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Introduction to the Journal

The purpose of the Journal of Biblical Pentecostalism is to bless the church with pentecostal scholarship from the faculty of Bridges Christian College. One part of the journal is exegetical and the other part is more practical in nature. The rationale for such a broad scope is so that there will be literature for the biblical researcher and the ministerial practitioner.

Mission of the Journal

The *Journal of Biblical Pentecostalism* presents biblical exegesis, ministerial training literature, and research of church history through a Pentecostal hermeneutic.

Goals of the Journal

This Journal has the following goals.

1. To present exegesis of the Scriptures with a Pentecostal hermeneutic to help the church understand the Bible and its theological principles.
2. To demonstrate the unity of the Scriptures through intertextual interpretation of the Old Testament and New Testament.
3. To apply Scriptural principles to a Pentecostal, practical ministry environment.
4. To present research of the roots and traditions of the Pentecostal movement throughout church history.

Journal Categories

This Journal will present articles that are separated into the following categories:

1. Biblical Studies
 - This category presents interpretation of the biblical text with a Pentecostal perspective. Various themes and theological principles in the Old and New Testaments will be presented.
 - This section is primarily focused on research on the biblical text.
2. Spirit-Empowered Ministry
 - This category presents articles that provide guidance in modern-day, Pentecostal ministry topics.
 - The biblical text, historical concerns, and Pentecostal doctrines are taken into consideration. The emphasis in this section is on application of the biblical principles to Pentecostal ministry.

FORMULA FOR FAITH: FAITH = TRUST + OBEDIENCE A LOOK AT FAITH AS THE COMBINATION OF TRUST AND OBEDIENCE

David Craun, Ed.S.

Having been a born-again Christian for seventy-one years, I have heard and seen a wide variety of ideas and concepts about faith – what it is, how it works, who has it, or when we have or do not have it. I have seen the pendulum of extremes regarding faith swing back and forth. Various interpretations of scriptures about faith can also add to the confusion instead of clearing it up. It seems that different individuals see faith through the lens of personal experience or Christian traditions. Even scholars who translate the Bible seem to have different meanings.

As a believer who desires to have a biblical worldview, I look to the Word of God as the source of truth, especially for matters of faith. My preconceptions about faith may bias my view of true biblical faith. Because of my bias, I will review passages that deal with the meaning, use, and application of faith. This review will consider the equation: “Faith = Trust + Obedience” or the converse “Trust + Obedience = Faith.” My thesis contends that this equation reflects the biblical truth about faith.

Historians recorded how Martin Luther's paradigm shift from works to faith impacted Christendom. He detailed how one's relationship with Christ must be seen through the lens of faith.

Luther lectured in Romans from 1515 to 1516. Very soon [he] came to these words in the first chapter: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' Romans 1:16-17...Luther understood that the just shall live by faith means not by their own works of righteousness. This faith brings one to Christ who is perfectly righteous and who justifies the sinner.¹

The Reformation returned faith as the key tenant of Protestantism. At the heart of Christianity, one finds the concept of faith. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)

Some define faith as a firm belief in something for which no proof exists; however, faith is not blind. Faith does not require empirical evidence. It requires trust and obedience. True faith combines "trust + obedience." Christians accept realities that exist beyond the physical realm by faith. Non-believers reject realities that exist beyond the physical realm. They reject the resurrection of the dead, God, and eternal life. The non-believer does not have empirical evidence that God does not exist. They cannot falsify God's existence. Their faith also requires trust and obedience to science, which has demonstrated fallibility.

¹ <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/just-shall-live-faith-conversion-martin-luther>, accessed January 5, 2023, from a passage by Leo de Vos, *Faith in Focus*, 2012. 7 pages.

Evan Minton stated in the CrossExamined.org blog: “We are never told to have a blind faith. Paul commended those in Berea for checking the Scriptures daily to see if what he was telling them was so. Jesus showed Himself alive to make sure those believed on Him, especially Thomas (John 20:28). Paul also said to “Test everything, hold onto the good.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:21.” He went on to state, “If God required us to have blind faith, then why did Jesus have to fulfill so many prophecies to PROVE to the Jews that He was the true messiah... Blind Faith can't give you that. God gave the Jews a test for the real Messiah... Jesus had to fulfill every one of the messianic prophecies... then that proved He was the genuine article.”²

Hebrews 11:1 reads, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (NKJV). Faith accepts a reality prior to its manifestation. This factor demonstrates the trust part of the equation. Accepting the reality prior to its manifestation results in one's obedience to Christ and the Word of God.

Non-believers equate faith with fantasy. They fail to comprehend God. When a person accepts God and Christ, that person grasps the reality of God's creation. This foundational belief enables Christians to accept the reality prior to manifestation because of God's omnipotence.

However, faith does not reflect wishful thinking. If my formula for faith proves correct and adequate, faith must have an element of trust based upon a relationship with an omnipotent God who can be trusted.

Humanity's ability to trust the Bible's metaphysical teachings can be seen in humanity's attributes imparted by God at Creation. (Gen. 1:26) These imparted attributes impact beyond the physical realm into the realm of ideas, hopes, aspirations, and imagination. Creativity demonstrates the essence of faith in action. The artist, sculptor, designer, seamstress, blacksmith, and all who envision a work of art in their mind before they form or create it have one thing in common: they have the evidence of a thing not yet seen. That evidence has not manifested itself in the physical realm, but it exists in the creativity of the artist.

The architect creates blueprints and designs buildings on paper before the first piece of material or equipment arrives onto the job site. All these actions illustrate faith – the substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen. The formula for faith holds true in these areas of life as well as in religion “Faith = Trust + Obedience.” The scientist, the artist, and the contractor all trust that what they see in their mind can and will be brought about because of their implementation.

In a physical structure, the engineer takes what the architect has designed and places specifications for the draftsman who draws the blueprints. The contractor uses those blueprints trusting both the engineer and the architect to know what they have designed will work. In the case of constructing a bridge, everyone who drives or walks across that bridge has faith that it will hold their weight. Faith is at work every day in so many areas of our lives. Because of trust, people walk or drive over the bridge.

Habakkuk first wrote these famous words “The just will live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4-5 NKJ). Paul used the expression in Rom. 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. The author of Hebrews used it in Heb 10:38. Habakkuk used the expression to detail God's response to his prayer. Habakkuk requested for God to deliver the righteous from evil oppressors. God's response to his prayer resulted in a rejection of Habakkuk's prayer and informed Habakkuk that he must rely on his

² <https://crossexamined.org/biblical-faith-vs-blind-faith/>, accessed February 14, 2023.

faith because deliverance would not be forthcoming. What did God convey to Habakkuk? The Hebrew word used by Habakkuk אֱמוּנָה (*'emunah*) occurs 49 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Typically, the LXX translates this word into πίστις (*pistis*). A direct link from Hebrew to Greek and then into English provides little satisfaction. "Thus *'emunah* is not so much an abstract quality, 'reliability,' but a way of acting which grows out of inner stability, conscientiousness."³ This understanding supports the equation about faith (Faith = Trust + Obedience). The Hebrew Scriptures relate faith as trust. This trust rests in God.

Today "faith" has been used to promote various teachings that degrade the term "Faith" into a "name it and claim it" paradigm. These teachings fail to understand James' teachings.

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. (Jas. 4:1-3 NAS)

This misrepresentation of biblical teachings about faith has spawned a "faith cult" in Christendom. These false teachings suggest that if I give \$100 God will bless me tenfold. This form of teaching looks more like a Ponzi scheme than sound biblical teaching. The acceptance of these distorted teachings develops out of improper hermeneutics and the desire to profit from unwitting participants looking to get rich quickly. Manipulation tactics provide the means of generating revenue for these ministries. The belief that if I have enough faith, I can have everything for which I pray has been promoted to an extreme. The Bible does not support this interpretation. The Bible does speak of those with "little faith" (Matt. 8:26), faith as a "mustard seed" (Matt 17:20), the lack of faith (Matt 13:38), having great faith (Matt 15:28), but it does not generally describe people not having enough faith. At times the recipient does not exhibit any faith:

Acts 3:3 And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms. 4 And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said, "Look at us!" 5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. (Acts 3:3-7 NAS)

A person's quantity and/or quality of faith does not ensure success. The Bible teaches that God is sovereign. Why and when He provides the miraculous has many factors: His will, individual needs, corporate needs, or unknown needs. Faith = Trust + Obedience develops out of one's firsthand experiences with God. If one demonstrates trust and obedience, faith becomes the logical by-product. When a believer has consistent outcomes through trust and obedience, the believer develops a greater level of confidence in the outcomes faith produces. James wrote, "... faith without deeds is dead." (James 2:26b) James understood that words produce a hollow faith

³ Alfred Jepsen, "אֱמוּנָה," ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 317.

without action. A sound understanding of biblical faith promotes a healthy balance between extremes (no faith vs. unrealistic faith).

All biblical translations require context to produce an appropriate outcome. For example, the word "bank" has the following semantic range in English: 1. Bank as where money deposits reside, 2. Bank as an airplane maneuver, 3. Bank as a river's edge. These usages do not allow for interchange. This reality prohibits translation from Strong's concordance word selection methodology. Just because a word has multiple possibilities does not allow for random selections to meet one's theological biases. Context provides the basis for how a specific word is translated. This context provides the framework that translators consider when determining the meaning of words and sentence structure. I propose several selected contexts to see if the definition "Faith = Trust + Obedience" holds up to scrutiny.

Since the New Testament's concept of faith best represents Christian theological paradigms, I have selected passages from this genre. From the Gospels, Matthew 9:29 - "according to your faith (πίστις)," and 21:21 - "if you have faith (πίστις) and do not doubt." From Mark 5:34 - "your faith (πίστις) has healed you." From Luke 7:9 - "not found such great faith (πίστις)." John saw faith as an active verb (πιστεύω) believing in Jesus." (John 2:11, 7:31, 8:30, 11:45, 12:11) In book of Acts, Luke used the term faith (πίστις) in 11:24 - "full of the Holy Spirit and faith."

Paul extensively used the term in his works. Paul used the term faith (πίστις) 132 in the Greek text. The author of the Book of Hebrews used the term faith (πίστις) 31 times. The following passages will be considered: Rom. 1:5 - "to the obedience that comes from faith." (πίστις) 1 Cor. 12:9 "to another faith (πίστις) by the same Spirit." Gal. 3:14 - "So that by faith (πίστις) we might receive the promise." Eph. 2:8 "By grace you have been saved through faith." (πίστις) Phi. 2:17 - "and service coming from your faith." (πίστις) Col. 1:23 "If you continue in your faith." (πίστις) Thess. 1:8 - "Faith (πίστις) in God has become known everywhere." 1 Tim. 1:5 - "a good conscience and a sincere faith." (πίστις). Phlm. 1:6 - "that you may be active in sharing the faith." (πίστις).

James, Peter, John, and Jude also used the term "faith" (πίστις) in their epistles: James 2:18 provides a classic example of his use of "faith" (πίστις) - "show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do." 1 Peter 1:9 "for you are receiving the goal of our faith." (πίστις). 1 John 5:4 - "That has overcome the world, even our faith." (πίστις) Jude 20 - "Build yourselves up in your most holy faith." (πίστις).

In the New Testament (πίστις - faith) occurs 243 times in 227 verses. Three books do not use the word "faith" (πίστις). John, in his Gospel, used "believing" (πιστεύω), while 2 John and 3 John lack both "faith" (πίστις) and "believing" (πιστεύω). Faith dominates the New Testament as an important topic. Can the formula "Faith = Trust + Obedience" be understood in these passages as an appropriate equation for understanding "Faith?"

“Faith” (πίστις) has two or three potential English words for its translation. The word could be rendered "faithfulness" or "Trust;"⁴ however, the word also has a connection to the Christian *kerigma* as saving faith in Christ.⁵ And by implication, a believer would have obedience to Christ. Paul emphasized confession and belief in Rom. 10:9-10.

I tend to agree with the objective view that the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament presents as the way one should understand faith – the objective reality of the faith. This is how the more classic translations of the Bible, such as the NKJV, have understood the meaning of faith. Faith substantiates or gives substance to what is promised. It provides evidence of what is believed, unseen, and hoped-for realities. This understanding of faith aligns better with the formula “Faith = Trust + Obedience.” It also aligns with James’ understanding that he showed his faith through his actions. (James 2:18) Faith is more than just mental assent to an idea. One must believe the spiritual reality, which then changes how one behaves. This is the trusting and obeying part of the formula. Understanding faith in this manner will help one avoid some of the extreme teachings that have dominated some parts of Christendom. Our relationship with God in whom one trusts rests upon true faith. Believers develop this trust through a firsthand experience with God. Experience enables one to know the future outcomes. Christians immersed in the Word of God develop faith and trust in the Bible's truth; this leads to obedience to the Word. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. We must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6) The trusting + obeying enables one to experience God. This action, in turn, produces faith that leads to everlasting life with God. God's blessings may occur in this life and other times in the life to come. Hebrews 11 speaks of those who experienced hardship or even died for their faith (Heb. 11:35-40). Paul talks about a "crown of righteousness" that is laid up for him in heaven. (II Tim. 4:8) Not only for him but also for everyone who "loves his appearing."

Before investigating other passages in the New Testament, can the formula pass the test in perhaps the most famous passage about faith: Hebrews chapter 11? After describing faith in the opening verse, the writer used most of the chapter to give examples of biblical characters who exemplified faith. I do not consider verse one to be a definition of faith but rather a description of how faith operates. I have attempted to summarize these accounts. This understanding helps one see the purpose of citing so many Old Testament examples in the remaining parts of the chapter.

Hebrews Chapter 11

- 11:1 Substance – **things hoped for** – desired
Evidence – **things not seen** – the invisible
- 2 Elders – **obtained** a good testimony
- 3 Worlds **were framed** – by the word of God “God said, God spoke.”
Faith **is manifested** in what is spoken
Things seen – not from what is visible

⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, “Πιστεύω, Πίστις, Πιστός, Πιστόω, Απιστος, Απιστέω, Απιστία, Αλιγόπιστος, Αλιγοπιστία,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 204.

⁵ Ibid, 208.

- 4 Able **offered** – more excellent sacrifice
Being dead – still speaks
- 5 Enoch was taken – **he pleased** God
- 6 Without faith it is impossible to please God – God rewards **those who diligently seek** Him
- 7 Noah – **moved with fear prepared an ark** – condemned the world, became an heir of righteousness according to faith.
- 8 Abraham – **Obedied** not knowing where he was going
- 9 Isaac and Jacob – **heirs of the same promise**
- 10 Abraham **waited** – for a city whose builder and maker is God
- 11 Sarah – **received strength** to become pregnant, judged Him faithful who had promised.
- 12 Result – From one became a great nation – Israel – Jesus
- 13 Died – not seeing the promise, saw it in the future – **were assured.**
- 14 **Seek a homeland**
- 15, 16 They could have gone back but **desired better**
- 17 Abraham – when tested **offered up Isaac**
- 19 God is able – conclusion
- 20 **Isaac blessed** Jacob and Esau
- 21 **Jacob blessed** all the sons of Joseph
- 22 Joseph – **mentioned the departure** from Egypt
- 23 Moses' **parents were not afraid** of the king's command
- 24 Moses **refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter**
- 25 Moses **chose to suffer affliction** rather than possessing pleasures
- 26 Moses **looked to the reward**
- 27 Moses **endured seeing Him who is invisible**
- 28 Moses **kept the Passover**
- 29 Israel **passed through the Red Sea**
- 30 Jericho's **walls fell down**
- 31 Rahab **did not perish**
- 33 Through Faith – **subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped mouths of lions**
- 34 **quenched fire, escaped the sword, made strong out of weaknesses, became valiant in battle**
- 35 women **received their dead alive again**
- 36 **endured mocking, scourging, chains, imprisonment,**
- 37 **were stoned, sawn in two, tempted, slain, wandered about, destitute, afflicted, tormented**
- 38 the world was not worthy – **wandered in mountains, in dens, and caves**
- 39 **Having obtained a good report** – testimony
- 40 **God provided** something better.

* * *

This summary illustrates how faith manifests and verifies both the trust and obedience elements of the equation. Each person trusted enough that they obeyed and acted upon what God requested of them. This trust developed from their relationship with God. They trusted because they considered God trustworthy. As they demonstrated being trustworthy by adding actions of obedience, God considered it to be faith. By demonstrating trust and acting upon God's request, God accepts their faith.

Now, I will consider how the other writers of the New Testament used the term "faith." Matthew stated in Matt. 9:29 "According to your faith let it be done to you." Three pericopes precede Jesus' words. Jesus healed the woman with the issue of blood, the daughter of the synagogue leader, and the two blind men who cried out to Jesus, "Have mercy on us, son of David!" Jesus asked the blind men if they believed he could heal them. They replied, "Yes, Lord." Jesus touched their eyes and said: "According to your faith let it be done to you." Can it do justice to this context if it read "According to your trust and obedience let it be done..." They believed that Jesus could heal them; they saw his power to heal the woman and raise a girl from the dead. Matthew used (πιστεύω) "to believe." This verb form relates to the noun faith (πίστις). When they replied, "Yes, Lord," they expressed their faith (πίστις) and demonstrated their obedience.

Matt. 21:18-22 provides another reference to faith. In this pericope, Jesus cursed a barren fig tree. He said, "May you never bear fruit again!" The disciples were amazed that the tree dried up so quickly. Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." I believe that Jesus used this pericope to teach an important lesson on "faith" and "doubt." What purpose would it serve to curse a tree to never produce fruit? Perhaps Jesus set the stage to teach the disciples an important lesson about the nature of faith. "If you have faith and do not doubt." Jesus used "Doubt" (διστακῆν) in the middle voice. When this word is in the middle voice, it translates into "doubt." When a believer's level of trust and obedience does not hesitate, waver, or doubt, Jesus taught everything is possible. This lesson needs to be understood within the larger context of God's will. Other passages reveal the reality that a believer's prayer must be in accordance to God's will and act in obedience to the Lord's instructions.

The "faith movement" cites Matt. 21:21-22 as evidence for its extreme teachings, which result in "me-focused" prayers rather than "Christ-focused" prayers. Jesus did not intend for His words to support a "name it and claim it" paradigm. One's obedience to him and His will provides the basis for faith, not self-pleasing pleasures for an abundant life here and now.

Mark used the word "faith" in Mark 5:34, "He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'" (NIV) This pericope recorded Jesus' encounter with the woman who experienced bleeding for twelve years. She touched Jesus' garment, and immediately God healed her. This healing occurred while many pressed into Jesus as he traveled to Jairus' home to heal his daughter. Mark records what the woman believed: "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." (Mark 5:28) This woman definitely trusted that Jesus

could heal her, and she acted on that trust by reaching out to touch Jesus' garment. By following through with her actions, she demonstrated her faith (belief) through action that demonstrated trust + obedience. Jesus said to the woman, "your faith has healed you" NIV.

Luke 7:9 provides the next example. After Jesus preached the sermon on the mountain, He returned to Capernaum. While returning to Capernaum, a Roman centurion who was supportive of the Jewish religion requested a meeting with Jesus. The centurion's highly valued (7:2 NIV) servant lie near death. He sent Jewish elders to ask Jesus for a miracle. Before reaching his house, the centurion sent friends to Jesus, expressing his unworthiness to receive Jesus at his home. The centurion, being a man of authority, requested that Jesus just speak the miracle for his servant. Jesus responded by saying, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel" 7:9 NIV. Because the centurion had heard of Jesus' ability to heal, and he trusted that Jesus could heal his servant, his trust + obedience generated faith that Jesus commended. When the men returned to the house, they found the servant well.

John perceived faith as a verb—believing in Jesus equates to faith in Jesus. The action of believing demonstrates an expression of obedience and trust towards Jesus. In his first epistle, John opens with these words: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life." (I John 1:1 NIV) John understood that when Jesus dwelt among humans, God demonstrated His love towards His creation – "the only begotten of the Father." (KJV) The NIV reads, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John understood that believing in Jesus equates to trust and obedience. Consequently, trust enables obedience, and obedience demonstrates faith which results in a restored relationship with the Father.

Luke, in the book of Acts, shared numerous accounts of faith. In this pericope (Acts 11:18-24), the Jerusalem leadership selected and sent Barnabas to investigate the revival among the Greeks in Antioch. A large number of "Hellenists" and non-Jewish individuals had accepted the Gospel's salvation message through the ministry of believers from the island of Cyprus and the northern coast of Africa around Cyrene. After the Gentiles' baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10), the Jewish Church leadership accepted God's inclusion of Gentiles into the Church. This visit by Barnabas to Antioch provided the opportunity for Barnabas to seek out Paul, who resided in Tarsus. Acts 11:25 transitioned back to Paul and his ministry to the Gentiles. These events reinforced Peter's vision of "unclean" animals, which the Lord instructed him to eat. "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." (Acts 11:9 NIV). Because of Barnabas' reputation and character, the church chose him to verify the reports from Antioch. Three characteristics describe Barnabas: "a good man," "full of the Holy Spirit," and full of "faith." Luke used the genitive form (πίστις - faith), rightly translated as full "of faith." The church saw something in Barnabas beyond his humanity. They perceived Barnabas's "Faith" in Christ. Barnabas demonstrated faith through a history of trusting and obeying. They recognized the power of God (via the Holy Spirit) and his trust and obedience upon his life. As a result, they trusted him as an official representative of the church. Barnabas acted by faith and traveled to Tarsus to bring Paul back to Antioch to launch his ministry to both Jews and Gentiles. Luke placed Barnabas first and

Paul last in the list of prophets (Acts 13:1). While at Antioch, the Holy Spirit separated Barnabas and Paul for service as Missionaries. (Acts 13:2-3) Barnabas' faith and leadership became the genesis of Paul's ministry.

Paul used (πίστις - faith) 142 times, and can be found in all of his written works. Some have debated Paul's usage and how one should translate this word. Kevin W. McFadden argued that 'faith' and 'faithfulness' are two distinct meanings of (πίστις - faith) in Paul.⁶ The NAS translated (πίστις - faith) as "faithfulness" twice (Rom. 3:3 and Gal. 5:22) and once as "pledge" (1 Tim. 5:12). The KJV always used "faith" as the translation. McFadden's argument seems to lack support for his interpretation among translation committees. In reality, "faithfulness" cannot exist without faith.

As I have stated previously, the formula Faith = Trust + Obedience does not attempt to define or redefine faith but rather a manner of describing how faith functions, a way to verify faith in action. Faith (πίστις) presents itself as both active and passive: 1. As active, faith reflects a person's worldview about God and Christ, 2. As passive, it describes qualities that others can verify about an individual's worldview in action.

Paul's usage of (πίστις - faith) in Rom. 1:5 sets the stage for the statement in verse 17 "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (NIV). Martin Luther wrestled with the supremacy of faith over works, as discussed earlier. In verse 5, Paul described the authority Jesus gave him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. His message "call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake." In this passage, Paul revealed the connection between faith being expressed through obedience. Paul stated that "obedience comes from faith." Faith brought the Christians in Rome to obey the truth that Jesus Christ was indeed Lord and God. Throughout the book of Romans, Paul referenced faith many times and its role in the Christian's life. In Romans, Paul made the connection to obedience as a function of faith.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:8-10), he provided the classic listing of the "gifts of the Spirit" so often referred to by Pentecostals. Paul placed the gift of faith third on this list. The Holy Spirit empowers the recipients of this gift to fulfill the purposes of God. If faith = trust + obedience, then it can be said that the Holy Spirit works through individuals to generate trust that leads to obedience as a means to build up the body of Christ. Here in 1 Cor. 12:9, Paul used the word (πίστις - faith). All major translations render πίστις as faith in this passage. Paul's usage of (πίστις - faith) has no hidden meaning. This gift of faith supersedes a human's ability. The Holy Spirit enables the recipient to trust and obey with supernatural faith.

Paul wrote in Gal. 3:14, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit." Paul placed these words in the middle of his argument that Jesus came to fulfill both the Law and the Promise given to Abraham that through him all the nations of the world would be

⁶ Kevin W. McFadden, "Does ΠΙΣΤΙΣ Mean 'Faith(fulness)' in Paul?," Tyndale Bulletin 66, no. 2 (2015): 251.

blessed. If one interjects the words "by trust and obedience we might receive the promise of the Spirit," would it change the meaning in this context? Paul Horgog wrote:

According to Richard Longenecker, "Much that has been written on Galatians has tended to ignore the central place of the Spirit in Paul's argumentation throughout his Galatian letter." All believers have received the promised Spirit through faith (Gal 3:2, 14). As Gordon Fee insists, "**For Paul the reception of the Spirit is the *sine qua non* of Christian life.**" [bold emphasis added by essay's author.] Paul used this coming and presence of the Spirit in believers as a prodding reminder toward further sanctification: "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (3:2–3).⁷

Paul concludes that one receives the Promise of the Spirit by trusting and obeying. Whether this implies the promise of salvation through the work of the Spirit or the promise Jesus gave his disciples fulfilled on the day of Pentecost makes no difference. Both of these interpretations have been vigorously debated by various branches of Christianity (Pentecostal/Charismatic and non-Pentecostal.) Regardless of one's theological paradigm, the promise of the Spirit manifests itself through faith – trust + obedience.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians expresses that "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:8-10 NIV). God supplies the "grace." Christians supply the faith. This faith leads one to Salvation via trust and obedience.

Once again, the association of trust and action (obedience) demonstrates a way of expressing how faith operates. Paul wrote that one's salvation comes by trusting and obeying the gift (grace) of God. This trust leads one to respond by doing good works – not to earn salvation but to express one's deep gratitude for that salvation.

Paul wrote in Phil. 2:17, "...on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith..." Paul admonished the Philippians to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling..." (2:12) because God is working in them to "fulfill his good purpose" (v. 13). Paul does not regret the sacrifices he made on their behalf ("even if I am being poured out like a drink offering"). This "pouring out" was on their sacrifice and service coming from their faith. Can one understand this to mean sacrifice and service coming from their trust and obedience? This understanding of faith (trust and obedience) helps provide additional insights. Paul sees the trust and the obedience of the Philippians, and it provides him with an opportunity to ask them to "be glad and rejoice with me" (v. 18).

Paul wrote in Col. 1:22-23 that Christians will be presented as being holy in God's sight "without blemish and free from accusation, if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel."

⁷ Paul Hartog, "The Integrative Role of the Spirit in the Ethics of Galatians," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 16 (2011): 21–22.

Can one say that Christians will be presented as holy if they continue trusting and obeying and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel? Once again, this understanding of how faith operates helps one see clearly the meaning of Scripture. As one continues to place his/her trust in Christ and obey Him in his/her daily walk, that person can be assured that faith is counted for righteousness and he/she will be holy in God's sight.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:8 Paul wrote, "Your faith in God has become known everywhere." (NIV) Paul gave commendations to the Thessalonians for their faith. Paul has already commented on their work "produced by faith," their "labor prompted by love," and their "endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." They had become "imitators of us and the Lord," and "became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia." In verse eight, Paul proclaimed that their faith has become known everywhere. What is it that had become known? How did others "know" that they had faith? Perhaps the Thessalonians had placed such trust in the Lord that they obeyed Him by demonstrating through their actions that faith? Because they trusted and obeyed the message they had received, others easily recognized their faith in Christ.

The Pastoral Epistles share insights about Paul's understanding of how faith operates. In 1 Tim. 1:5 Paul wrote, "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (NIV) Paul made the connection that love is a motivation for faith. Three sources generate this love: a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Gordon D Fee in *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* comments on I Timothy. He demonstrated the connection between love and faith: "Note how often faith and love appear together in the PE [Pastoral Epistles] as the true Christian virtues: 1 Tim 1:14, 2:15, 4:12, 2 Tim. 1:13, 2:22, 3:10; Titus 2:2"⁸ Also, Paul made the connection between faith and love in 1 Cor. 13:13 "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love..." (NIV) This triad of faith, hope, and love expresses the association of the three virtues. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he reminded Timothy that any expression of faith – trust + obedience – that does not have the motivation of love is foreign to the message of Christ. Paul contrasted how Timothy should function in opposition to the false teachers in Ephesus. Thus, the motivation for trust + obedience should be love.

Some refer to the Epistle of James as the faith-expressed-through-works message for the church. James 2:18 states, "But someone will say, 'You have faith; I have deeds.' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds." James made the argument that a "faith" that does not demonstrate itself in actions is no faith at all. If my formula is correct, then this passage can read, "Show me your trust + obedience without deeds, and I will show you my trust + obedience by my deeds. Can someone demonstrate trust without obedience? James wrote that faith without obedience does not exist. True biblical faith must demonstrate trust by acting in obedience to the leadership of the Holy Spirit through God's Word.

The *Theology of Work Bible Commentary* puts it this way: "James does not imagine that work is at odds with faith. There can be no "justification by works" because there can be no

⁸ Gordon D. Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 1 & 2 Timothy Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 43.

good works unless there is already faith (trust) in God. James doesn't mean that faith can exist without works yet be insufficient for salvation. He means that any "faith" that doesn't lead to works is dead; in other words, it is no faith at all. 'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead. (James 2:26)'.⁹

True biblical faith demonstrates one's love for the Lord and others via one's acts of obedience because of our trust in Christ. Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35 NIV) Christian faith operates through love. John later says, "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:8 NIV)

In 1 Peter 1:9, Peter wrote in his Epistle about the "goal of your faith." The NIV expresses it as "the end result." This end result culminates with "the salvation of your souls." Earlier in the letter, Peter referred to this "end result" when he wrote, "This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." (NIV) Then he speaks of the trials (persecution) that they faced and stated that they "have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith... may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:7 NIV) This supports the message presented in Hebrews 11, where it speaks of persecution and murder of the faithful. Sometimes it takes as much faith, or even more faith – trust + obedience – to endure hardships, even death, as it does to be delivered from those trials. Peter conveyed to the church and believers that their current situation does not represent the end. One's present reality provides a journey that leads to the ultimate goal, Heaven. Peter made it clear that "salvation of your souls" results from the outcome of one's faith which equates to trust and obedience.

John reinforces this thought in 1 John 5:4 "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." (NIV) If we understand faith to be, in fact, trust + obedience, Christians can follow the path God provided in His Word. Their faith enables them to become overcomers.

The Epistle of Jude concludes the New Testament review (πίστις - faith) references used to test my formula Faith = Trust + Obedience. Jude packed much into this short letter. Verses 20 and 21 read: "But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life." Jude indicated that Christians should build up their faith. Faith (trust + obedience) has the result of building up the body of Christ and believers in particular. As Christians live out their lives by trusting and obeying the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The path leads to eternal life.

For the Pentecostal/Charismatic believer, the phrase "praying in the Holy Spirit" has an enhanced meaning. Those believers who have received the "gift of tongues" as described in various parts of the New Testament have an "inside" understanding of what Jude wrote. Praying in the Holy Spirit refers to praying in one's "prayer language." As a believer who has been

⁹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/theology-of-work/faith-and-work-s-james-2-14-26>, accessed February 14, 2023

"baptized" in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, I see this verse as a means to encourage my walk with the Lord. Praying "in the Spirit" builds up (edifies) the one who is praying. (1 Cor. 14:4) Paul reinforced what Jude wrote when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues...." Paul recognized that unless someone interprets a message in tongues, other believers are not edified. However, this does not discount the truth expressed by Jude that Christians must build themselves up by two actions: building up one's faith and praying in the Spirit. As Christians walk out their lives by trusting God, obeying what He has spoken to them, and demonstrating what the Word of God directs, Christians become people of the faith.

As I stated at the beginning of this essay, I have been a Christian for 71 years. In that time, I can personally say that believers grow from faith to faith. My understanding of that faith is much broader than when I first believed. However, a "measure of faith" is given to each person as a gift from God. (Rom 12:3b NKJV) Without it, no one can be saved. By God's measureless love, Christians have the ability to respond with trust by obeying the truth that "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom 10:13 NKJV)