

CALL to PRAYER - Confess sinful words and pray to express Christian words

Intro - We are a religious people, and we live in a religious society, but not all religions, or religiosity, are the same. James, the half-brother of Jesus, helps us sort out our religiosity. He gives us little litmus test by which we may evaluate whether our religion is worthy of the name "religion." James gives us three simple areas to check the authenticity of our personal religion. The test is simple but to take this test can be simply revealing and very convicting because none of us may be as religious as we think. Our "Definition" for today is "What is Pure Religion?"

## James 1:26-27 - Definitions 28 - What is Pure Religion?

### RELIGION

- Religion = outward service to God (god) personal devotion ... our beliefs & external practice of worship
  - For James, all religions are not the same - True/False Pure/Defiled
  - Pure religion, or true religiosity, is without the all the fake phony hypocrisy
- There are a lot of religions and religious people in the world
  - But there is not a lot of pure religion or true religion.
    - There is a big difference between "religion" and "pure religion"
  - The Christian religion is true, but the individual practice can be false & defiled
- James gives us an easy test to assess our personal religion. A three-question religious test
  - These three all go together. "All for one and one for all" (3 Musketeers)
  - Only part of one ever gets attention (1/2 of 1 doesn't really count or pass the test)

### TONGUE

- James 1:26
  - True religion tames the tongue. False religion runs at the mouth.
  - Your tongue will tell you what kind of religion you practice (if religiosity is hypocrisy)
  - Matt. 12:33-37 judge a book by cover? No ...by words? Yes! be judged by what we mutter & utter
    - Our words reflect our heart. A defiled tongue reveals a defiled heart
- True religion bridles the tongue
  - James 1:19-20 (quick anger and quick evil speech often go together - mad-mouth disease)
  - False religion runs at the mouth, but pure religion puts a bridle on it
  - Prov. 10:19 Prov. 13:3 the tongue is behind a double wall of teeth & lips with a jaw that will lock
  - Job 40:3-5 - use your hand if needs be Psalm 39:1 - muzzle on the mouth
  - Prov. 17:27-28 "Better to be thought of as a fool than to open mouth and remove all doubt."
  - Prov. 21:23 Prov. 29:20
- The "tongue test" will grade your religion
  - We may think we are religious, but our tongues will tell on us - James 1:26
    - "...deceives his own heart..." false religion brings self-deception
    - "...this man's religion is worthless." a worthless religion doesn't change your words
  - The "tongue test" is often omitted from the definition of Pure Religion - Why?
    - What does the "tongue test" reveal about your personal religion?

## *FAMILY*

- ❖ James 1:27
  - True religion promotes the family & provides for those who have no family
  - "...to visit orphans and widows..." visit = to go and see in order to relieve (2:15-16)
- ❖ Pure religion has charity for those without family
  - Psalm 68:5 true religion reflects the love of the True God
  - Funds were collected Acts 4:34-35 and distributed by deacons to widows - Acts 6:1
  - Society oppresses and takes advantage of widows & orphans
    - True religion protects them and provides for them
- ❖ The "family test" is usually the only one ever mentioned...yet incomplete or misapplied
  - Religious charity is to be focused on those with no family - (women & children first)
    - Widows - women whose husbands had died (old with no family - 1 Tim. 5:9-11)
    - Orphans - children who had no parents
  - True religion promotes family and family responsibility
    - 1 Timothy 5:3-4, 8, 14-16 The family is the God-ordained social safety net
  - The church is not to be burdened with those who have family (their responsibility)
    - 2 Thess. 3:10-12 (beware of misplaced "charity" or indiscriminate "charity")
- ❖ True religion promotes family & family responsibility.
  - Pure religion seeks to build family and doesn't enable destroying family
    - It is a defiled religion that demeans and destroys family with "charity"  
indiscriminate "charity" is not true religion  
True Religion helps those who are truly in need - women and children first
  - Pure religion promotes family & family responsibility. Pure Religion provides for those without family - *widows & orphans* (it helps people in need but women & children first)
- ❖ How does your personal religion measure up to the "*Family Test?*"

## *WORLD*

- James 1:27 True religion doesn't follow worldly trends
  - Religion that looks like the world is not real religion - it is fake/phony/impure/defiled...
    - There is a big difference between worldly religion and godly religion
    - It is a false religion that has its finger in the air to follow prevailing winds
  - This question on the "*religion test*" is usually completely overlooked or omitted
- Pure Religion / True Religion is unstained by the world worldly religion is worthless
  - True religion operates in the world, but it is not of the world - John 17:14
    - It moves in the world without being molded by the world
    - It swims against the stream but doesn't pick up any stain (oil & water not mix)
    - Pure religion doesn't follow the prevailing winds filled with Spirit not spirit of age
  - True religion doesn't think or act like the world - Romans 12:2
  - James 4:4 A kind of religion that plays footsies with the world is a kind of religion that is an enemy of God
  - 1 John 2:15 to love the world is to not have love for God or the love of God
- How did you do on this religious test? A simple test that is simply revealing & convicting
  - The Tongue Test                      The Family Test                      The World Test
  - It is good to take a test to see how religious we really are - 2 Cor. 13:5