“Workless faith is folly…”

I enjoy working outside in the wide open yard. Cutting grass and trimming plants are relaxing. There have been occasions that I do some of this work at church. I don’t sign up for the grass cutting detail. I don’t like to sign lists. I just show up and do it because it gives me an opportunity to do something I enjoy. I do not feel obligated or pressured. I just do it. The shrubs that I trimmed earlier in the year need it again and one morning I will go in and take care of that. It is like outdoor sculpture for me. A friend asked me for a favor. It had to do with church camp. I said yes. Really not a big deal because I knew I could do what he required. Another friend asked me to write something for him and I said yes to that as well. Sometimes I have been given the opportunity to offer communion mediation at our church. Sometimes I am asked to be a substitute teacher in our Sunday School Class. I say yes. I feel it is important to use our gifts and talents. If I was asked to participate in the church musical, play an instrument in the church band or sing a song as a special in church my response would be very simple. NO! NO! NO! I have no talent in those areas. There is no use to make others suffer when we try to do things we have no talent for. To think I can when I cannot is delusional and a waste of good time. I also do not subscribe to the opinions of others that God has a score card and is writing it all down and keeping a list and checking it twice. That is not my God. That is Santa.

My God has given me the opportunity to an eternal life. My God said let me show you how much I love you and came to earth. He was a preacher, a healer and a teacher. My Gods ultimate expression of his love for me was when he went to the cross to die for each and every one of us and most importantly, kept his promise. He came back from the dead and hundreds of people witnessed him after this resurrection. My God defeated death and still is the victor over death. For me to inherit all that my God wants me to have I have certain responsibilities. I have proclaimed publicly that I accept Jesus as my Savior, I was baptized as an act of obedience and I have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is my faith.

I also know that one can write or talk himself blue in the face if you want to get a group of people and talk about faith and works. (Heb 10:38, Heb. 11:6, Rev 2:2, James 2:14-18, James 2:26, Eph 2:8-9) I am sure you recognize one of the scriptures above. You, like me, might have used that particular scripture when you were speaking to others about faith vs. works. I have heard the debates and I have participated in a few of them myself in college as well as Sunday School classes. When all was said and done each group of people parted their own ways convinced that they were more right than the other group. I think this type of discussion is good. I think this is what my God wants people to do. Study, think, have a dialogue with others to stretch our minds in his direction. Often we selectively use scripture to prove a point, our point. I know what I read in James 2:26. Oh, there I go trying to be selective and prove my point. But what is the point? Folly is senseless or foolish behavior. Now go back to paragraph one about twelve lines down beginning with ***“If I was asked to participate in the…”*** Read that very carefully. That would be truly foolish behavior on my part. My talents are definitely not in these areas. So what about the first twelve lines? What is the point? I believe

Christians enjoy using their talents and gifts for others. I believe those things you have a talent for are talents bestowed upon you by our God. Why would you have them if they were not to be used for his glory? Yes, even working outside in the yard at church or someone's house who can't do for themselves. The following are ***not*** my words. I wish they were. * "By works we prove the genuineness of our faith. We are saved by faith alone, but not by the faith that is alone."

Richard Hurt, Retired Classroom Teacher

*Truth for Today
Paul Mizzi
http://www.tecmalta.org/tft219.htm