

## Religion! A Love Hate Relationship!

**James 1:21-27** *Therefore putting aside all filthiness and overflowing of evil, receive in meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. But become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man studying his natural face in a mirror. For he studied himself and went his way, and immediately he forgot what he was like. But whoever looks into the perfect Law of **liberty** and continues in it, he is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work. This one shall be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks to be religious among you, yet **does not bridle his tongue**, but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

James, the supposed brother of Jesus, why did he start his book the way he did in chapter one? I am supposing here that he watched Jesus very closely being his brother! He may have just wondered "is he really the son of God" at one stage, not knowing what his mother knew, and noticing something different about Jesus. Certainly he noticed this about him, that he went about doing good (not evil) visiting all, not being so worried about money and the cares of this world, it was even Jesus who said cast all your cares on me because I care for you! James may have been there that day when he said that?

Religion is supposed to be a love - hate relationship! Love that which is good and truthful, hate that which is Evil and a lie! Keep yourself from the world and yet visit the fatherless, widows, sick, the down and out, I studied just what the word "unspotted" meant and was surprised at what I found, **John Wesley** says "*The only true religion in the sight of God, is this, to visit - **With counsel, comfort, and relief.** The fatherless and widows - **Those who need it most.** In their affliction - In their most helpless and hopeless state. And to keep himself unspotted from the world - From the maxims, tempers, and customs of it. But this cannot be done, till we have given our hearts to God, and love our neighbour as ourselves. What does "**visit**" mean? Your local dictionary says The act of going to see some person or place or thing for a short time or a meeting arranged by the visitor to see someone (such as a doctor or lawyer) for treatment or advice. So what is pure religion again? Keep oneself **unspotted** from the world and **visit** those in need, with a friendly gesture of some sort.*

How many people do you know right now, that may be going through a difficult time in their lives, whether it be physical, spiritual, mental or financial? Have you visited them with a cheerful hello, or God Bless ya can I pray for you, or a kind word, maybe a word of wisdom from God for them., Or have you been like the pharisees that said God speed; be clothed and fed and be on your way yet giving them nothing? Now I am not saying for you to be suckered into every persons plight and go broke or mental yourself from trying to help others, but then again don't do nothing, if you can do something.

Let me show you a picture of true religion. I had a really crap (excuse the french) Christmas, my car was broken down and I borrowed a friends car and blew it up too! I was feeling pretty down, for a couple of weeks! During this time, I had a Non Christian friend (who happens to believe in God) offer me a car to replace mine and a loan to fix the other, then I had a Biker 4 Christ rider offer me the use of their car till I got mine fixed and another come and say Hi, after about an hour of cheering me up, he got up to leave asking me if I would like to loan a large amount of money to fix my friends car or mine, I declined but was thankful for the offer, he then took an envelope out and said, I suppose I need to return this to the bank, he already had it in his pocket, then the friend who owned the car that I blew up also had said "don't worry about it, scrap it, God will take care of it", (I believe I broke it so I fix it). And yet another non believer offered us a couple of thousand dollars as well.

This is **not** a plea for help either, but who was showing true religion here? All of them! Even the 2 "non believers". Then lo and behold I invite a new Christian over to cheer him up and he offers me help too by getting me another cheap car or motor. Then I start my computer Bible and read about James and true religion. All these people did not care for their own needs at the time they heard of mine (**and they all had them**) but offered help to me. Even though I declined all the offers, just the thought that someone cared enough to help cheered me up immensely ( *I was feeling pretty depressed*). They all showed unselfish love toward another, many from Bikers 4 Christ have given me encouraging words, and others knowing me well, have made a joke of it all, getting me looking at the brighter side, **and it has all helped**, I have received all the help I will ever need, but who do you know that needs a kind word, or a couple of dollars?

The world's way would be to say bad luck old chap, or what black cat run across your path etc. This is what we need to stay unspotted from, "having no compassion" being "selfish", "bigoted" and "proud", not giving a hoot what happens to others, being judgmental, etc. Remember Jesus said "if you follow these 2 commandments you have fulfilled the 10 and one of them was to "Love your neighbour as yourself"

When you can honestly look back on your Christian walk and say “yes I have done my best with my possessions and life to help others” **then** you have perfect religion, not a false religion. I know many who are “*in the ministry*” for all they can get, and yet don’t even see the needs of others under their noses. If Jesus were to return today and play a video of **your** life of “religion”, what would it be? Sci Fi, Fiction, a Novel, a Drama; or would it be based on a true story - the Bible? Would he say “well done good and faithful servant” after watching the video of your life? Or would he have a frown on his face and a tear in his eye?

**Bless ya - Roscoe.**