

Is faith more important than good deeds in Islam?

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I have asked this question to many Muslims.

The way I propose the question is as a hypothetical;

Lets say there are two unrelated men, man one follows the word of Islam but makes mistakes and commits bad deeds. In terms of deeds, man one is average, he is not a particularly good person compared to a non-Muslim but he has faith in Islam. On the other hand, man two is an exceptionally good person, he lives up to the values of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as much as is practically possible for a mortal human. However, he does not believe in Islam.

Which man would go to Jannah (heaven) in the eyes of a Muslim; Who is the better man?

The most common response to this question from practicing Muslims I have spoken to is that man one would go to Jannah while man two would Jahannam (hell) due to his lack of faith in Islam.

Many people who state this argument also recognize that the implications of this are seemingly off from the message of Islam.

They argue however, that all men will be given the fair opportunity to put their faith in Islam and that therefore the judgement is still fair. However, I argue that there is difference between a fairness in judgement

Many Muslims at this point will revert to faith as an implicit unquestionable explanation, they will restate their faith in Islam, and ideology that belief and repenting in Islam are the ultimate deciders of a mans character.

The less common end of this spectrum believe that one is not truly a Muslim unless they follow the code of Islam to the best of their physical capability. Therefore, if they do not engage in practices such as prayer or fasting, they are not Muslim; with the exception of reasonable extenuating circumstances.