# James 1:26-27 – Pure and Undefiled Religion

*As is the case in most all my sermons I study many different outlines. This particular outline is a combination of many thoughts triggered by many sermon outlines, commentaries, etc.*

*Specific outlines read and used:*

* [*http://www.executableoutlines.com/ja/ja\_08.htm*](http://www.executableoutlines.com/ja/ja_08.htm)
* [*http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=4075*](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=4075)
* [*http://marbaniang.wordpress.com/2010/08/29/pure-and-undefiled-religion-sermon-james-127/*](http://marbaniang.wordpress.com/2010/08/29/pure-and-undefiled-religion-sermon-james-127/)

*Note: Use the Bible to verify if words in the links are truth, I can only state my derived outline is to the best of my ability truth as presented in God’s word.*

1. INTRODUCTION
   * + - 1. Many things are done in the name of the Chirstian religion

The Crusades

The Inquisition

Salem witch hunts

* + - * 1. Religion has been, is, and will always be a powerful motivator
        2. Define by Bible: Greek word G2356 – used 4 times

Acts 26:5 – Paul describing his past

Colossians 2:18 – False worship of Angels

James 1:26-27

Outline of Biblical Usage (from BlueLetterBible.org):

Religious worship, especially that which consists of ceremonies

It is the external, visible acts of worship

From James we learn it can be:

Useless

Pure and undefiled

1. Worthless Religion
   * + - 1. Uncontrolled tongue – James 3:1-12

The tongue is like the rudder of a ship and sets the course of your entire life

1 Peter 3:8-12 (Job 27:4) – Why worthless, the Lord’s face is set against you.

* + - * 1. Saul seeking to do his own will uses religion to justify his actions

1 Samuel 15:1-3 – Saul told to utterly destroy   
(notice tie back to Numbers)

1 Samuel 15:9 – Saul saved the best

1 Samuel 15:17-23 – Samuel says obedience is better than “religion”

Hosea 6:6 – God desires love, loyalty, mercy and not sacrifice, knowledge of God more than burnt offerings

Psalm 51:16-17 – God desired a broken and contrite heart over “religion”

* + - * 1. (Scribes and) Pharisees

The Pharisees followed the law of externals perfectly

they wore white clothes

worshipped at the temple

gave tithes, and

followed the law minutely

Jesus said that they were whitewashed tombs – Matthew 23:27-28

The Pharisees missed the point of the old law and therefore their externals were worthless.

James tells us there is a way to have pure and undefiled religion.

1. Pure and Undefiled
   1. Visit widows and orphans
      1. Why these two groups of people?
         * 1. Passages:

Exodus 22:21-24 – “You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.”

Deuteronomy 27:19 – “‘Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”  
(Preceding verse is about misleading a blind man down the road)

Isaiah 1:16-17 – “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”

Zechariah 7:9-10 – “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.”

* + - * 1. They need an earthly advocate, someone who cares for them!

David understood this – Psalm 68:5 calling God their protector  
“Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”

In today’s society, I strongly believe the elderly (those tucked away in homes) meets the intent and purpose of these verses

* + 1. Visit defined:
       - 1. Let us again use the Bible to define visit (G1980)

Mathew 25:31-46

Visit the sick

Again notice the theme of visiting and caring for those in situations worse than yours?

Luke 1:68,78;**7:16**, Hebrews 2:6

All point to similar thought of God visiting man

Luke 7:16 - “Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and ‘God has visited his people!’”

Acts 6:3 – “pick out” “select” “look out"  
“Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.”

Acts 15:36 – “And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.’”

* + - * 1. Outline of Biblical Usage (bullet [a] from BlueLetterBIble.org)

to look upon or after, to inspect, examine with the eyes

in order to see how he is, i.e. to visit, go to see one (the poor and afflicted, the sick)

to look upon in order to help or to benefit (to look after, have care for, provide for: of God)

to look (about) for, look out (one to choose, employ, etc.)

What it is not:

Preaching  
(qualify statement – not meaning we cannot or should not preach whilst visiting, but simply stating if the ground is not fertile, there are other reasons to continue our visits)

Sending money  
(there is a place for that – consider the “good Samaritan’s” use of money to aid the helpless – but money is not part of visiting)

* + 1. Side point – Orphan homes, should the church out of her treasury support orphan homes?
       - 1. Many use James 1:26-27 to support that activity
         2. Notice the personal pronoun emphasis of this passage and its context:

"anyone" – James 1:23

"he", "his" – James 1:23

"himself", "he" – James 1:24

"he", "this one" – James 1:25

"anyone", "he", "his", "this one's" – James 1:26

"oneself" – James 1:27

* + - * 1. Recall the definition of visit – money is not required or the focus of visiting

There are words in Greek that mean send money

Consider 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 as an example

* + - * 1. Two conclusions:

First, James 1:26-27 cannot be used as authority for the church to send money to Orphans homes

Second, individually we need to individually be visiting orphans and widows in their need.

In addition to visiting those who are without an earthly advocate, Pure and Undefiled Religion is to…

* 1. Remain unstained (unspotted) from the world
     + - 1. We discussed Language – certainly foul, hateful, coarse language is a stain of the world
         2. Stains defined: Works of the flesh – Galatians 5:19-21
         3. The works of the flesh stand in contrast to the fruits of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-24

1. COnclusion
   1. God demands your obedience
      * + 1. Someone may hear this lesson and conclude religious acts (Lord’s Supper, singing, prayer, contribution, etc.) are worthless, all you must do is focus on “loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31)

You have missed the point

Loving God and loving your neighbor are religious acts!

Did God really not want sacrifice under the old law?

True obedience demanded sacrifice

Religious acts (Lord’s Supper, singing, praying, contribution, loving your neighbor) are what springs forth from: knowledge, a broken, contrite heart, and obedience, to God

Obedience to God is how you love God (John 14:15)

Many people have issues with the rudimentary acts of worship, to some extent there is a point…

* + - * 1. If you think the religious acts of showing up to worship service, singing, praying, following along with the sermon, preaching, contribution, etc. is going to save you, you are sadly mistaken – your religion is worthless!
        2. Just as in the old law, God desires obedience not simple rudimentary observances.
  1. We can become unstained from the world
     + - 1. We can cleanse worldly stains and become pure and undefiled, through the blood of Christ!

Which can cleanse us and make us pure if we walk in the light with God – 1 John 1:7

This involves keeping the commandments of God – 1 John 2:3

By experiencing to the INITIAL CLEANSING of the blood when we obey the commands to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins – Acts 2:38

And, experiencing the CONTINUOUS CLEANSING of the blood when we confess our sins to God – 1 John 1:9

* + - * 1. We can become unstained from the world only though THE HELP OF GOD!

Who not only provides the blood of Christ to cleanse us from sin...

But also a way of escape in times of temptation – 1 Corinthians 10:13

* + - * 1. Yes, with Christ's blood and God's help, it is possible to be pure, undefiled, and unstained by the world!
        2. And this is what makes the religion of Jesus Christ UNIQUE! Only the true religion of Jesus Christ can present one "pure" in the sight of God! (John 14:6)
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