

May 3, 2009

“RELIGION, Amazing, Wonderful, God-Glorifying,
Religion!” James 1:26-27

Real
Exciting
Love-filled
Inspiring
God-glorifying
Intelligent
Oh WOW!
Nothing-else-like-it --- CHRISTIAN RELIGION!

*I. True religion is something right, good and
wonderful – James 1:26-27*

NKJ **James 1:26** If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

1. Non-believers being against it does not make it WRONG!
2. Not Religion DOT COM does not speak for me, Christians should be careful about kowtowing to the world
3. Christians should be against: worthless religion; false religion; pharisaical religion; etc... but not against true Christian religion, as described here!

Here, James gives us some clues for distinguishing TRUE RELIGION from false –

*II. True religion means CONTROLLING your
tongue –*

“and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.” James 1:26

1. A person's control of his or her tongue / language is one mark of true conversion –
 - A. Romans 3:13-14 vividly describes the unconverted, ungodly person in terms of his or her tongue

NKJ **Romans 3:13** "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

- B. God has great and high purposes for our converted tongues – Psalm 40:1-3

NKJ **Psalm 40:1** To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.² He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps.³ **He has put a new song in my mouth -- Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.**

- C. James will speak more about an unruly tongue, tongue sins: filthy language, slander, lying, gossip are dread sins and mark are religion as deficient – **James 3:1-12**

III. True religion means CARING for the needy –

1. Here orphans and widows, not necessarily limited to them
2. This caring ministry was an essential part of the churches ministry from its very beginning – Acts 6:1-7

NKJ **Acts 6:1** Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and

serve tables.³ "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;⁴ "but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

3. *Though our cultural situation may be different / this mandate from God to care still applies*
4. *A philosophy of pastoral visitation*

IV. *True religion means CUTTING OUT of your life, any CONFORMITY to the world –*

1. *We are to keep ourselves “unspotted”*
2. *We are not to be conformed to the world – Romans 12:1-2*

^{NKJ} **Romans 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3. *We are not to LOVE the world – 1 John 2:15-17*

^{NKJ} **1 John 2:15** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world.¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

4. *Remember the world HATES you if you LOVE Christ and God the Father – John 15:19-25*

^{NKJ} **John 15:19** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."²⁰ "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."²¹ "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me."²² "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."²³ "He who hates Me hates My Father also."²⁴ "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father."²⁵ "But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

V. *True religion is EXCITING, FULFILLING, this is what we are made for –*

1. *It is not the prerequisite for our salvation – Ephesians 2:8-9*

^{NKJ} **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

2. *It is the FRUIT of our salvation – Ephesians 2:10*

^{NKJ} **Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

3. *It is different for each one of us, like snowflakes God has a unique and wonderful place, plan, for our lives! We are His poetry, His work of art, His masterpieces!*