

# Pure and Undefined Religion

James 1:25-27

## Introduction:

- A. James contrasts vain religion with pure religion.<sup>1</sup>
  - 1. Not a complete definition of each, but one manifestation of each.
    - a. An unbridled tongue is but one example of vain religion.
    - b. Visiting is but one example of pure and undefiled religion.
    - c. These manifestations are personal, not congregational — “anyone”, “oneself”
  - 2. “Religion” is broad enough to cover our whole duty to God.
  - 3. Text illustrates some general principles about the nature of pure religion.
- B. We note some *features* of pure and undefiled religion:

## Discussion:

### I. It Is Lawful.

- A. One must receive and do “*the perfect law of liberty.*” (vv. 21-25).
  - 1. Not self-imposed religion (Col. 2:23 NKJV).
  - 2. Not the commandments of men (Matt. 15:9, 13).
- B. One must not just be religious — must be lawfully so.
  - 1. Athenians were “very religious” (Acts 17:22).
  - 2. Saul of Tarsus was strictly and sincerely religious (Acts 26:5, 9).
  - 3. Nadab and Abihu sacrificed “before the Lord” (Lev. 10:1-2)
  - 4. Many at the judgment think themselves religious, but are lawless (Matt. 7:21-27).

### II. It Is Consistent.

- A. An unbridled tongue is not consistent with profession of pure religion (v. 26).
- B. One must not only profess religion, he must consistently practice it..
  - 1. Pharisees’ actions were inconsistent with their teachings (Matt. 23:2-4).
  - 2. Week-day lives often inconsistent with Sunday profession.
  - 3. Practices often inconsistent with names were wear — “Christian”, “church of Christ.”

### III. It Is Balanced.

- A. Pure religion is balanced between positive (“visit...”) and negative (“unspotted...”). (v. 27).
- B. Balance is essential to spiritual strength and survival — Individually and congregationally.
  - 1. Grace of God (Tit. 2:11,12) teaches a balance between:
    - a. Negative (“denying...”) and positive (“living...”) living.
    - b. Living in “present world” and looking to next world (v. 13).
  - 2. Preaching should be balanced — “rebuke” and “exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2).
  - 3. Like Israel, we must use both hands (Neh. 4:17).
- C. Balance is necessary to the success and survival of a congregation.
  - 1. Without positive work it will dry die of depletion.
  - 2. Without negative work it will die of pollution.

## Conclusion:

- A. Let us make sure that our religion is lawful, consistent and balanced.
- B. Let us embrace the religion of our Lord by

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<sup>1</sup> Threskeia signifies "religion" in its external aspect ... He is "not herein affirming... these offices to be the sum total, nor yet the great essentials, of true religion, but declares them to be the body, the threskeia, of which godliness, or the love of God, is the informing soul" (Trench).(*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*)

obeying the gospel.

C. Let us live the religion of our Lord in all of its manifestations daily.