

What kind of religion do we have? Is it like a...SPARE TIRE (used only in the case of an emergency)? A WHEELBARROW (easily upset and must be pushed)? A BUS (ridden only when it goes your way)? Whatever kind of religion we have, it is of no value unless it is pleasing to God in heaven as defined in **v. 27**:

James 1:27: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**Religion**" or in the Greek, "thrēskeia" means, "worship expression"; "**pure**" or "kithara" meaning, "sinless"; "**undefiled**" or "faithful; free from adultery"; "**unstained**" or "aspilon" meaning, "morally pure."
- **Literal Interpretation:** Real worship doesn't allow for sin but is faithful to God; the kind that passes muster before God the Father is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. To be sure that our own religion is acceptable before God, notice some attributes which are mile markers and guideposts for our faith:

I. A "PRACTICING" RELIGION

A. IT INVOLVES DOING SOMETHING ON OUR PART...

1. This is clearly implied in the phrase "**to visit**"
2. The context prior to this verse also makes it clear that we must be "**doers**" and "**not hearers only**" – **vv. 22-25**

B. IF WE ARE NOT "DOERS", WE ARE DECEIVING OURSELVES (v. 22**)**

1. And usually, it is ONLY ourselves we are deceiving!
2. We are certainly not deceiving God, nor Satan
3. And it unlikely that we fool others, especially our children

II. A "PRACTICAL" RELIGION

A. GOD DID NOT INTEND FOR OUR RELIGION TO CONSIST SOLELY OF "GOING TO CHURCH"...

1. Extending OUR HEART TO GOD IN WORSHIP is certainly important
2. But so is extending OUR HAND TO MAN IN SERVICE! (**v. 27**)

B. THROUGHOUT THE N.T., MUCH EMPHASIS IS PLACED UPON DOING GOOD...

1. From the writings of Paul - **Galations 6:10; Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14**
2. From the author of Hebrews - **Hebrews 13:16**
3. From the apostle John – **1 John 3:17-18**

III. A "PERSONAL" RELIGION

A. IMPLIED BY THE USE OF "SINGULAR PRONOUNS" IN THE TEXT...

"anyone" – v. 23; "he", "his" – v. 23; "himself", "he" – v. 24; "he", "this one" – v. 25; "anyone", "he", "his", "this one's" – v. 26; "oneself" – v. 27

B. **THERE IS A PLACE FOR "CORPORATE" GIVING...**

That is, where we give in conjunction with others to meet a need (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**)

IV. **A "PURE" RELIGION**

A. **THIS SOUNDS REDUNDANT, BUT IN OUR DAY IT MUST BE EMPHASIZED!**

1. Our society has become increasingly immoral and materialistic
2. Such is wreaking havoc upon many in the Lord's church

B. **OUR RELIGION IS FOR NOTHING, UNLESS IT IS...**

1. PURE - without blemish
2. UNDEFILED - untainted
3. Capable of keeping us UNSPOTTED from (by) the world

C. **BUT IF WE ARE SINNERS (as affirmed in **1 John 1:8**), HOW CAN WE EVER BE PURE, UNDEFILED, AND UNSPOTTED?**

1. It is possible, only BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST!
Cleanse and makes us pure if we walk in the light with God – **1 John 1:7**, keeping the commandments of God – **1 John 2:3**; cleansing at the moment of repentance (**Acts 2:38**) and continuous cleansing as we confess our sins (**1 John 1:9**)
2. It is possible only BY THE HELP OF GOD!
Who not only provides the blood of Christ to cleanse us from sin...but also a way of escape in times of temptation – **1 Corinthians 10:13**

Review

What kind of religion do YOU have?

- a. Is it a PRACTICING religion?
 1. Does it go beyond the walls of a building?
 2. Does it go beyond the printed pages of the Bible?
 3. Does it go beyond a superficial hearing of the Word?
- b. Is it a PRACTICAL religion?
 1. Does it consist of more than JUST "going to church, reading, and praying"?
 2. Does it reach out and manifest itself in compassion to those in need?
- c. Is it a PERSONAL religion?
 1. Going beyond what we may do in conjunction with others?
 2. Including our personal involvement apart from what others may do?
- d. And is it a PURE religion?
 1. Involving our initial cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ as we in faith repented and were baptized?
 2. Involving our continual cleansing by the blood of Christ as we confess our sins and repent of them?
 3. Does it include a putting away of sin with the help of God so that we might be "unspotted by the world"?

➤ **Conclusion:** Is our religion USELESS, simply DECEIVING OURSELVES?