

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. I John 3:17-18 NIV

“Action speaks louder than words, but not nearly as often.” These comments are attributed to Mark Twain. In a humorous way, he was describing the human tendency to make promises but neglect to keep them.



Sadly, our actions often aren't consistent with our words.

Twain's comments were built on a phrase that had been part of the general vocabulary, in various forms, for hundreds of years. In 1856, Abraham Lincoln had described how actions speak louder than words. In 1692 Gersham Bulkeley wrote, "Actions are more significant than words." And, in the 16th century, French writer Michel de Montaigne is quoted as stating, "Saying is one thing and doing is another." During the civil rights movement of this nation the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther Kings, Jr. said, "You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say."

But, in fact, this phrase really has its origins in the Bible. The book of James clearly states the principle that *we demonstrate*

our faith through our actions. If we see someone with needs, it doesn't really help them just by saying a few words. *"What good does that do?"* James explained that unless our faith *"produces good deeds, it is dead and useless"* (James 2:15-17).

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If 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? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:15-17

The Bible also declares that this principle is true concerning genuine love. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"* (John 14:15) It is not enough to say that we love God. We *prove* that this love is genuine when we obey Him and keep our promises.

But this also is true for our relationships with other people, such as our spouses, children, and friends. We demonstrate the sincerity of our love through our actions.

Today, remember that your actions demonstrate the true conviction of your heart, both in your relationship with God and with other people.

Prayer for today:

"Father, thank You for how much You love us. Fill us with Your Spirit and help us and me to show Your love toward others. In Jesus' name. Amen.