

JAMES 1:26-27



Religion that is God-honoring and Helpful to Others

Self-centered complaints and criticisms are not the fruit of true religion (1:26)

“If anyone thinks he is religious”

- He doesn't reprimand them saying, *“Religion is bad. What you want is a relationship.”*
- Seeking a biblical and God-centered religion is a good thing.

“and does not bridle his tongue”

- Here James takes issue with people who claim to be religious but have no control of their tongue.
- When there are harbors of sin and selfishness within, they are bound to make themselves known.
 - *Luke 6:45*

Self-centered complaints and criticisms are not the fruit of true religion (1:26)

- Ungodliness will normally inspire pride in some form, and this leads to comparative condemnation that belittles others, causing hurt and division in the church.
 - The godly tongue is **bridled** by God and truth.
 - An unrestrained tongue is deceitful and destructive.
 - *Proverbs 10:19*
 - *Proverbs 17:27–28*
 - The evidence of steadfastness and perseverance under trial is made known in countenance and verbal communication.
- “but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”*
- The deception in this is that the arrogant person truly does feel superior.
 - Their self-serving religious activity has no value before God (“worthless”).
 - It does not humbly honor God nor does it humbly encourage others.

Humble concern for others and personal purity are the fruit of true religion (1:27)

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this:”

- God-glorifying religion is made evident when all that is done is from the strength God supplies us and the truth God uses to guide us.
 - *1 Corinthians 10:31*
- All of life and all of ministry are done in dependence on God.
 - *Colossians 1:28–29*
- Those who are double-minded are not pure and undefiled.

Humble concern for others and personal purity are the fruit of true religion (1:27)

“to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,”

- *“visit”* - carries the idea of being intentional to contact with wholehearted concern
- *“orphans and widows”* - the undervalued and neglected in society
- They are representative of any needy people crossing our path.
 - *A sincere and wholehearted worshiper of God is a servant of people no matter how insignificant they may be in the eyes of others.*
 - Matthew 25:34–40
 - *“in their affliction” indicates they are hurting, in distress, or in some manner of need*
 - **“Good Samaritan Principle”** – *Neighbor: anyone who crosses your path in need and you have the ability to minister to that need*

Humble concern for others and personal purity are the fruit of true religion (1:27)

“and keep oneself unstained from the world.”

- *“keep oneself”* - describes consistent commitment to guarding one’s heart
- Such awareness can only come from being consistently Christ-centered in thought and action.
 - Before the Lord Jesus, we live in constant dependence and grateful worship.
 - Jesus blesses us with the care and concern of others, and we become a blessing showing care and concern for others.
 - Being Christ-centered and others-oriented keeps us from straying into selfish and sinful contamination.

Questions to Consider

- What are some of the ways you realize you need God to bridle your tongue?
- What are the things that are keeping your religion from being pure and undefiled?
- How do you respond when hurting and needy people cross your path?
- In what ways is the Holy Spirit revealing you need to be more Christ-centered?

JAMES 1:26-27



Religion that is God-honoring and Helpful to Others