

## A few thoughts on James 1:26-17

Written by Josh Winslett

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"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:26-27

- Religion is not a bad word. It's cliché to say you want a relationship and not a religion. Many pastors sadly even demean the word religion. However, the Bible speaks positively about true religion.
- Religion is empty if we cannot control our mouth, or even our keyboards. We can use the mantra, "no one is perfect." Whereas that is true, we should never use that as an excuse for untempered dialogue. We deceive ourselves if we think our words do not matter. No one wants food from a dirty plate.
- Religion is defined here in sacrificial terms. What would God have you to do in his service? Looking for a ministry to apply your gifts? Look for the widows and orphans in your assembly, even your community. This seems mundane and not very selfie worthy. We typically want the exciting and sensational. Crucify that mentality. The freedom we have in Christ is meant for personal service to other believers in Christ (Galatians 5:13). If you get done visiting all the widows and orphans in your community, then we can find something else for you to do.
- Religion is defined as not conforming to the world. Believers and church bodies should not mirror the world thinking they will gain the masses. That was first done to the largest degree by Cyril of Jerusalem in the 4th century and hurt the Christian world for a millennia. The church is like a boat. If a boat takes on water it sinks. Likewise, if the church tries to mirror the world, it will soon no longer be the church.
- Notice that the Christian religion affects all of your life and not just the occasional Sunday morning. The Christian is a transformed individual who is to live self sacrificially to others for Christ. A religion that makes no affect on the whole of your life is no religion at all. However, the freedom we have in Christ is life changing.

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Question for consideration, how is the religion of Christ being worked out in your life?

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Roman's 12:1-2