

## James 1:26-27

### Introduction:

1. In his letter James addressed a number of important issues pertaining to Christianity.
  - a. (1:2-18) He wrote at length about "facing temptations."
  - b. (1:19-27) He continued by writing about "hearing and doing the Word."
2. This lesson is a study of the information presented in 1:26-27.
3. As we study these verses we must keep in mind the principle revealed in vs.18 -- God wants His children to *"be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."*
4. To accomplish this we must follow the instructions given in vs.19-25, including:
  - a. being *"swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"* (vs.19-20)
  - b. putting away wickedness and receiving the engrafted Word with meekness (vs.21)
  - c. being doers of the Word (vs.22-25).
5. The way we approach these instructions will determine the kind of religion we practice.
6. In the verses we are studying, two kinds of religion are contrasted:
  - a. "vain religion" (vs.26)
  - b. "pure and undefiled religion" (vs.27).

### Discussion:

- I. (vs.26) JAMES DESCRIBED "VAIN RELIGION"
  - A. "Vain" [useless, worthless, serving no purpose] religion is of no value to the person practicing it, it is of no value to other people, and it is of no value to God.
  - B. James showed that a person may appear to be religious while practicing vain religion -- such a person deceives his own heart.
  - C. The specific problem addressed is a failure to bridle the tongue (vs.19, 3:2-12).
    1. Bridle: to hold in check, to restrain
    2. An unbridled tongue is a sign that the engrafted Word has not been received with meekness (Proverbs 8:13; 17:27-28; Matthew 12:34-37; Ephesians 4:29).
    3. Religion that is accompanied by an unbridled tongue is vain.
  - D. One cause of too much talking is a lack of activity (2 Thessalonians 3:11).
    1. A good way to keep the tongue bridled is to be active and busy (2 Thessalonians 3:12-13).
    2. This principle leads to the next point.
- II. (vs.27) JAMES DESCRIBED "PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION"
  - A. In contrast to vain religion, pure and undefiled religion is a blessing to the one practicing it, it is a blessing to other people, and it is pleasing to God.
  - B. Pure and undefiled religion consists of 2 main activities.
    1. One activity is *"to 'visit' the fatherless and widows in their affliction."*
      - a. This is providing the needs of those who are less fortunate (Ruth 1:6).
        - 1) God has always been concerned about the needy (Psalm 146:9).
        - 2) He has always instructed His children to care for the needy (Isaiah 1:16-17; Galatians 6:10).
      - b. Caring for the needy is a demonstration of true faith (James 2:14-17) and true love (1 John 3:17-19).
      - c. The Lord will bless this activity at the judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).
    2. The other activity is to remain *"unspotted from the world."*
      - a. This has already been mentioned in vs.21a.
      - b. To practice the kind of religion that pleases God, we must not allow ourselves to be tainted by the world (Romans 12:1-2).