

Pure Religion

James 1:26-27

A FAITH TO LIVE BY

JAMES

JAMES

Background

- James is Jesus' little brother
- James was an early church leader
- James practically addresses how to follow Jesus
 - Count it joy in trials
 - We need to ascribe to God's wisdom rather than our own
 - God is Good and we are not
 - We need to be hearers of the word

Context

- James was written to a mainly Jewish Audience
 - They practiced the law
 - Their religious actions were meant to please God

James 1:26-27

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

What is Religion?

- There are two types of religion
 - Worthless and Pure religion
 - Worthless religion falls short of pleasing God and shaping our hearts
 - Pure religion accomplishes that purpose of pleasing God and allowing him to shape us.

Examples of Pure Religion

1. Control what you say

- James gives us the imagery of a bridled horse
- Where else do we see this in scripture

Scripture regarding controlling the tongue....

Psalm 39:1

*I said, "I will guard my ways,
that I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle,
so long as the wicked are in my presence."*

Psalm 34:13

*Look away from me, that I may smile again,
before I depart and am no more!"*

Scripture regarding controlling the tongue....

Proverbs 21:23

*Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue
keeps himself out of trouble.*

Romans 3:23

*Their throats are open graves; their tongues
practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their
lips.*

James 3's description of the tongue

“Fire”, “a world of unrighteousness”, “staining the
whole body”

Examples of Pure Religion

1. Control what you say

- James gives us the imagery of a bridled horse
- Where else do we see this in scripture
- Examples of how we use the tongue in these ways
 - Gossip, bullying, talking negatively about others, speaking out of anger
- James pleads with us to control what we say

Examples of Pure Religion

1. Control what you say
2. Caring for the fatherless and oppressed
 - The widowed and orphaned refers to those who are helpless
 - This was the role of the Israel in the OT
 - This is what the early church did well
 - This is what we need to do well today!

Examples of Pure Religion

1. Controlling what you say
2. Caring for the fatherless and oppressed
3. Remaining pure in a impure world
 - This is like wearing white to a food fight
 - We respond by either
 1. Hiding and trying to keep clean
 2. Allow ourselves to be stained and give up

So What?

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We should be careful not to mislead ourselves into thinking that we are something we are not. True devotion to God requires that our actions match our beliefs. Belief without action is of no value in bringing God glory, and pleasing Him

So What?

What is the danger of being deceived?

- For those described in Matthew 25 it was that they didn't know they were being deceived.

Let's evaluate. How are you doing at....

1. Controlling what you say?
2. Caring for the helpless and oppressed?
3. Remaining unstained from the world?

Pure Religion

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So What? Part 2

A FAITH TO LIVE BY

*Not one of us can walk through this life unstained.
So how do we actually practice this true religion
James is talking about?*