

The Book of James

Jas. 1:26-27

faith

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ACTION!

Jas. 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

We continue looking at the Christian and his battles, realizing what a believer's relationship with faith looks like:

1. A believer is saved by grace through faith;
2. A believer lives life by walking by faith;
3. A believer learns to be tested by faith.

I. THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BATTLES, 1:1-16

A. The Testings of the Christian Life, 1:1-12

B. The Temptations of the Christian Life, 1:13-16

II. THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BIBLE, 1:17-27

A. God's Word is Likened to a Gift, 1:17-18

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C. God's Word is Likened to a Glass, 1:22-27

1. A Challenging Experience, 1:22-24

2. A Changing Experience, 1:25-27

a. A Call to Behold, 1:25

Today is the celebration of one of the most significant days on the Christian calendar. Known popularly as *Easter*, which we prefer the title of *The Resurrection*, most people recognize it as the day that Jesus was arose from the grave after three days and three nights in the tomb. Many religious people will pay homage to this occasion, some in our state making a pilgrimage to Chimayo:

During **Holy Week** in New Mexico, tens of thousands of pilgrims make their way to a small village in Northern New Mexico. Some arrive by foot, some crawl on their hands and knees, many are carried by others or come by wheelchair, and some even arrive on horseback.

<https://www.newmexicoexplorer.com/pilgrimage-to-chimayo/>



<https://www.nydailynews.com/2012/04/06/see-it-fervent-filipino-catholics-nailed-to-crosses-for-good-friday/>.

A Filipino villager has been nailed to a wooden cross for the 35th time to reenact Jesus Christ's suffering in a brutal Good Friday tradition he said he would devote to pray for peace in Ukraine, Gaza and the disputed South China Sea.

On Friday, over a hundred people watched on as 10 devotees were nailed to wooden crosses, among them Ruben Enaje, a 63-year-old carpenter and sign painter. The real-life crucifixions have become an annual religious spectacle that draws tourists in three rural communities in Pampanga province, north of Manila.

<https://www.newsmax.com/world/globaltalk/philippines-good-friday-crucifixions/2024/03/29/id/1159071/>

The Book of James makes a differentiation of those who “seem to be religious” and those who are true believers. This morning, we will observe the difference.

b. A Call to Behave, 1:26-27

(1) A Pretended Religion Prescribed, 1:26

(a) The Test, 1:26a “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart...”

- ❖ The problem of religious deception has been from the beginning of Christianity.
- ❖ The very first commandment emphasizes the truth in Ex. 20:1-3, and reiterated in Isa. 46:9:

Isa. 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for **I am God, and *there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,***

- ❖ To know God is to know what He expects from mankind:

Jn. 4:24 God *is* a Spirit: and **they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.**

- ❖ To be involved in various ceremonies and rituals without Scriptural foundations is simply a self-deceiving endeavor of the heart.

Original Word: ἀπατάω **Transliteration:** apataó

Definition: to deceive **Usage:** I deceive, cheat, lead into error.

apatáō – properly, *deceive, using tactics* like seduction, giving *distorted impressions*, etc. *apatáō* ("lure into deception") emphasizes the *means* to bring in error (delusion). <https://biblehub.com/greek/538.htm>

- ❖ The litmus test of spirituality is the control of the tongue (see Jas. 1:19, 3:3-12.)
- ❖ Jesus emphasized the influence of the heart regarding a person's speech.

Mt. 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? **for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**

35 A good man **out of the good treasure of the heart** bringeth forth good things: and an evil man **out of the evil treasure** bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For **by thy words** thou shalt be justified, and **by thy words** thou shalt be condemned.

- ❖ If a person's "religion" cannot influence the heart, that religion is worthless.

(b) The Truth, 1:26b "...this man's religion *is* vain."

- ❖ A person may seem to be VERY religious, but if the lifestyle does not exhibit Biblical principles it is "vain" or empty.

Original Word: θρῆσκος **Transliteration:** thréskos of
unc. or.

Definition: religious **Usage:** (refers probably to a
careful observance of religious restrictions),
religious (probably in a limited sense), devout.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/2357.htm>

- ❖ The implication of “religion” is the outward display of rituals, liturgy, and ceremonies.
- ❖ The value of such things regarding God’s perspective of value is just emptiness.

Micah 6:6 **Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?** shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?

8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and **what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?**

- ❖ The Lord Jesus did not come to earth to establish a religion – He came to establish a relationship.

(2) A Practical Religion Prescribed, 1:27

(a) Unstinted Giving, 1:27a “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction...”

- ❖ “Pure...and undefiled” emphasizes being both clean and free from being contaminated.

Original Word: καθάρως **Transliteration:** katharos

Definition: clean **Usage:** clean, pure, unstained, either literally or ceremonially or spiritually; guiltless, innocent, upright.

katharós (a primitive word) – **properly, "without admixture"** (*BAGD*); what is separated (purged), hence "clean" (pure) because *unmixed* (without *undesirable elements*); (figuratively) spiritually *clean* because *purged* (purified by God), i.e. **free from the contaminating (soiling) influences of *sin*.**

<https://biblehub.com/greek/2513.htm>

- ❖ Being a “separated” Christian includes sanctification before God, along with an attitude of concern for others = “to visit.”

Original Word: ἐπισκέπτομαι

Transliteration: episkeptomai

Definition: to inspect, to go to see **Usage:** I look upon, visit, look out, select.

<https://biblehub.com/greek/1980.htm>

- ❖ The emphasis of “fatherless and widows in their affliction” is to oversee the welfare of the less fortunate that are truly in need, which was prevalent during the days of the early church age.

Jn. 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are **my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

- ❖ For a believer to show such concern to others reflects God’s concern and care.

Psa. 68:5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, **is God** in his holy habitation.

(b) Unstained Living, 1:27b “...*and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

tēréō (from *tēros*, "a guard") – properly, maintain (preserve); (figuratively) *spiritually guard* (watch), ***keep intact***.

- ❖ Believers have a responsibility to keep themselves pure (1 Tim. 5:22.)
- ❖ To be “unspotted” is properly, unspotted (unstained); (figuratively) *undefiled* and hence *fully acceptable*.

áspilos ("unspotted," literally, "without spot or stain") refers to what is *morally (spiritually) untainted* i.e. morally unblemished (pure) – "free from censure, irreproachable, free from vice, unsullied" (K. Wuest).

1 Jn. 2:15 **Love not the world, neither the things *that are in the world*.** If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Summary

- ❖ The difference between a “religious” person and a true believer is exhibited by the actions derived from a spiritual heart.
- ❖ A transformed heart produces a transformed life.
- ❖ Such a transformed life is exhibited by the concern to help others, accompanied by a life that pleases God, sanctified from worldly influences.
- ❖ True godliness is a matter of holy obedience to the Word of God, reflected by a lifestyle of selfless concern for others and an uncompromising stand for God’s glory.

Conclusion

Jn. 15:5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing.**

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and **my words abide in you**, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 **Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.**