

**Pure Religion
James 1:26, 27**

James 1:26, 27 “If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father is to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep yourself from being polluted by the world’s corruption.”

James 1:26-27 26 Anyone who sets himself up as "religious" by talking a good game is self-deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air.
27 Real religion, 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.” The Message

The word translated "religion" means "the outward practice, the service of a god." Did you know there are 4300 religions in the world? It is used only five times in the entire New Testament (James 1:26-27; Acts 26:5; and Col. 2:18, where it is translated "worshiping"). Pure religion has nothing to do with ceremonies, temples, or special days.

Pure religion means practicing God's Word and sharing it with others, through speech, service, and separation from the world.

Speaking Properly (v. 26) – “control your tongue, your words”

James 1:19 “You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.
20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.
21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the Word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.”

James 4:11 “Don’t speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God’s law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you.
12 God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?”

James 4:11-12 11 Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, his Message, his Royal Rule, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. 12 God is in

charge of deciding human destiny. Who do you think you are to meddle in the destiny of others?

Serving widows and orphans (v. 27a) – “help those who can’t repay you”

Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.”

Deuteronomy 10:17 “The LORD your God is God of all gods and Lord of all lords.
18 He helps orphans and widows, and he loves foreigners and gives them food and clothes.

19 You also must love foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.”

Job 31:16 “Have I refused to help the poor, or crushed the hopes of widows?

17 Have I been stingy with my food and refused to share it with orphans?

18 No, from childhood I have cared for orphans like a father, and all my life I have cared for widows.”

Psalms 68:5 “God is in his holy Temple. He is a father to orphans, and he defends the widows.”

Psalms 146:9 “The LORD protects the foreigners. He defends the orphans and widows, but he blocks the way of the wicked.”

Jeremiah 22:3 “This is what the LORD says: Do what is fair and right. Save the one who has been robbed from the power of his attacker. Don’t mistreat or hurt the foreigners, orphans, or widows. Don’t kill innocent people here.”

Zechariah 7:10 “Don’t hurt widows and orphans, foreigners or the poor...”

Staying unpolluted from society’s pollution (v. 27b) – “show the difference Jesus Christ can make in your life as well as your heart

By "the world" James means "society without God." Satan is the prince of this world (John 14:30), and the lost are the children of this world (Luke 16:8). As the children of God, we are **in** the world physically but **not of** the world spiritually (John 17:11-16). We are sent into the world to win others to Christ (John 17:18).

It is only as we maintain our separation from the world that we can serve others. The world wants to "spot" the Christian and start to defile him.

First, there is "friendship **of** the world" (James 4:4), which can lead to a **love for** the world (1 John 2:15-17).

If we are not careful, we will become **conformed** to this world (Rom. 12:1-2), and the result is being **condemned with** the world (1 Cor. 11:32). This does not suggest that we lose our salvation, but that we lose all we have lived for.

Lot illustrates this principle. First he pitched his tent toward Sodom, and then moved into Sodom. Before long, Sodom moved into him and he lost his testimony even with his own family.

When judgment fell on Sodom, Lot lost everything. It was Abraham, the separated believer, the friend of God, who had a greater ministry to the people than Lot did the friend of the world.

It is not necessary for the Christian to get involved with the world to have a ministry to the world. Jesus was "unspotted" (1 Peter 1:19), and yet He was the friend of publicans and sinners. The best way to minister to the needs of the world is to be pure from the defilement of the world.

God wants to recycle your heart!

"Let Goods recycle your trash and God recycle your heart"