

12. Even done biblically, the production of divine good is limited by the doctrinal inventory of the believer. Consistent and legitimate application to life and circumstances requires an inventory of biblical principles in the *kardía*.
13. I would impose the following necessity to every believer who wishes to develop a highly functional inventory of problem-solving devices in his soul. He must be *in cathedra*. He must be “in the chair.”
14. Faith must have an object for inculcation and application to occur. Faith in the veracity of the Word results in inculcation while faith in resident doctrine in the stream of consciousness results in application.
15. Failure of application results in no works since faith by itself is dead.

**James 2:17** So also faith, if it does not have production, keeps on being observably dead, being by itself. (EXT)

### Paragraph. 2: The Principle of Vindication: James 2:18–20.

**James 2:18** But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (NASB)

1. This paragraph is introduced by a debater’s technique. James introduces the straw-man technique: “An argument or opponent set up so as to be easily refuted or defeated.”<sup>1</sup>
2. James is going to utilize classical rhetoric to defeat the notion that works are primary to faith in the function of the Christian *modus operandi*. We will observe his use of the straw-man method of argument in verse 18.
3. A brief introduction to this system of argument is the subject of George A. Kennedy’s book, *Classical Rhetoric*, and its chapter, “Judeo-Christian Rhetoric”:

Scriptural truth must be apprehended by the listener, not proved by the speaker. Somewhat surprisingly the early Church adopted the Greek word *pístis* [faith] to mean “Christian faith.” In classical Greek, the meanings of *pístis* range over the spectrum of “trust, belief, persuasion”; it was, however, the word used by Aristotle for proof in rhetoric, and this usage became standard among teachers of rhetoric.

<sup>1</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed., s.v. “straw man.”



The acceptance of *pístis* to mean “Christian faith” by the early Church implied at the very least that faith came from hearing speech, and provided a future opening for the acceptance of classical rhetoric within Christian discourse.

Rhetorical criticism of the gospels and of the other parts of the New Testament has made great progress in the late twentieth century; a substantial body of scholarship is now available. An important goal of rhetorical criticism is to try to hear the biblical texts as an ancient audience would hear them, and that means an audience familiar with classical rhetorical practice whether from study in school or from experience of the secular world. Among the early Christians there were many simple people with little formal education, but there were many others who had had some formal training in Greek language and rhetoric, and in the sophisticated Greek-speaking communities of Antioch, Miletus, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria, Athens, and Rome most hearers would have had some expectations of how a speech should be arranged and delivered. The gospels and the epistles were read aloud in Christian churches, and necessarily received by the congregation as speech.<sup>2</sup>

4. James is obviously one of the pastors who knew the structure of Classical rhetoric and utilizes it in his argument against those who insist that works take priority over faith.
5. James’s argument begins with the adversative conjunction **ἀλλά** (*allá*): “But.” This is followed by the indefinite pronoun, **τις** (*tis*). It is masculine singular gender, but, since indefinite, it refers not to, “a man,” but to, “someone.”
6. Part of debater’s technique is to never address an individual by name, but anonymously. Therefore, the sentence begins, “But someone,” followed by the future active indicative of the verb **λέγω** (*légō*): “will say.”
7. The future tense is predictive summarizing the action indicated will happen in the future therefore it is asserted that, “someone will say this.”
8. This is followed by what James’s Straw Man says, “You have faith,” is the present active indicative of **ἔχω** (*échō*): “You have.” The present tense indicates what some other person claims to have as a continuing possession.
9. What is contended is that this other person claims to possess continuing “faith,” the Greek noun **πίστις** (*pístis*): “faith,” a system of learning that results in placing confidence in a specific object, i.e., Bible doctrine.

<sup>2</sup> George A. Kennedy, “New Testament Rhetoric,” in *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 2d. ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 146–47.



10. An unusual circumstance regarding the noun *pístis* is the absence of the definite article. Its absence generally places great emphasis on the following noun. Further, in English its absence often indicates obscurity.
11. The absence of the definite article requires the translation to read, “But someone will say, ‘I have *a* faith,’” but not ‘*the* faith.’ This obscurity is further compounded by the absence of an object for this unparticular faith.
12. The next word in the verse is the grammatical term, crasis (krā'sīs), whose use is described by the following excerpts:

**Κράσις [krásis]:** mixing, blending of things. Grammar, crásis, i.e. the combination of the vowels of two syllables into one long vowel or diphthong.<sup>3</sup>

**Crasis: Greek grammar.** The combination of the vowels of two syllables, especially at the end of one word and beginning of the next, into one long vowel or diphthong; as in *κἀγώ* for *καὶ ἐγώ* [*kagṓ: kaí egṓ*].<sup>4</sup>

**Crasis Form: κἀγώ:** A crasis form of *καὶ* + *ἐγώ*; a personal affirmation adding to or confirming a previous statement: “and I.”<sup>5</sup>

13. The unbeliever would say, “You have a faith without an object and I (*κἀγώ* [*kagṓ*]).” This crasis is a form taken from Classical Greek and used as a debater’s technique. It also indicates James’s knowledge of the formal structure of debate.<sup>6</sup>
14. Following *kagṓ* is the present active indicative of the verb, *ἔχω* (*échō*): “I have,” followed by the plural noun, *ἔργον* (*érgon*): “works.” In this debate, the unbeliever asserts he has numerous works while the believer has a little faith without an object.
15. This opening salvo is simply the set-up for the Straw Man which follows.
16. The Straw Man’s argument begins with the aorist active imperative<sup>7</sup> of the verb *δείκνυμι* (*deíknymi*): “to prove or make clear by evidence or reasoning, *explain, prove something*; James 2:18.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., rev. Henry Stuart Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 990.

<sup>4</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), s.v. “crasis.”

<sup>5</sup> Rodney J. Decker, *Reading Koine Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 244.

<sup>6</sup> The development of the grammatical form, crasis, is thought to have originated from the Greek’s aversion to pronouncing too many vowels in a row so they blended two words to form one.

<sup>7</sup> This is imperative mood 21 in the Book of James.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Bauer, *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), 214–15.





4. This is the circumstance we have already observed in:

**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)

5. Faith with a working object results in the production from divine guidance from a believer's inventory of ideas and empowerment by the Holy Spirit.
6. However, James is setting up a debater's technique by introducing the thinking of the Straw Man who emphasizes works, but refuses to recognize the necessity of doctrine as the working object of one's faith.
7. Those who put works as top priority for believers do not understand how divine good is produced, consequently their criticisms sound good to the untrained ear, but they are the arguments of spiritual childhood.
8. The basic reproach is to criticize the predominance of time spent in Bible study as compared to the little amount of time in application.
9. James's effort is to characterize works as the incidental result of those who have spent significant time in Bible study.
10. The issue James is stressing is that Bible study develops an arsenal of biblical principles and doctrines that serve as the working object of one's faith.
11. When a believer does not consistently develop an advancing biblical inventory of ideas, then his faith does not have a working object and his works are human good and potentially evil.
12. The "works-first" approach also infiltrates into the doctrine of salvation. The working object of one's faith for salvation is Jesus Christ, but the "works-emphasis" approach has developed the false doctrine of doing "good works" for salvation.
13. Whether a person is saved, or not, this "works-emphasis" philosophy distracts from the grace plan of God. The working object of a believer's faith is the ever-increasing inventory of divine categories of absolute truth resident in his soul.
14. It is from this inventory that enables a believer to produce divine good under the mentorship of the Holy Spirit. The end result of the philosophy of showing one's faith by his works is the subtle elimination of the working object which is the Word of God.



15. Without an active, advancing inventory of divine thought resident in the soul, then the “works first” approach must depend on human viewpoint to guide the person’s activities thus producing human good instead of divine good.
16. When the working object of one’s faith is human viewpoint, then the working object, which is the Word of God, is ignored.
17. There is a subtly positive element in the uninformed believer’s “works first” approach. When involved in evangelism and he quotes verses containing the gospel message, then some people will get saved. This is a legitimate, bona fide, activity
18. Reason? Because the Word of God is alive and powerful even when it is conveyed by a works-oriented believer. The message itself has divine power and can convict the unbeliever of its veracity by the common grace ministry of the Holy Spirit.
19. Doctrinal application associated with daily contact with others is quite different. The resource for this is doctrine resident in the soul and functional under the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit.
20. In this circumstance, doctrine is the working object. What such an inventory produces is a growing inventory of Bible doctrine from which the believer produces divine good.
21. Nevertheless, the works-oriented believer will say:

**James 2:18a**                      But someone will  
say this, “You have a faith without an object and I  
have works; you demonstrate to me your faith,  
apart from the works ...

1. The verse continues with the future active indicative of the verb **δείκνυμι** (*deiknumi*): “demonstrate.” Here we have a contest: **(1)** “You demonstrate to me your faith apart from works” and **(2)** “I will demonstrate to you my faith by my works.”
2. The key to understanding the error in this exchange is to expose the missing element in each of these quotes. The missing element, unstated twice, but if inserted it would be, **ὁ λόγος** (*ha logos*): “the Word.”
3. Faith must have a working object. In salvation it is in Jesus Christ through faith alone; in the believer’s spiritual advance it is in *ha logos*, the Word.
4. Here is the expanded translation of the entire verse:



**James 2:18** But someone will say, “You [ **Imperative mood #21** ] keep on having faith (in the working object of the Word), and I will keep on having faith in the working object of my works; demonstrate to me faith without the works, and I will demonstrate to you my faith from the source of my works.” (EXT)

5. The Straw Man cannot win this debate because he chooses to ignore or does not know about the working object of a believer’s faith is the Word of God.
6. Because it is self-fulfilling to “be involved in working for Jesus,” he prefers the aggrandizement he gains from physical effort over against the drudgery of slugging it out in boring, tedious, exegetical Bible classes that last for as much as an hour.
7. Because I am forbidden to criticize a worker bee such as he, under the Royal Law I cannot berate him for his ignorance, so I’ll just allow James to provide a descriptive phrase:

**James 1:22** But keep on becoming [ **IM #13** ] doers of the implanted Word, and not only hearers who deceive themselves due to self-induced stupidity. (EXT)

8. The key word for the worker bees is not the Word but the works. The Bible is clear about what we believers are required to do:

**2 Peter 3:18a** Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

9. Mr. Straw Man is involved in working for Jesus rather than knowing Him first. Divine good, accomplished by the application of resident knowledge about Jesus and the Word of God, is imperative for the believer to pursue in order for his works to be classified as gold, silver, and precious stones at the Evaluation Tribunal of Christ.
10. Works without them being underwritten by the Word is human good. James is constantly pointing this out in his first chapter. He builds a crescendo toward the end of chapter 1 with his emphasis on being a doer of the Word rather than a hearer only. Remember this?



**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 only, but a doer, this man shall acquire unalloyed happiness by the production of divine good. (EXT)

11. Faith must have a working object in order for the believer to be a doer of the Word. This principle is expressed by Paul in:

**Romans 10:17** Consequently, faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached Word of Christ. (NET)

12. Further confirmation that faith must have a working object and that working object for the believer is the preaching of the Word of Christ to positive volition believers.

## The Doctrine of Faith

### A. Definition.

1. There are three systems of human perception:
  - (1) **Faith** is a non-meritorious system of perception based on confidence in the authority and the veracity of another. Faith is not based on one's own knowledge, as is rationalism or empiricism.
  - (2) **Rationalism** is reason from the source of knowledge in itself, superior to and independent of any other source of perception. Rationalism says that reality is what you think to be true. Rationalism requires a high I.Q., from which systems of philosophy are often developed.
  - (3) **Empiricism** is knowledge from perception by observation and experience rather than by theory. All ideas are derived from some sensuous experience using the eyes, ears, nose, touch, and taste having no innate or preconceived notions.
2. Perception by faith is always non-meritorious. It depends on the authority, veracity, and ability of someone else. Faith requires authority.
3. Faith also means a system of doctrine or a creed perceived by faith; i.e., what is believed.



## B. Etymology.

### 1. Hebrew:

- (1) The verb אָמַן (*'aman*) means to believe, to support, to use someone as a prop, a crutch; to use someone else to be supported. The root meaning is a foundation on which you build something.

In Isaiah 28:16, the Hiph'il means to cause to believe. The Hiph'il in Genesis 15:6 uses *'aman* for the salvation of Abraham, meaning to use God as a prop and foundation.

Further, *'aman* means to prove oneself, to stay faithful to, to remain or continue.

Metaphorically, *'aman* means to be faithful, trustworthy, and sure, as in Proverbs 19:8; Genesis 42:20; 1 Kings 8:26; Hosea 5:9.

- (2) The noun אֱמוּנָה (*'emunah*) means faithfulness, security, or that on which security is based, e.g., the integrity of God.
- (3) The noun אֱמוּנָה (*'emun*) means integrity, fidelity, reliability, trustworthiness.
- (4) The noun אֱמוּנָה (*'omen*) means doctrine, truth, faithfulness.
- (5) The noun אֱמוּנָה (*'emeth*) means faithfulness, integrity, stability.
- (6) The verb בָּטַח (*batach*) is a wrestling term, which means to trust in the sense of slamming your troubles on God; this has a faith-rest connotation. In Psalm 37:3 and 91:2, it also means to confide in someone.
- (7) The verb חָסָה (*chasah*) means to hide in the cleft of a rock, as a rabbit does when chased by a fox. This verb is used for suffering and adversity. It means to trust in the sense of taking shelter or taking refuge in Bible doctrine; to believe in the integrity of God, Psalm 57:1, 2:12, 5:12, 25:20, 7:1.



- (8) The verb **יָחַל** (*yachal*) means to trust the Lord in time of great pain or disaster, Lamentations 3:21, 24. In Job 13:15, it means to have hope and to wait. It is used for faith under great pressure, intense suffering, and pain.
- (9) The verb **קָוָה** (*qawah*) is the strongest word for faith, used in Psalm 25:3. It depicts a fine thread woven into a giant rope that cannot be broken. It is used in Isaiah 40:31 for the faith of a mature believer. In Lamentations 3:25 it means to wait. This word means that faith which gets its strength from outside of itself, connoting the non-meritorious aspect of faith. All merit lies in the object of faith.

## 2. Greek:

- (1) The noun **πίστις** (*pístis*) is used as an attribute. *Pístis* is what causes trust or faith, reliability, faithfulness, or integrity, Titus 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.
- (2) In the active sense, *pístis* means faith, confidence, and trust as a recognition of and acceptance of Bible doctrine. In the active sense, faith is used in three ways:  
**(a)** Saving faith, Ephesians 2:8; 1 John 5:4–5, **(b)** the three stages of the faith-rest drill, Romans 3:20; Hebrews 4:3, and **(3)** the inculcation of Bible doctrine which is the working object of faith.
- (3) The passive meaning of *pístis* is Bible doctrine, meaning that which is believed, i.e., doctrine, the body of belief, which is obedience to authority. *Pístis* is translated “doctrine” in such passages as Galatians 1:23; 2 Peter 1:5; 1 Timothy 1:19, 4:1, 6; Hebrews 11.
- (4) The adjective **πιστός** (*pistós*) in the passive sense means being trustworthy, worthy of trust, faithful, dependable, and inspiring trust. In the active sense, it means trusting or believing.
- (5) The verb **πιστεύω** (*pisteúō*) means to believe, to trust something to someone, to use someone as an object of faith, Galatians 2:16. It only takes a little more than no faith at all to be saved, Acts 16:31.

**(End JAS2-77. See JAS2-78 for continuation of study at p. 771.)**

