

6. It is implicated by the Lord in Mark 7:9–13, that the young ruler had contributed all his wealth to the temple under the pledge of Corban thus violating the Fifth Commandment.
7. With these things in mind, the Jews of James’s congregation were to orient to grace by remembering that although they no longer functioned under the Mosaic Law they now functioned under the principle of free will.
8. The function of one’s volition in the Church Age is approached differently than previously in the dispensation of Israel. In the Old Testament, many Jews were guided by the mandates of the Mosaic Law, many erroneously assuming that keeping the Law resulted in salvation.
9. In the Church Age, believers function under the principle of grace which includes the principle of the Law of Freedom. Saved by grace, the believer is to grow in grace so he can apply doctrines of that dispensation.
10. Verses 12 and 13 draw an obvious conclusion from verses 8–11. Believers in the Church Age are commanded to grow in grace so they may, “prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers” (James 1:22).
11. Therefore, the believer is to move forward as a good soldier for Christ by growing in grace. Failing to do this results in being a hearer of the word and not a doer.
12. This principle is forcefully stated in James 1:25 where the term Law of Freedom is first used:

James 1:25 But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect Law of Freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer, but a doer, this man shall acquire unalloyed happiness by the production of divine good. (EXT)
13. The Law of Freedom makes reference to the principle: “In human history, the sovereignty of God and the free will of man coexist by divine decree.”
14. Therefore, believers may opt for intensified study of the Word of God which results in “not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer,” or on the other hand, they may be a “hearer, but not a doer.”
15. The subject that James now addresses is how to tell the difference between a doer of the word and a hearer only. James 2:14 looks at the situation from the standpoint of the unbeliever.



16. Verse 14 begins with an interrogative pronoun **τίς (tís)**: “What.” It introduces a principle that will stress the importance of the Word of God over works since no divine good can be produced unless it is based on divine guidance from Scripture and under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.
17. The problem that results among unbelievers is their inability to recognize the difference between themselves and professing Christians. The reason is that all too often the believer is a hearer, but not a doer.
18. All the unbeliever can do is observe the lifestyle, behavior patterns, and character traits of others. All they are able to perceive is the production or lack of it of the believer.
19. When mainline Christianity stresses “good works,” but without teaching the doctrines that support them, a form of subtle legalism emerges. The biblical sequence is for the pastor to teach the doctrine which challenges members to first hear and then apply.
20. The end result among congregants is that some hear the Word and then apply while others are hearers only. It is this latter group that James is challenging in verse 14 because being a hearer only does not enable the unbeliever to distinguish that person from other unbelievers.
21. The next word in the text is the subject, the noun **ὄφελος (óphelos)**: “advantage, benefit, or profit.” This may be translated, “To what advantage.”
22. We know that unbelievers have no access to divine thought which is foolishness to them:

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man
[unbeliever] does not accept the things of the
 Holy Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him;
 and he cannot understand them, because they are
 spiritually appraised. (NASB)

23. Believers must be constantly reminded of the status they once occupied. Like the person in this verse, he could not understand what believers were talking about when they discussed biblical principles.
24. He could clearly understand negative commandments, the “thou shalt nots,” but things unseen were a mystery to him. He could observe a believer not doing the “thou shalt nots,” but in an establishment oriented culture, even unbelievers obey many of those.



25. What unbelievers cannot see is the person's faith: faith alone for salvation and faith alone for spiritual growth. If they cannot "see" these things because believers in their periphery were not using, "faith in the Word for application to life and circumstances," then James asks, "What advantage is it?"
26. The unbeliever has no human spirit and cannot discern the difference between himself and other people except by observation through the eye and ear gates. What they see or hear, or in this context, what they do not see or hear, is how they determine the difference between themselves and members of the Royal Family of God.
27. The personality of the believer is reflected by his demeanor, mental attitude, and communication. His demeanor is not threatening, but confident. His mental attitude is positive, not negative. His communication is not judgmental, but flexible.
28. One does not need to quote chapters and verses to an unbeliever for he cannot understand biblical truth anyhow. However, principles of doctrinal truth have the power to confront human viewpoint without citing the Source.
29. Of course, this does not include personal evangelism which does require references to passages that distinguish Jesus Christ as the means by which one may choose to submit to acquire eternal life.
30. In this context, it is the application of doctrine to life and circumstances that enables the unbeliever to distinguish something different about Christians as compared to others he encounters.
31. Visible production from the source of inner faith will impress the unbeliever. He cannot see the inner source of faith, but he can see the application of it.
32. He cannot see the *kardia* and its stream of consciousness, he cannot see the doctrine stored therein, he cannot see the Holy Spirit's indwelling ministry, and from that resource he cannot see God's grace and His power.
33. Nevertheless, these attributes are most assuredly real and active in the soul of the Spirit-filled believer. Without application of these attributes, the unbeliever cannot distinguish a believer from an unbeliever.
34. So James poses the question, "What advantage is it, my fellow believers, if anyone "says": the present active subjunctive of **λέγω (légō)**. The present tense indicates the universality of this statement during the course of the Church Age.



35. This is not in quotes, but the phrase “anyone says,” indicates this is the attitude of the unbeliever. The active voice means the unbeliever thinks this while the subjunctive mood introduces a third class condition, maybe true, maybe not.
36. This is preceded by the particle **ἐάν (eán)**: “if,” plus the subjunctive of *légō* implying a third class condition. As far as the unbeliever is concerned, this is the way he sees life.
37. To try and restrict yourselves from association with unbelievers is unrealistic. There are numerous situations where it is actually impossible to avoid them such as a classroom, workplace, organization, recreation, and of course, family.
38. These gatherings are places for the believer to apply doctrine without necessarily quoting Scripture. These are environments for the application of the Christian way of life.
39. The verse reads so far, “What advantage is it, my fellow members of the royal family, if anyone says” This is followed by the present active infinitive of **ἔχω (échō)**: “to have” or “to have and hold, to possess.”
40. The unbeliever either thinks or comments, “He says he has faith.” The word “faith” is **πίστις (pístis)** and is the direct object of the verb *échō*, “to have.”
41. The noun *pístis* is transitive and therefore must have an object. It is the object that indicates in what the individual places his faith. In our context, it is obvious that the unbeliever is accusing a believer of having faith in something.
42. That “something” cannot be the gospel of salvation since the person has already been identified as a believer. So then, what is the object? The unbeliever does not actually know, but what he does observe is that the person does not produce works.
43. Well, we do know what the unbelieving observer has at least partially deduced and the answer is supplied by James in James 1:23: “he is a hearer of the word, but not a doer.”
44. “Not a doer” is the unbeliever’s assessment by the repetition of the verb *échō*, “to have,” however this time it is preceded by the adversative conjunction **δέ (dé)**: “but he has,” and followed by the negative conjunction, **μή (mē)**: “no.”



45. What this believer does not have, according to the unbelieving observer, is the direct object of *échō*, the plural noun, **ἔργον (*érgon*)**: “works or production,” which is accompanied by the negative *mé*, “no works or no production.”

46. Here is the expanded translation of James 2:14 so far:

James 2:14 What advantage is it, my fellow members of the royal family, if any unbeliever says, “he has faith in the Bible, but he has no production [**no application**]”?

1. Now we arrive at a sentence in the English that, when taken at face value, has led many to conclude, if a person does not have works, then he is not saved. Nothing could be farther from the truth.
2. The verse concludes with a second rhetorical question, “Can that faith save him?” This question begins with the present active indicative of the verb **δύναμαι (*dúnamai*)**: “capability for doing something: “can, able, capable.”¹
3. The question is directed to the believer’s faith which is the noun **πίστις (*pístis*)**. The verb form is **πιστεύω (*pisteúō*)**: “to believe, to have faith, to trust.” It and its noun form are transitive meaning this faith or belief must have an object.
4. Dependent on the context, the object with regard to the Christian way of life can be the gospel of Jesus Christ resulting in salvation, or it can be doctrine resident in the soul for application to life and circumstances.
5. James is not discussing salvation, but the issue among believers who have placed their faith in Christ for salvation. When it comes to production from their doctrinal inventory, they are negligent.
6. James’s illustration presents an unbeliever observing a believer who, as far as he can tell, is not much different than himself and most of the other unbelievers he knows.
7. What comes next is the word that seals the deal for those who think that production is necessary for salvation, the aorist active infinitive of **σῶζω (*sōzō*)**: “to save.”
8. There are several applications of this verb in the New Testament. The one most often assumed is salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, but it is just one of the applications (Acts 16:31).

¹ Walter Bauer, “δύναμαι,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 261–62.



9. Another is deliverance from disease or demon possession (Luke 18:42). A third deliverance is from impending peril or death (Matthew 8:23–27 with emphasis on v. 25).
10. The question in verse 14 may be assumed to read, “Can faith save him?” as we see in the NASB translation. But note the pronoun “him.” Who is “him”? We have to go back to the beginning of the paragraph. There we find the subject that is to be discussed throughout the rest of the chapter:

James 2:8 **If [protasis of a 1st-class condition] you apply the Royal Law according to the Scripture, “You shall unconditionally love from personal integrity those you encounter,” [apodosis] honorably, you must keep on doing this. (EXT)**

11. The expanded translation contains the answer in the phrase, “those you encounter,” which in the Greek is the noun **πλησίον (*plēsion*)**: “fellow man, any member of the human family,” or according to the KJV, “neighbor.”
12. As a royal ambassador, one of our duties is to recruit new witnesses for the Prosecution from among those we encounter, in other words, “those in our periphery.”
13. The issue James is emphasizing is the function of the Royal Law. The application we have been observing is the development of personal integrity so that our relationship with others is focused on grace orientation and unconditional love from the soul status of personal integrity.
14. This is the approach to fellow believers with whom we may or may not have differences. In verse 14, James directs us to the unbeliever. How can we be a good witness to those with whom we are not familiar? We must execute the doctrines we have learned while in their company as a way of demonstrating the lifestyle of a believer in Jesus Christ.
15. When doctrine in the stream of consciousness is put into action in the presence of unbelievers, it serves to validate the difference that exists between the unsaved and those who effectually apply biblical truths to life and circumstances.
16. This is a form of evangelism. Unbelievers are able to observe our works as opposed to the invisible presence of our faith in Christ for salvation.
17. The application of our doctrinal inventory through production of divine good converts the negative answer to the question into a positive. Take for example the dynamics in James’s church among Golden Fingers, Chazzan, and the Poor Man.



18. Let's conclude, for the purpose of illustration, that all three men are positive-volition believers. Golden Fingers would be a man of integrity that would not have allowed Chazzan to give him a choice seat in the synagogue to the exclusion of the Poor Man.
19. Chazzan would not have discriminated against the Poor Man in favor of Golden Fingers. The Poor Man would have been agreeable to sit anywhere as long as he could attend Bible class which was actually his desire.
20. Quite contrarily, James takes the opposite approach in verse 14 in order to make the point when an unbeliever contends, "he has faith in the Bible, but he has no production."
21. That brings us back to the question, "Can that faith save him?" So, "him" refers to the unbeliever that the believer encounters among "those in his periphery."
22. The word "faith" is *pístis* referring to doctrine in his stream of consciousness. Can unapplied doctrine in the believer's *kardía* save, *sózo*, an unbeliever? We have established that the word *sózo* does not refer to salvation with regard to the man who has faith, but has no production.
23. To illustrate, let's temporarily jump forward in James, chapter two, and note Abraham's faith in doctrine and its application with regard to his son, Isaac:

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works [**production**] when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

v. 22 You see that faith was working with his works [**production**], and as a result of his works [**production**], faith was perfected. (NASB)

24. James illustrates in the above passage that Abraham's faith application did not refer to his salvation, but to production from doctrine in his soul:

Genesis 22:9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

v. 10 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

v. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."



Genesis 22:12 He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

25. Through faith in the integrity of God, Abraham confidently took his son, Isaac, to Mount Moriah to fulfill the Lord’s command to “offer him there as a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:2).
26. Abraham’s submission to divine authority was so strong that he had absolute confidence that God was testing his faith application at the most intensified level: parental love for his only son while orienting and adjusting to a divine commandment.
27. In this example, salvation was not the issue, but rather Abraham being delivered from the danger of sacrificing Isaac. This doctrinal confidence was revealed when he dismounted his donkey and led Isaac away to be bound upon the altar:

Genesis 22:5 Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey, and **I and the lad** will go over there; and **we** will worship and **return to you.**”

28. In our James 2 context, the verb *sōzō* does not refer to salvation of the soul of the person who has faith, but no application. The verb *sōzō* occurs in the next sentence. The NASB’s choice of words is, “Can that faith (*pístis*) save (*sōzō*) him?” In the twenty-first century, this translation does nothing but intensify what was already developed in the latter half of the twentieth century, that salvation of the soul requires the production of good works.
29. How should we address this heresy and still be in sync with the Royal Law? I am inspired to say, “You ignorant wretch, how completely disoriented are you to the conjugation of the verb *pisteúō*? It is transitive and demands an object. In salvific passages that object is Jesus Christ.”
30. But under the principle of the Royal Law, I am forced to leave out the, “You ignorant wretch, how completely disoriented are you,” part.
31. If there is no doctrine in the soul, then there is no ammo to fire. Our artillery, in the scrum of the Angelic Conflict, is divine ordnance and its firepower consists of principles, mandates, concepts, doctrines, and categories of systematic theology by which we fight the good fight of faith.



32. If there is no ordnance in the stream of consciousness, then there is no application to life and circumstances. Such a believer did have faith that saved his soul, but he is incapable of doing battle from his soul's armory that is virtually empty of any doctrine.
33. It is imperative that we expand on the principle that faith's object for salvation is Jesus Christ. Post salvation, we must inculcate doctrine as the object of our faith for application to life and circumstances.
34. James's rhetorical question is a challenge to show that unless you have an ever-increasing inventory of doctrinal ideas in the soul you cannot apply doctrine in the presence of unbelievers.
35. This production can take the form of a relaxed mental attitude. This copacetic state of mind pays attention to what the unbeliever says to which the Holy Spirit may recall a biblical principle which can be added to the conversation.
36. No need to certify it by citing book, chapter, and verse. Just fire some truth into the discussion. If it stokes further conversation, then you respond with more divine viewpoint. Some may respond others may not. Under the Law of Freedom, their volition is unrestricted to either accept or reject.
37. All of this takes place in the first sentence of verse 14. The verb *σῶζω* appears in the last sentence of verse 14, "Can faith save him?"
38. The pronoun "him" is the masculine singular pronoun, **αὐτός (autós)**: "him." The man who is saved, but has no production does not need to be saved, he just needs to get in fellowship and grow in grace. He is not the person referenced here.
39. The masculine pronoun in the last sentence can be expanded to read this way, "Can the person indicated in the Royal Law, referred to as 'your neighbor,' be saved by a believer who has faith but no production?"
40. The Greek of this last sentence gives us a clue from a word that is not translated into the English, but is very important to the translation. Here is how it appears in the Greek text: **μὴ δύναται ἡ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν (mē dúnatai hē pístis sōsai autón)**: literally, "Not can the faith save him?"
41. The negative particle **μὴ (mē)**: "not," is not translated, but with the aorist active infinitive of the verb **σῶσαι (sōsai)**: "save," it indicates a question that demands a negative answer. Here's more on the subject:



Μή (mḗ). As an emphatic interrogative particle which has lost its own negative power, but expressing a degree of fear or anxiety and implying the expectation of a negative answer. With the present indicative (James 2:14).²

42. The presence of the untranslated particle μή in the last sentence of the verse requires another sentence to be added, “No, it cannot.”
43. The lifestyle of the believer who produces divine good by means of his thoughts, decisions, and actions can gain the attention of an unbeliever and with that response use the opening to present the gospel.
44. This is the expression of soul integrity under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It enables this believer to use the opportunity to communicate truth to an unsaved person.
45. For him, faith in doctrine, plus a receptive environment, provides the opportunity to evangelize an unbeliever.
46. Here is the expanded translation of:

James 2:14 What advantage, my fellow members of the royal family, if anyone alleges he has faith in the Bible, but keeps on not having production? Is faith alone able to evangelize his neighbor? No, it cannot. (EXT)

Principles on Operational Death:

1. Faith has several objects in Scripture:
 - (1) For unbelievers, Jesus Christ is the object of one’s faith for salvation. The faith of an unbeliever does not result in salvation unless it is directed to Jesus with the understanding that his faith alone in Christ alone results in eternal salvation.
 - (2) Faith is one of three systems of perception:
 - a. Rationalism: The theory that reason is in itself a source of knowledge superior to and independent of sense perception.
 - b. Empiricism: The practice of relying on observation and experiment especially in the natural sciences. A theory that all knowledge originates in experience.

(End Jas2-74. See JAS2-75 for continuation of study at p. 731.)

² Spiros Zodhiates, ed., “μή,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 9779.

