

James 1:27 – Are you a True Christian?

Poole, TSK, GreekLexicon, Reinecker, Calvin, Abbot, Barnes, Clarke, Geneva, Family, Gill, Handfuls, JFB, Henry, PNT, Robertson, Trapp, Vincent
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How do you know someone is a true Christian?

Do you think someone is a true Christian
if he says “Merry Christmas,”
votes conservative,
marries in a church building,
gives to the Salvation Army,
goes to church regularly, dresses modestly,
has an “I Love Jesus” sticker on his car,
or even reads the Bible regularly?

Recently, a **South African swimmer** who won a swimming race at the Olympics had “Glory to God alone” on her swimming cap? Can you say she is a Christian by that?

Today you will get **a summary of what God requires of one who calls himself a Christian.**

Our headings are:

True Religion is grounded on Christ

True Religion is seen in good works

True Religion is living a pure life

Our goals are: **That you will reflect on what a true Christian ought to be, and then endeavor, using God’s wisdom, to be and to live as a true Christian.**

27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

True Religion is grounded on Christ

1. It is God – Jehovah God - who determines what real religion is.

A religion is not legitimate **based on the number of the those following it.**

2. This true religion, as defined by God the Father, requires an ardent faith in God the Son, Jesus Christ, a faith created in you by God’s Holy Spirit.

So substitute true religion with true faith.

Now this faith is not abstract. That faith is based on a **knowledge of Christ’s life and death** and a **trust and assurance** that he lived and died for you. This **brings**

forgiveness of sins. This results in a heart change! This is true religion...true faith.
God then brings that man into his family by adopting him as his child.

3. This true religion (faith) must be pure and undefiled.

Pure means “clean.” There are no inventions of men in it. There are **no works required...no giving of money to the poor...no pilgrimages to holy sites!**

Undefiled means “without pollution.” So you can't say, Jesus “and” this or that will save you. **Nothing mixes with faith!**

4. You have to live this true religion before God!

He knows the heart and sees through hypocrisy. He needs to see true faith in Christ in your heart for you to be acceptable.

5. Lessons:

a. There are nice people in other religions – sometimes they are nicer than Christians, (I know many. I have relatives like this) but there is only one true religion. Without faith all my and your relatives are heading to hell.

b. Those who say they are Christians but are not fanatics, probably don't know what true Christianity is.

Don't stay close to them. Don't marry them! Teach them.

c. Those who say they are Christians but think people of other religions will be saved by Jehovah God, don't know what true Christianity is!

Don't stay close to them. Don't marry them. Teach them.

True Religion is seen in good works

1. True religion is seen in those who care about orphans in their stresses, pressures, or afflictions.

You **look out for, and take care of orphans.**

Job 29: 12 Because I delivered the poor who cried out, The fatherless and the one who had no helper.

Deuteronomy 10:18 "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.

You “visit” with the view to helping. You adopt. You help teach. You help support.

And it is true modern medicines – hospitals- higher and lower education – were all grounded in Christian compassion.

People of false religions kidnap orphans in northern Africa and sell them as slaves, but Christian look to rescue and pay for their freedom. Christians want to save them from their daily horrors.

2. Real religion is seen in caring for widows in their stresses, pressures, or afflictions.

They were in the worst positions in Apostle James’ day! There was no state assistance. But...

Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor;
Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

You “visit” widows with the view to helping. This was not simply to visit to have coffee.

3. In Toronto, it might not seem there are many orphans starving or kidnapped, and maybe you don’t see too many widows struggling to live, but there are other ways in which you show real religion – offer true help.

These might include helping recent immigrants – those living away from their loved ones. (Foreigners were usually mentioned with widows and orphans, but this was a mostly immigrant community. So there was no need to mention this.

The depressed – and there are many these day. There is a 400% increase in mental troubles from this lockdown in Canada, according to a recent study.

Those chronically ill...many can’t get treatment or tests.

Those who have been abandoned by their husband...who are practical widows.

The lonely and the elderly...including widowers. The ones who need a phone call...just to have someone to talk to...

The poor...the ones who truly need help.

Those going through marriage break-up...and many marriages are under stress these days...

Those who may have recently lost loved ones...

Consider some reminders from God's Word to care for the downtrodden.

Psalms 82:3 Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

Matthew 25:36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Even zeal by itself means nothing, absolutely nothing, without work!

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

4. So they had to prove their religion by sacrificing of themselves for the good of others (based on their faith in Jesus Christ).

They had to get their hands dirty by helping the poor. They had to be personally involved. It is way too easy to send a check. **There are no good works by proxy!**

5. Lessons:

a. I know your frustration with the lockdowns. It's been too long. But what have you done for others who were struggling more than you? You think your life is hard (and maybe it is) but there are those who are even more troubled, worried, struggling for food, medicines...

b. Ask the Lord Jesus to remind you of the cross and see him suffering in your place. If you do, you will more easily be ready to sacrifice for others! Yes, rolling back the curtains of memory is necessary...**so you could see 5 wounds he bore**...on his head, hands, and feet.

c. Warning 1: Be quiet about your Christianity if you don't intend to personally work for the kingdom. Otherwise you will give Christianity a bad name and your

Savior won't be pleased. (Faith? Yes! Works? Absolutely.)

d. Warning 2: Stop praying for God to help someone, if you have the opportunity and ability to help and but don't!

e. You must not say, "We pay the pastor to do the work." You have to do this work yourself.

True Religion is living a pure life

1. True religion is seen in valiant attempts to live a life free from worldly corruption.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This includes attempts to keep you and your family with honest and clean living.

2. Those that don't pursue true religion by living clean lives are carnal and spiritually immature.

1Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people **but as to carnal, as to babes** in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now **you were not able to receive it**, and even now you are still not able;

Carnal = fleshly. It means they were living for the enjoyment of the things of this world and ignoring spiritual things. **We get the word "carnivore,"** a meat (flesh) eating animal, from this word.

What can you learn from babies and so learn how the Corinthians were acting?

a. Babies are selfish. Babies take all your attention if they could... The more they get, the more they want. They want their needs met first.

b. Babies are ignorant; they don't know much. So the Corinthians were ignorant. They learned only the basics: Who God is, how man fell into his condition, and how man could be saved from his sins. And that was not wrong. You always start with ABC's before reading.) **But the Corinthians had not grown up and could only handle elementary things.**

After many years, they were still drinking milk. Their stomachs were not ready for

solid food – for greater progress in spiritual things...just like a baby's stomach is not ready for solid foods.

As a result, they could not be a true blessing to their families.

They could not be as helpful in the church.

That meant they hindered the kingdom of Jesus Christ from spreading.

3. Pomp and ceremonies, singing all the Christmas songs, giving gifts to the poor, and working in a soup kitchen to feed the poor are not enough; you need to have a clean and pure heart before the Lord.

4. That Christians would like a pure life was the constant prayer of the Lord and his Apostles.

They knew this was the Christian's greatest need.

John 17:15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

Jude 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

5. Lessons:

a. There are many such people who are carnal and only live to do whatever gives physical or emotional pleasure, like eating too much, drinking too much, spending inordinate time on wasteful things like sports or computer games - **acting like selfish babies.**

b. To live a pure life, you have to kneel in prayer and kneel in submission to God's Word! You have to pray knowing that your heavenly Father will hear his children's cry. You have to get a double portion of food each Lord's Day and a good portion every day. Read your Bible, pray every day, if you want to grow!

Conclusion:

True religion is based on **true faith that you only find in Christ** – faith in who he is and what he has done. And you then show that faith in **unquestioned good works** and **keeping yourself pure from sin.**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. How do you measure up? **Do you truly trust in Jesus?**

2. Then do good works. If you have had success in doing good works and remaining faithful in your Christian life, praise God. Continue to do so. If you have had failures, ask God to show you Jesus dying on the cross for you. This is your true and only motivation of doing good works.

3. And then keep yourself pure...pure in doctrine...staying close to your Savior.

4. And then tell others about it. Don't let them stay in their false religions, with no hope, and heading to hell for eternity. Love them enough to speak.

Finally, if you don't know Jesus...now is the time. You don't have a guarantee of tomorrow. Tomorrow is promised to no man. Read God's Word. Learn of Jesus and his work for sinners. Then ask God to give you faith to receive who Jesus is and what he did for sinners on the cross.