

March 24, 2024 PM – Pastor Kevin Olivier  
**James 1:26-27** – Your Tongue and Pure Religion

Is your religion worthless or pleasing in God's sight?	I. <u>WORTHLESS RELIGION</u> II. <u>PURE AND UNDEFINED RELIGION</u>
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- A. You may have heard a Christian say something like this: "I am not interested in religion; I only care about my relationship with God."  
B. As we come to the end of chapter 1, James continued towards his giving of the high and holy calling of what it means to live for Christ.

I. WORTHLESS RELIGION → **v26**

- A. The audience James is addressing are the ones who think of themselves as religious.
1. That is how they think of themselves and how they want others to think of them.
  2. What does it mean to be religious?
    - a. The Greek word for "**religious**" can also be translated as "devout" or "having piety."
      - 1) It describes "the diligent performer of divinely ascribed duties of outward service to God. . . It is the external framework while as *eusébeia*, godliness, is the inward piety of soul."<sup>1</sup>
      - 2) It is possible for one to have outward performance of prayer, worship, singing, and partaking of the Lord's Supper without that inward piety of the soul.
      - 3) The Word of the Lord came to Isaiah warning His people of worthless religion. In **Isa 29:13**, we read "**Then the Lord said, 'Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote.'**"
    - b. Some might say, "I don't want to have any outward service to God, I only want to have that inward godliness."
      - 1) That is a good desire; however, it is not really possible. There must be physical elements with our devotion to God.
      - 3) In **Heb 11:24-25**, we are called to "**consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.**"

- B. There are a lot of things James could have cited as an example of worthless religion. Here he thought it was fitting to cite the unbridled use of one's tongue.
1. Notice James didn't say one was required to have flawless or perfect use of the tongue.
  2. The call of a true Christian is to bridle or reign-in his or her tongue just like one slows down or stops a horse with the use of a bit and bridle.
  3. The ways to bridle one's tongue are manifold. It is not only a matter of cursing or taking the Lord's name in vain. It includes restraining gossip and backbiting among other things.
  4. Holiness has to do with godly restraint. Think about all the things we are to "bridle" or hold back.

<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

## II. PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION →v27

A. Love for God without love for the body of Christ is contrary to Scripture.

1. → Ja 2:14-17
2. → 1 Jn 3:14-18

B. The ones we are to care for according to James are **“orphans and widows in their distress.”** Deut 10:18-19 also adds the alien or stranger to the list: **“He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien.”**

1. These three types of people have something in common— all lack a support system of other human beings.
2. People need other people. If there are some in our community without our support system, we as a church should endeavor to be there for them.
3. Don't believe Simon and Garfunkel and that false and depressing song called, “I Am a Rock.”

C. The care for widows, orphans, strangers, and other in need is not a work that we add to Christ's work to be saved. It is evidence of a true and lively faith.

D. Another evidence of a true and lively faith or **“pure and undefiled religion”** is to **“keep oneself unstained by the world”** (Ja 1:27).

1. The Word of God ought to have greater prominence on how you think, talk, and behave than the secular world around you.
2. The world around you with God's creation (i.e. nature) is not what is being talked about here. That is not what can corrupt or “stain” you.
  - a. The **“world”** as James used it here can be defined as, “The present world, the present order of things, as opposed to the kingdom of Christ; and hence, always with the idea of transience, worthlessness, and evil both physical and moral, the seat of cares, temptations, irregular desires.”<sup>2</sup>
  - b. In 1 Jn 2:16-17, the apostle wrote, **“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”**

Review, further application, and conclusion:

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<sup>2</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.