

## Is Your Religion Worthless or Pure and undefiled?

### ➤ Intro:

- R - Ja. 1:19-27 be doers of the word
- R - Ja. 1:26 “this man’s religion”
  - each Christian has a religion, because of the exercise of our faith in our own personal lives (e.g., “doers of the word” “not doers of the word”)
- What is your religion? Is your religion worthless or pure and undefiled?

### ➤ About the word “religion”

- *threseia* signifies "religion" in its external aspect (Vine’s)
  - “It means religious worship in its external observances, religious exercise or discipline, but not to the exclusion of reverence” (Robertson).
  - our “religion” is everything we do
    - assembling with the saints
    - working with the church
    - everything in daily life: family, friends, school, work, community, love neighbors, Bible study, meditation on God’s word, benevolence, etc.
- R - Ja. 1:26-27 two major types of religion: worthless, pure and undefiled – exercise of our faith in our own personal lives
- our religion encompasses everything we do, every moment of every day
  - “religion” is something that’s personal – mine, my decisions, what I do serving God every day
  - worthless: if not living the way you should
  - pure and undefiled: if living as God commands
- What is your religion? Is your religion worthless or pure and undefiled? – can’t be both

- **Only Christians can have a pure religion – where it starts**
  - **nature worshipers** (e.g., pantheists, being in tune with nature) have a **worthless religion**
    - **R - Rom. 1:21-22, 24-25** pantheism is worthless religion – vs. 26-32 homosexuality outward proof
    - must be a Christian before can have a good, pure and undefiled religion
  
- - **people who worship their own appetites have worthless religion** – slaves to own carnal appetites (bellies)
  - **R - Phil. 3:19; Rom. 16:18** worshiping own appetite (belly) is worthless religion
  - must be a Christian before can have a good, pure and undefiled religion
  
- - **people who live for money and social status have a worthless religion** – worship money, social status
  - **R - 1 Jn. 2:15-17** lustful religion is worthless – result, not live forever, eternal death
  - **Q - Matt. 6:24** “No one can serve **two masters**; for either he **will hate the one and love the other**, or he will be **devoted to one and despise the other**. **You cannot serve God and wealth.**”
  - must be a Christian before can have a good, pure and undefiled religion
  
- - **people who worship according to a denomination or other false religion have a worthless religion**
  - **R - Eph. 5:23-24a; 4:4-5** Jesus savior of body (church), body subject to Him (church), one body
    - **membership or practice of any other religion results in worthless religion**
    - illus.: denominations, cults, occult, New Age, spiritualists, etc.
  - **R - Rom. 10:1-3** Jews, zeal, not according the knowledge, trying to establish their own righteousness, lost in sin
    - **zeal and ceremonial religion not ordained by God is worthless**
  - **R - Col. 2:18-19a, 20-23** false religion is always worthless – not holding fast to head (Jesus)
    - **must worship and practice religion as God commands, or worthless**
  - must be a Christian before can have a good, pure and undefiled religion

religion: worthless or pure and undefiled, must be faithful Christian to have a pure and undefiled religion

- **As a Christian, we must be doers of God's word for our religion to be pure and undefiled**
  - **R - Ja. 1:26-27** some brethren to whom James wrote had a worthless religion, and some had a pure and undefiled religion
    - **illus.: intro, young woman and young man**, both Christians, but both not doers of the word, both not have pure and undefiled religion
  
- **- What is the difference between a worthless religion and a pure and undefiled religion?**
  - **review - vs. 21** remove filthiness and wickedness from life
  - **review - vs. 21** humbly receive word of God, live by it
  - **review - vs. 22** prove self to be doer of word, not hearer only who has deluded self
  - **review - vs. 25** effectual doer of the word
  - **review - vs. 26** bridle tongue
  - **review - vs. 27** visit widows and orphans
    - **illus.: good Samaritan**, difference between him and Levite and priest was compassion and mercy
  
- **- Words describing Christian with pure and undefiled religion – are you this type of Christian – cf. intro illus.**
  - **faithful**
    - **rf - Rev. 2:10** be faithful until death, Jesus give us a crown of life
  - **pure**
    - **rf - Matt. 5:8** blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God
  - **holy, sanctified**
    - **rf - 1 Pet. 1:15** like the Holy One who called you, be holy in all your behavior
  - **devoted**
    - **R - Rom. 12:10** devoted to one another in brotherly love
    - **R - Rom. 12:12** devoted to prayer
    - **R - 1 Tim. 5:10** devoted to every good work
  - **fervent: boiling with heat, hot, on fire**
    - **R - Rom. 12:11** fervent in spirit, serving the Lord
    - **R - 1 Pet. 4:8** fervent in love for one another
  - **zealous: uncompromising partisan**
    - **R - Tit. 2:14** zealous for good deeds
    - **R - 1 Pet. 3:13** zealous for what is good
  - **Does this describe you? Do you have a pure and undefiled religion? - worthless religion?**
  
- **- How does your religion compare to these Christians?**
  - **R - 2 Cor. 11:23-28** Paul, persecuted – beheaded – apostles – are we....?
  - **R - 2 Cor. 8:1-5** brethren in Macedonia, sacrificial giving – are we....?
  - **R - Phil. 2:25-27** Christian who delivered financial support, stayed a while and helped, almost died because of working for gospel – do we....?
  - **R - Rev. 12:10-11** Christians who refused to deny Christ and were slain – are we....?
  
- **What is "your" religion? Is "your" religion worthless or pure and undefiled? – can't be both**

religion: worthless or pure and undefiled, must be a Christian to have a pure and undefiled religion, must be doer of the word

➤ **If your religion is not pure and undefiled**

- **R - Ja. 2:14** your faith can't save you – lost in sin, doomed to eternal punishment unless you change  
- **illus.: young lady and young man in intro**

➤ - **R - Ja. 4:7-10 solution:** submit to God, humble self in His presence  
- **illus.: young lady and young man in intro**

**Inv.:** if you aren't a Christian – if you are a Christian but your religion isn't pure and undefiled because not living right

- if not a Christian

- **rf - Jn. 14:6** Jesus is the way, truth, life, no one goes to the Father except through Him

- **rf - Rom. 10:17** learning process

- **rf - Lk. 13:3** process of change

- **What must we do to be saved?**

- if a Christian but not living as God commands

- **illus.: young man in intro**

- **R - Rev. 3:19** lukewarm Christians, be zealous and repent – change attitude, change actions

- **What must we do when we sin as Christians, to be right with God again?**

- **Is your religion worthless or pure and undefiled?** – need to change so your religion is pure and undefiled?

- **It's your religion! If it needs to be changed, you're the only one who can do it!**