
Good Religion

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James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not only hearers of it, blinding yourselves with false ideas.

23 Because if any man is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a glass;

24 For after looking at himself he goes away, and in a short time he has no memory of what he was like.

25 But he who goes on looking into the true law which makes him free, being not a hearer without memory but a doer putting it into effect, this man will have a blessing on his acts.

26 If a man seems to have religion and has no control over his tongue but lets himself be tricked by what is false, this man's religion is of no value.

27 The religion which is holy and free from evil in the eyes of our God and Father is this: to take care of children who have no fathers and of widows who are in trouble, and to keep oneself untouched by the world.



- Being a doer of the Word is more than a suggestion from James, but it's what we must do so our religion will be authentic and not superficial.
- Religion is defined as the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, esp. a personal God or gods. In this passage, James is saying that our belief in God must be shown outwardly as well as inwardly.
- James also tells us that if we are hearers only and not doers, then we are basically studying ourselves, understanding our flaws, but not doing anything about them. When we don't change after hearing the Word for long periods of time, we begin to accept our negative behaviors as character flaws instead of things we can change.

- Beholding yourself in a mirror and forgetting what you see is James' way of describing a person that does not correct themselves after getting understanding of who they really are. The Word is here to correct our behavior and change us.
- People that come to hear the Word yet do not change are hearers only and that removes God's blessings and causes you to live on your own ability. How can you be blessed if you do not do what the blesser tells you to do?
- There is no self-denial in doing our own thing. If we just hear and don't do, then how can we ever be what He wants us to be?





- Many do what they want and then desire for God to bless it. But God has spoken to us in His Word to let us know that it has to be HIS way in order for us to be blessed by Him. **Rev. 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**
- When we decide to do things just because we are able to outside of God's will, it will produce dysfunction. Sure it may bring attention, fame, money, etc. but look at all the negative things it produces as well. Broken marriages, dysfunctional children, sin addictions, depression, suicidal thoughts, and bad health are just some of the consequences of doing our own thing and not being directed by God. **Matt. 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:**
- Using God, His Word, and His people to promote your own agenda is dangerous. The enemy was the first to use God's platform for his own way, so when we do it, he becomes our leader. Our churches are being filled with selfish leaders that use God's people for their own fame and riches. **Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

-James 1:26 states that if you have no control over your tongue (self control) then your religion is fake. True religion rests on the fact that you can control yourself, control your tongue and readily reject falsehoods. **James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.**

-James goes on to say that real religion is about helping others, not ourselves. Investing in those that are fatherless and widowed should be our desire. In other words, we should first help those that are victims of circumstance and not victims of their own decisions.

-Many times when our lives are in trouble, we are victims of our own decisions and we cannot focus on others because of our own issues. This causes us to focus on ourselves and always feel we should be the focus of others. **Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.**

-Our modern-day, seeker-friendly churches, have begun to center ministry around those that are victims of bad decisions versus those that are victims of circumstance. This negates our religion because we must be in position to serve others before ourselves according to the Word.



SUMMARY

Self-denial begins with knowing our issues and getting past them. We must grow past what we are dealing with and claim deliverance over our old mindset, taking thoughts captive, and casting down imaginations. Once we truly break free from our issues, we can have true religion. We can focus on the well-being of those that are victims of life's circumstance. When people are not doers of the Word and they keep making bad decisions in life, they become their own focus and they lose their ability to truly help others. Our focus in this new year should be helping others, but first we must start by not just hearing the Word, but applying it and growing past our issues.

Heb. 6:1 For this reason let us go on from the first things about Christ to full growth; not building again that on which it is based, that is, the turning of the heart from dead works, and faith in God,