul wrote:

"For what does the scripture say? `Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Romans 4:3).

Whereas James wrote:

"For what does the scripture say? " Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?" (James 2:21).

These two verses are dealing with two different incidents in Abraham's life. Paul dealt with how Abraham acquired the righteousness needed to spend eternity with God (faith and nothing more), whereas James dealt with an act of obedience which occurred over thirty years later which explains why Abraham came to be called "the friend of God" (James 2:23).

Being God's friend depends upon works. Jesus said, "You are My friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14). Also, having your prayers answered depends upon works. First John 3:22 says, "And we receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him." Having rewards in heaven depends upon works. Jesus said, "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels and then shall He reward every man according to his work" (Matthew 16:27).

What if someone believes he is God's friend, but doesn't keep the commands of Christ? What if someone has faith his prayers will be answered, but has no works? What if someone believes he will have rewards in heaven, but does nothing for Christ? Wouldn't you agree that faith without works is dead? This is exactly what James meant.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO TRUST CHRIST AS HIS SAVIOR AND DO NO WORKS AT ALL?

A good example of this is found in the Gospel of John. It says, "Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in Him,

but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42,43).

Because these religious leaders didn't want to suffer persecution, they remained silent about their faith in Christ. Will they be rewarded? Of course not. Jesus said, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Another place which clearly teaches there will be some in heaven without rewards is First Corinthians 3:11-15. In this passage it explains that works done for Christ amount to gold, silver, and precious stones; whereas all else is wood, hay, and straw (i.e. worthless). On the day of Judgment for the believer, God will burn up all that was worthless, and only what was done for Christ will remain. Verse 15 says, "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

A person in heaven without rewards is compared to a person who escaped from a fire. He is safe, but all his valuables have perished. What a waste of a life!

WHAT ABOUT REPENTANCE?

When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved, he was told, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). In order for the jailer to believe this simple message, he had to repent. You see, the Greek word translated "repent" means "to change one's mind."

If someone thinks he has to ask Christ into his heart or ask for forgiveness or turn from his sins or make Christ the Master of his life to be saved - that person has to change his thinking and realize there is nothing more to do to go to heaven than trust the One who made a perfect payment for sin and rose again from the dead three days later. Then, and only then, has that person put his complete trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ for his salvation - only then has he repented.

So you see, eternal life is absolutely free... without a catch!

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life."

(First John 5:13)