

Words - Action = Nothing

I think I am going to buy you a car. Not just any car, but a Sunfire Red, 400 horsepower, 1969 Chevy Camaro Z28 that I found in a lot and plan to have restored. You deserve it. I think you have done well lately and it is about time that I reward you. I have not bought it yet, but once I get some money saved up and are able to buy it, it is yours. Just give me some time and before you know it, you will be cruising down the highway with nothing but the sun in your eyes and the wind in your face. Lavish me in your thanks and praise, and all the favors I am gaining because of the promise that I made to you. Nothing can compare to a car, right? You are bending over backwards to take care of me at every turn. How much do you love me?

Time goes by, and I still have not bought it for you. Five years turns into fifteen, slowly into thirty, and yet still no car. Finally I pass from this life, and you, thinking the time will come for you to cash in on that promise, show up at the reading of the will. Lo and behold, ten other people walk into the room expecting the same reward, and fifteen seconds is all it takes you to figure out that it was an empty promise with no chance of becoming a reality. How much do you love me now?

We all know people that seem to be masters of the above situation: promising something and yet never following through. They talk a lot, but never seem to back anything up, and, after a while, we stop believing them because there is no credibility left. What use is their words? James makes a similar appeal in James 2:15-16 by asking, *"If a brother and sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?"* What good is it, in other words, if we talk a big game, but do not back it up? It is worthless speech and empty promises.

Brethren, our faith is the same way. What good is it for us to make the claim every Sunday and Wednesday that we are Christians, but then do not live it out in our lives? Who are we fooling? *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked"* (Gal. 6:7). James makes the argument that our faith is not something that we merely acknowledge verbally, but a belief system that is ingrained into our actions at every turn.

The passage in James has caused a great number of believers much difficulty when comparing it with Paul's statement in Romans 3:28: *"Therefore we conclude that man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law."* This confusion is settled when both James 2:15-16 and Romans

3:28 are compared to Romans 4:1-4. Paul is dealing with the attitude of **only** having faith or **only** having works which James refutes as well. Both James and Paul condemn those who reject righteous works under the pretense of faith or vice versa. *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"* (Eph. 2:10).

The true crime of empty speech is the illusion it presents to the person hearing it. Hopes are built up, expectations are raised, and the ball drops, giving way to unfulfilled promises, leaving the person heartbroken. Fortunately for us, we have a Father that does not act like that. He fulfills His promises, and, depending on the person, can either be glorious comfort or fearful expectation. On His behalf, God also does not accept empty promises from us either, but expects us to fulfill our words to Him. Keep that in mind next time you go to God.

Note: The opening paragraph is to be used for illustrative purposes only. The writer does not have the resources available to buy a Sunfire Red, 400 horsepower, 1969 Chevy Camaro for everyone that reads this article. He is sorry.

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