

Is My Religion True?

James 1:26-27

The theme of James is to call on the Christians to carefully examine the validity of their faith. The same theme is repeated in the 2 Cor. 13:5. Paul warns Timothy in 2 Tim 3:5 of men who have the form of that false religion which Jesus sharply rebukes in Matt 23:27. James shows what is acceptable and pleasing to God by differentiating true and false religion.

1. _____ of False Religion

Trying to obey God's word without controlling the tongue indicates a useless religion. James condemns false religion in three specific ways;

- a. False religion is _____
Paul warned Timothy of deception 2 Timothy 3:5. In Rev. 3:1 Jesus rebuked the church at Sardis for deceiving itself (cf. Gal. 6:3). Jesus illustrates this in Matthew 6:5.
 - b. False religion is _____
According to Matthew 12:34 our lips will reveal what is in our heart. Like the Psalmist, we ought to pray, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."- Psalm 141:3
 - c. False religion is _____
In Matthew 15:7 Jesus again rebukes the Pharisees for their vain worship.
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2. _____ of True Religion

The proper response to the word of God is to apply it without deception and with loving obedience from the heart (John 13:35). True religion is characterized in two ways;

- a. Practical _____
Matthew 25:35-36 carries the idea of true "visitation" that is motivated by care and concern (cf. 1 John 3:11, 14, 18). God has always been so concerned with the welfare of the orphans and the widows (Exo. 22:22, Deut. 10:18; 14:28-29; 24:17-22; Psalm 68:5; Jer. 7:6). True Christianity is manifest by how we love people who are in need and not how we love people we like.
 - b. Personal _____
As believers we should resolve in their hearts not to be defiled or corrupted by the plans, principles and practices of this sinful world (Psa. 1:1; 1 John 2:15). We are to maintain our spiritual integrity and moral purity as children of God (1 Peter 1:15; 1 Tim. 5:22).
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Personal inventory:

- What is my attitude towards myself? Do I deceive myself thinking that I am saved because of my religious activities? Is my tongue controlled by the Spirit of God?
- How about my love for others? Is my desire to give to the needs of others come from a heart of pure motivation and genuine loving concern?
- How about my attitude towards the world? Do I want to win the world or do I like to be like the world? Does this sinful world bother me or do I feel at home with it?