

## Pure Religion #2

Text : **James 1: 19-27 ; Isaiah 58: 3-11**

**S#1.**

**A. II Cor. 13: 5** instructs us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith.

1. We must each one continually keep monitoring our own personal faith.
  - a. We understand that to do so is to our own spiritual advantage.
  - b. Doing so enables us to monitor our spiritual grow or lack thereof.
  - c. We should be as eager to grow as children measuring their height.
2. Our examination is only of ourselves and our children, **not** others.

- a. **I Cor. 4: 5** –; **but the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

**S#2.**

- b. God is **not** looking for a way to condemn, but to praise.

**B. As you examine yourself, do you find yourself to be a religious person ?**

**S#3.**

1. How do you know that you are a religious person ? By what standard ?
  - a. Some think they are religious if they attend church services. ( **more = more** )
  - b. Others measure spirituality by their bible knowledge. ( **knowledge is not faith** )
  - c. Still other measure religiosity by how many people they evangelize.
2. The recipients of James' epistle thought themselves to be religious because they knew and believed the gospel.
  - a. **Vs. 22** ... James told them they were deluding themselves
  - b. They had the problem the Apostle Paul warned the brethren at Rome about :  
**Rom. 12:3a** – **For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;**
  - c. Being religious is a lifestyle, not a just belief system. **Is it my lifestyle ?**
3. The scriptures give us several ways to measure ourselves.  
Our text sites three of them :

**James 1: 26-27** **If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.**

**S#4.**

- a. **bridle his tongue**
- b. **visit orphans and widows**
- c. **keep oneself unstained by the world.**

**C. This lesson will start with the second one “visit orphans and widows.”**

**I. What does it mean to be religious ?****S#5.****A. Let's start with a definition of terms.**

1. **Orphans** : { *orphanos* } 1 bereft (of a father, of parents). 1A of those bereft of a teacher, guide, guardian. 1B orphaned.  
\* Also translated as “**comfortless**” and “**fatherless**”
2. **visit** : { *episkeptomai* } ( bishop ) 1 to look upon or after, 1A in order to see how he is, help or to benefit. 1B1 to look after, have care for, provide for:
3. **Religion** : { *threskeia* } 1 religious worship. 1A esp. external, that which consists of ceremonies. 1A1 religious discipline, religion  
\* Also translated as “**worship**” ... Col. 2: 18

**B. The adjective “Religious” is indicative of one who is given to worship.****S#6.**

1. **Micah 6: 8** – He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
2. One whose life is linked to acceptable worship.

**Isaiah 58: 3, 10-11** Why have we fasted and You do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice? ..( *God list many transgressions* )..  
**10** And if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday.  
**11** And the Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones;

**S#7.****C. The Christian must have the attitude which seeks to make God look good.****S#8.****II. Caring for the poor and the helpless has always been the desire of God.****S#9.****A. As with us, God commanded His people of old to love each other.****S#10.**

**Lev. 19: 18** – You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

**B. God cares for those who cannot care for themselves.****S#11.**

1. **Psa. 68: 5-6** A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, is God in His holy habitation. **6** God makes a home for the lonely; He leads out the prisoners into prosperity, only the rebellious dwell in a parched land.
2. **Deut. 10: 17-18** A For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. **18** He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

**S#12.**

S#13.

**C. God instructs His people to care for those who cannot care for themselves.**

1. **Deut. 14: 28-29** – At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe **S#14.** of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town. **29**  
( 1/3 of total budget ) The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.
2. **Exod. 22: 22-24** You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. **23** "If you afflict **S#15.** him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; **24** and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

S#16.

**D. If one wants to be like God, what must His attitude be toward widows & orphans**

S#17.

**III. God's requirement to care for widows and orphans remains the same now.****A. God is totally consistent; He never changes.**

S#18.

1. **James 1: 17** – the Father of light with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning
2. **Heb. 13: 8** – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- \* 3. If God ever once thought something was right or wrong and still feels the same way.

**B. The New Testament gives us many examples of the care of widows.**

1. **Act 6** ... The Jerusalem church appointed 7 men to care for them EVERY DAY.
2. **Act 9: 36ff** ... Dorcas was mourned as the one who made clothes for the widows.

**C. The churches in the New Testament maintained an organized widows program.**

1. **I Tim. 5: 3-16** ... They had an organized and permanent widow's program.
2. There were requirements for a widow who were recipients of the program.
  - a. They could have no relatives who would take care of them.
  - b. They must have been the wife of one husband. ( but could've been widowed before )
  - c. They had to have a history of active and faithful service to God and his people.
  - d. She had to be over 60 years of age. Younger widows were required to remarry.
  - e. Those on the list had responsibilities to the church.

**D. Jesus taught that it was essential that His followers love their neighbors.**

1. **Matt. 22: 39** – The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
2. After that same command in **Luke 10**, Jesus taught the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach us that whoever is in need is our helper.

S#19.

E. Our text identifies the care of widows and orphans as essential to true religion.

**James 1: 27** – Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is **S#20.**  
this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep  
oneself unstained by the world. ( *This is God's standard, not man's.* )

S#21.

#### IV. Why does God place such emphasis on being merciful to the poor and helpless?

S#22.

A. The merciful character of God requires that His followers be merciful like Him.

1. **Joel 2: 13** – And rend your heart and not your garments. Now return to the **S#23.**  
Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to  
anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil.

2. **James 5: 11** – We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the **S#24.**  
endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's  
dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

3. **Luke 6:36** – Be merciful, just as your heavenly Father is merciful.

4. If we are not interested in the things God is interested in, we need to repent.

**Prov. 14: 31** – He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is **S#25.**  
gracious to the needy honors Him.

B. A lack of concern for the poor and helpless is a mark of wickedness. **S#26.**

1. **Isa. 1: 16-17** – Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil **S#27.**  
of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, **17** Learn  
to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless,  
defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

2. Why was Sodom destroyed ? It was for more than perversion.

**Ezek. 16: 49** – Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her **S#28.**  
daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease,  
but she did not help the poor and needy.

2. Remember God's warning to those who do not care for the widows and orphans.

**Exod. 22: 22-24** You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. **23** "If you afflict him **S#29.**  
at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; **24** and  
My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your  
wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

C. Compassion for the poor and helpless is a mark of righteousness. **S#30.**

1. When Job asserted his righteousness, he said the following :

**Job 31:16-17, 22** If I have kept the poor from their desire, or have caused **S#31.**  
the eyes of the widow to fail, **17** Or have eaten my morsel alone,  
and the orphan has not shared it ... **22** Let my shoulder fall from  
the socket, and my arm be broken off at the elbow.

2. The Psalms often extols the virtues of those who aide the poor and helpless.

a. **Psa. 41: 1** – **How blessed is he who considers the helpless;** **S#32.**  
**The Lord will deliver him in a day of trouble.**

b. **Jer. 22: 16** – **He pled the cause of the afflicted and needy; Then it was well.**  
**Is not that what it means to know Me? Declares the Lord.**

**D. God saved us so that we would gladly accomplish His will on earth.** **S#33.**

1. What would be the response of an employer if an employee did not produce ?

a. Employer says, “*I want for you to weld 300 battery brackets per shift.*”

b. At the end of the day the employer finds only 10 and asks, WHY ?

c. “*I cleaned & organized the area, I assisted coworker, I helped unload a truck ...*”

d. **He stayed busy doing good things but did not get the assigned job done.**

2. Jesus died to purchase workers who would accomplish His purposes on the earth.

a. **Tit. 2: 14** – **Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from** **S#34.**  
**every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people**  
**for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.**

b. **Eph. 2:10** – **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good** **S#35.**  
**( cf – Acts 10:38 ) works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

3. Jesus sent His servants to proclaim Him to the world and do His works.

a. **I Pet. 2: 9** – **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,** **S#36.**  
**a people for God’s own possession, SO THAT you may**  
**proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you**  
**out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

b. **Acts 20:35** – **In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner** **S#37.**  
**you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus,**  
**that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'**

c. **Luke 6: 46** – **Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?**

### **CONCLUSION :**

**A. Are we religious ? What kind of religion do we practice ?** **S#38.**

**B. Is it pure and undefiled ? Are we caring for the helpless ?**

### **INVITATION :**

**S#39.** ... Communion slide

**Lesson Text :****James 1: 19-27**

**19** This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; **20** for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. **21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; **24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. **25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

**26** If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. **27** Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

**Isaiah 58: 3-11**

**3** 'Why have we fasted and you do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and you do not notice?' Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, and drive hard all your workers. **4** Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like you do today to make your voice heard on high. **5** Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed and for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the Lord? **6** Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke? **7** Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? **8** Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. **9** Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, **10** And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted, Then your light will rise in darkness And your gloom will become like midday. **11** And the Lord will continually guide you and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.