

Pure Religion

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[0 : 00] 1 Corinthians 1.27 James 1.27 it says, Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Religion. There's over 4,200 religions on earth today. 4,200. Is one religion just as good as another?

The Bible says that there is such a thing as pure religion. Pure religion. It follows that some religion is not pure. Pure. It means 100%.

If you were to go down the shop and buy pure grape juice or pure orange juice, it's 100% what it's supposed to be. There's nothing added. Nothing but.

It's pure. And the Bible speaks of pure religion as we read in this verse here. Now, much is made in the health industry, which I've got something to do with as my day job, of cleansing, of cleanliness, of hand washing.

[1 : 16] It's like they're really over the top. You know, they've got these pumps of alcohol gel everywhere where you wash your hands and they give people training on how to wash their hands. It's so important that every little bit of their hands is washed and they've got some special way that they can put something on your hands and then you wash them and then they put it under this special machine and you can see all the bits that you missed underneath the fingernails and in between the fingers and around the thumb.

All the bits that you don't... They thought you washed your hands but they're not really clean. They're not really pure. And there is a problem with purity. There's a pollution problem.

On planet Earth today, the Bible says that. It speaks of the pollutions of the world. The pollutions of the world. There's a far-reaching contamination that spread right across the planet since Adam. A foulness of impurity. And how we need to search out Bible truth, scriptural truth to rediscover the truth, the purity of Biblical Christianity, of pure religion.

What makes Biblical Christianity different? Biblical Christianity is pure religion. It's pure. 100%. Nothing but. Nothing added.

[2 : 41] It's pure. Pure religion. Bible Christianity, it's distinct. It's pure in its author. Christ is the author of this pure religion.

The founder of this pure religion. It's pure in its object of worship. God Almighty. It's pure in its doctrine, in its teaching. It's reliable.

It's the gospel. True. It's pure in its institution, the church of the living God. The true church of God. There's a purity to this religion, to this faith.

There's a cleansing, a purity. It's unspoiled. It's unmixed. It's uncontaminated. It's something that's wholesome, and it's precious. And if you've got something that's pure, if you've got something that you count as a purity, it's something worth guarding.

Purity is something to be guarded, isn't it? Especially in our day, we see young men and women, their purity is not guarded. It's not guarded. It's not treasured.

[3 : 42] It's not defended. As we see, as it's been said, of the media. For, you don't have the TV on too long, in front of the little ears, and the little eyes, that are watching, lest they be tainted, lest that purity be taken, lest that innocence be lost.

And it's so true in the world today. Purity is under attack, every which way you look. Biblical purity stems from God, and His nature. His holiness is the essential character of our God.

His purity. Now, if you were to mix a litre of water, a litre of water, a container of water, with one teaspoon of something else, that pure water is no longer pure.

If you were to take a bucket of white paint, and put just one drop, one little drop off your fingertip, of black, into that white, pure white paint, it would no longer be a bucket of purely white paint.

And purity is something precious, is something wonderful. And thank God, He's given us His Word. It's pure. There's a purity. Of religion. It's completely freeing from anything else.

[5 : 00] A little something else added, makes it impure. So the question for us today, what is pure religion? Pure religion.

You've got 4,200 to choose from. What is pure religion? Pure religion. I'll put it to you. Firstly, it's a lifestyle. It's a lifestyle. The definition that we must use for purity, it's not the definition that the world would use, of what is pure and impure, of the way our society would define purity, but how God defines it in the Bible, how He reveals it, His will, His standards, His ideal, in respect to our conduct, in respect to purity of life.

And purity of religion, it translates into the day by day, where the rubber hits the road, into our lifestyle, our way of living. It's that discovery of a life truly lived.

That's the pure religion that we can know. It's a religion that goes beyond a knowing, but a trusting of our Saviour, a lived out of a life that's evident.

Pure religion will be evident in our relationships, in our lifestyle, in our caring, in our living, in our choices, in the commitments we make. We see, as our text says, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.

[6 : 24] It's lived out in the real world, in the people we mix with. We are designed, absolutely, to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

To honour our Lord, and to present, Romans 12, our bodies as a living sacrifice. Our life should be a living sacrifice. A lifestyle.

Pure religion. It's something that happens 24 by 7, by 365. Not something you clock in and off of, or that you just turn up for church, and live it there.

It's a lifestyle. Pure religion. It happens in the everyday. And 2 Timothy 2.19 it says, Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His.

And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. It's lived out in the departing from iniquity. And then it goes on, that not only will we steer clear of iniquity of sin, those who name His name, they'll flee, but not only that, they'll follow.

[7 : 30] It's twofold. In 2 Timothy 2.22, that's an easy one to remember, to look up. There's two things there. Flee, also youthful lust. There's the fleeing.

And then, secondly, follow. Follow, righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart.

It's a life, live. It's a fleeing. It's a following. And purity, it's meant to permeate a whole lifestyle and impact a whole life. It's a way of living.

Think of, there's many scriptures that talk about purity, of pure living. For example, Matthew 5.8, the Sermon on the Mount. The Lord Jesus says, Blessed are the pure in heart.

The pure in heart. For they shall see God. Matthew 5.8, Paul wrote to Timothy, 1 Timothy 5.22, Keep thyself pure.

[8 : 30] Your purity is something that can be taken. It's something that can be lost. Pure in heart. Secondly, pure in speech. Pure in speech. James 1.26, If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, he doesn't put his tongue in a bridle and control it, but deceiveth his own heart.

It says, this man's religion is vain. It's not pure, it's vain religion. And Paul writes in Philippians 1.27, Only let your conversation be, as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

Pure in heart, pure in speech, and pure in conduct. Our Lord says in Matthew 5.16, Also, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

It's something that's seen. It's something that's evident. It's something that will show. And 1 John 2.15, John writes, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It will be evident that purity in our conduct. And also, Paul writes to the Philippians, Of a purity in our mind, a purity in our thought life, in our thinking.

[9 : 48] He writes there, Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are honest, are just, are pure. Whatsoever things are lovely, of good rapport, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

How is our thought life being fashioned, and affected, and manipulated, and controlled? You can, you can, renew your mind.

The Bible says you can make it new again. You can make it fresh, and alive, and pure again. It's a battleground up there, isn't it? The seeds, through the ear gate, and the eye gate, the seeds, all the time, that grave matter up there, your mind, your thoughts, are constantly being barraged, and God says, commit your thoughts, commit your mind, to such thoughts, to such things.

And it says elsewhere, bringing into captivity, every thought, every thought, to the obedience of Christ. Pure religion, it's a lifestyle. It'll show in our heart, in our speech, in our conduct, and in our mind.

Pure religion, it's a lifestyle. Secondly, it's a culture shift. It's a culture shift. This is foreign, to the world around us. That we should care. That we should spare a thought, for purity.

[11:10] It's as if this world, there's no standards, there's no guidelines, there's no moral compass. It's all, do as you please. Every man does that, which is right, in his own eyes.

It's a culture shift, to take this kind of message, and make it live, to make it real, in your life. But God says you can, and must. Pure religion, and undefiled.

Talks about being, unspotted, unspotted from the world. God's desire, for you, for me, is that we have, a pure religion. Meantime, in the here and now, it's a culture war out there.

It's a jungle out there. It's a culture war out there. There's a culture, that is a culture clash, with biblical Christianity, with biblical culture.

You know, you see, some of the examples, of people living for Christ, and they just stand out, from the crowd, there's something different, about them. It's like that brother, last weekend, there's something about him, they stood out.

[12:07] There's something different, about the life, that he was living. Something different, about you, and the life, that you live, in the workplace, in the home life, in the everyday. It's a culture war, out there.

A clash of cultures, going on. Because the world's culture, is pitted, against biblical culture. Biblical culture, is counter to, the world's culture.

And, it's not a matter, of our interpretation, of how we feel, or think, of how we condition, as children, in school, or life, as we grow up.

Not the things, that the world influences, and impacts us, that should set, the standard, for what is right, and what is wrong. But it is God, it is God, who sets the standard, of what is right.

It is God, who defines, whether a thing, is right, or wrong. Not our own interpretation, or of how we feel, or think about things. You know, I was interested, to read lately, that it's a fact, that in, the US of A now, that President Obama, is trying to bring in, a law, that actually, will mean that, your children, in the secular school system, of the US of A, could be taught, by a cross dressing man.

[13:25] He could be standing there, in the clothes of a woman, with lipstick on, and with a wig on, or whatever they do, and he will be teaching, your children, in the secular school system, of the United States of America, that that's okay.

That's okay, for a man to dress, as a woman. The Bible says, that that is an abomination. In the sight of God. Brothers and sisters, these are the things, that are coming in, to the world today.

And that is what, the world says is okay. That is what the world, defines as right, and wrong, and okay to do. It's every man does, while he's right, in his own eyes.

God forbid, these things are happening, brothers and sisters, on planet earth today. And who knows, where it will end. Where it will end. In today's world, lust, knows no boundaries.

Lust, knows no boundaries. It doesn't matter, whether you have, whatever your attraction might be, whether they're the same sex, or to an animal. You know, anything goes.

[14:26] There is no boundaries, there is no clear guide. If we were to use, the world's guidelines, and the world's measures, of what is pure, and right, and good, and wholesome, they would be doing, what it says in Isaiah.

They call good, evil, and evil, good. Because like it was said, on the weekend last, that, that's wicked. That means it's good. Brothers and sisters, God says, evil is evil, good is good.

There's a dividing line. There's a purity, there's an impurity. It's either one or the other. And the world's culture, is pitted against, biblical culture. And the prevailing world culture, has abandoned, all sense of commitment, of commitment, of accountability, to a God.

Of a focus on that, which is spiritual. That which drives popular culture today, is self, not God. Selfishness, of discontentment, of rebellion, of an obsession with feelings, and of vain searching after pleasure, that cannot satisfy the soul.

Of a pressure being constantly applied, shaping our mindset, our desires, our nature. If it's the world's frame of reference, that's setting the right and wrong for you, that's dictating the choices we make, in terms of life, in terms of your investment of time, or is it God, who's doing that?

[15:48] Pure religion. Pure religion. And in the practical application, it includes, for example, sexual purity. Before God, before and through marriage.

Sexual purity. It's God's plan for mankind. 1 Corinthians 7.1, It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But it goes on, verse 9, But if they cannot contain, let them marry.

For it is better to marry, than to burn. It takes courage. In today's world, where anything goes, she'll be right, mate. She'll be apples.

Do what you will. No worries, mate. God says, there's a right and a wrong. There's a right and a wrong. There's a purity, and there's an impurity. And friends, as God's people, to be an effective Christian, to find that wholeness in Christ, to find that relationship, that's everlasting with God, we need to find, that unspoiled intimacy, that path of purity, that closeness to Him, where there'll be no regrets.

There'll be no skeletons in the cupboard. There'll be no dirt to dig up on you, because you're living according to God's right and wrong. Not what you make for yourself. Not how you set your own standards, of what is right and wrong.

[17:03] But of what God says is right and wrong. That's how we should live, how we should choose to live, to delight and honour our King. Pure religion, it's a culture shift. This is foreign. This is contrary to that which the media would condition us.

It's a culture shift to want to have a heart and life that honours Him, to have our philosophy, our ethics, our worldview shaped by His Word, not by the entertainment channels of the world, not by the gossip magazines, but about what God says is right.

When all that is carnal, is promoted and applauded, how do we stand today? Do we have absolute truth? We can have that.

Thank God we have that. In our hands, the Word of God, the source of truth, absolute truth, the answers that our world needs today. And there is no doubt, it's absolutely true, absolutely all of the time.

100%. Nothing but, nothing added. The Word of God. His words are found in the Bible and they are 100% true. Fact is, history is timeless and unchanging.

[18:13] God's truth doesn't change with the times, with the prevailing culture and times and seasons of the time. It's changeless. God's truth is changeless. For to be spiritually minded is life and peace, but to be carnally minded is death.

Pure religion, it's a lifestyle, it's a culture shift. But all that said, how can this be? Surely, we cannot find, you know, if we were humanly searching and thinking, how can this be?

How is this possible? It's made possible by a new creation. It's a new creation. How can this be? That we can be undefiled. Undefiled.

In the midst of this filthy world that we walk in, how can we live a life that is undefiled? How can we have this pure religion and undefiled? It's God's grace to us that He grants us this new life, that He gives us this purity within.

For the grace of God hath appeared to all men. It bringeth salvation, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

[19:24] You can be a testimony of God's grace. You can be pure in an impure world. You can be a Christian in a non-Christian world. You can be a testimony, a testimony to the grace of God, that you can live a godly lifestyle in the middle of a godless culture.

But it takes grace to get there. It takes grace, a new beginning, a new life. As Paul wrote to Timothy, not to let any man despise his youth, but that he should be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Purity. It's a testimony that you follow Christ that there's not a defilement. It's cleared, it's cleansed away. And how? By the fountain open for sin and uncleanness of Zechariah 13.1.

How can we find this fountain of life, the fountain that takes away our sin and uncleanness? It's by experiencing that new creation.

It's about finding Christ for yourself, personally. New life springs up to your soul. And all the dirt and grime and muck can be wiped away.

[20 : 44] The slate can be wiped clean. That's what Christ can do. And thank God for a new life. Life abundant. Life free and full. And friends, just to close, think of it today.

We've been talking about cleanliness, purity of life. That the purity, the pure religion, and undefiled, is a lifestyle. It's contrary to the world's culture.

There's a clash there. And it happens by the new birth. It happens as Christ comes and resides within us. Because the fact is, like it says in James, there's a process going on.

Every man is tempted, is drawn away of his own lust, is enticed. Then lust is conceived, it brings forth sin. And then sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

It's like a natural, subtle slide. Temptation, lust, sin, death. But Christ's blood breaks that chain. Christ's blood breaks that slide into sin and damnation.

[21 : 49] Christ's blood brings a liberty and a freedom and a cleansing and a total removal of that which is impure. Because it says in 2 Corinthians 5.21, He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The fountain is still flowing. The fountain of life. The fountain open for sin and uncleanness. It's still flowing today. Maybe you've not experienced it yet.

You've not experienced that new birth of finding a new heart, a new life, to have your heart transformed by his grace, to have that sin cleansed and taken away forever.

Eternally erased from God's memory banks, as it were, from his hard drive, so to speak, that he holds it no more against you. Every wrong thought or action or lack of action, anything that you've done or the good you've not done, he cleanses it, he takes it away, he forgives you.

And it promises us in 1 John 3 that when he shall appear, we shall be like him. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure. And friends, just to close, think of the blood today.

[23 : 10] We've heard about the blood. We've heard about Christ's wonderful act of love, of Calvary's cross. And it's meaningful for our walk.

It's meaningful for you believers today for your walk with God. It's not just a one-off thing. It's a walk. It's a life. It's a lifestyle. And it says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

And the blood, the blood, the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us, cleanseth us, cleanseth us.

It's an ongoing cleansing from all sin. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Pure religion, an undefiled, just to recap, a lifestyle to glorify God, to enjoy him forever, to have purity in your heart, in your mind, in your speech, in your conduct, in your way of life.

[24 : 13] A culture shift. It's radical to take that step of being counted, of going against the flow, of daring to stand and swim against the tide, to have that culture shift, that culture clash of finding a relationship with God that's meaningful, that's pure, that's everlasting, to find that source of truth that's absolute, 100%, and to have what it takes is a new creation, to find a new heart, to find the grace that teaches us, to find the fountain that cleanses us, to find the righteousness of God in Christ that he makes you, and to know the blood of Christ that cleanses you, even daily, as you call out to him.

Pure religion, an undefiled, you can know that this morning, by his mercy and grace, and I trust that you do, or you will do, and that we'll walk in it, no matter what the world's counter-influences can be, you can know that life everlasting, that life lived, truly lived, in him.

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