"TRUE RELIGION"

(When we really live the Christian Life)

JAMES 1:19-27

6-3-2020

WE NEED TO PRACTICE TRUE RELIGION (CHRISTIANITY)!

How? By following 3 sequential responses to God's Word.

I. HEAR THE WORD - SWIFTLY (v. 19 - 20)

A. DO BE EAGER TO HEAR

B. DON'T INTERRUPT

C. DON'T BE OFFENDED

II. RECEIVE THE WORD - HUMBLY (v. 21).

A. REMOVE SINFUL HINDRANCES.

B. REMAIN TENDER HEARTED

III. OBEY THE WORD - INTENTLY (v. 22 - 27)

A. THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE "HEARER ONLY"

B. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE "DOER" (v. 25 - 27)

1. He is conscientious (v. 25)
   a. He is a serious reader.
   b. He is a steady reader.
   c. He is a submissive reader.

2. He is consistent in his practice (v. 26 - 27).
   a. Doing the Word takes self-control (v. 26)
   b. Doing the Word takes sacrifice (service) (v. 27a)
   c. Doing the word takes separation.

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INTRO: The Word of God is shown in verses 19-27 by 3 figures:

1) as seed "implanted" (v. 21)
2) as a mirror (v. 23)
3) as a Law of Liberty (v. 25)

ill. of a man who knew the Bible inside out, but did nothing.

PROP: **YOU NEED TO PRACTICE TRUE RELIGION (CHRISTIANITY)!**

How? By following 3 sequential responses to God's Word.

I. HEAR THE WORD - SWIFTLY (v. 19 - 20)

A, DO BE EAGER TO HEAR

V. 19 - "swift" = quick, fast, speedy, without delay. From the Greek tachos from which we get our English word "tachometer" which measures the speed of the RPM's on a car motor.

"Swift to hear" - eager and attentive, ready to receive and assimilate the message heard.

B. DON'T INTERRUPT

"Slow to speak" - does not mean slowness in speaking; but is an exhortation to restrain hasty, wrong reactions to what is heard.

Ex. of early church - epistle was publicly read.
Others could interact and share.

I Cor. 14:26-33

"Slow" = tardy, late

note: Not late to church or late signing up to serve the Lord.

- many are anxious to speak about God, the Bible, etc., when they know nothing at all about it (Illus. RCC Ladies Bible study)

Cp. 3:1 "Be not many masters (teachers) . . . " Applic. to human relationships: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and shame unto him.

Ill. People in the Middle East love to talk but don't like to listen.

Don't be anxious to add your two cents.

God has given us 2 ears and one mouth!

C. DON'T BE OFFENDED

"Slow to wrath" - a common wrong attitude of one who is convicted by the Word and doesn't want to accept it.

"Wrath" = deep-seated anger

Illus. of Jew's anger when he was confronted with what Christ said.

Illus. - Acts 7 - Stoning of Stephen.

V. 20 -"Righteousness of God" = the right way of living (in thinking and acting) that God requires of us.

Sinful anger is **never justified**.

"Those admonished would have justified themselves by saying that they were angry on account of false teaching. But it is James' conviction that human wrath does not further spiritual ends, even when it appears in the garb of religious zeal." (Hiebert, p. 127).

II. RECEIVE THE WORD - HUMBLY (v. 21).

A. REMOVE SINFUL HINDRANCES.

V. 21 "Lay apart" = to take off, strip off. Word was used of taking off dirty clothes.

"Filthiness" = dirtiness; moral defilement.
"Filthiness" = a medical term used of built-up ear wax.

"Superfluity of naughtiness" = excess of wickedness (evil).

Ex. When we got saved, we put off the "big" sins. We emptied the cup which was full of sin. Now God calls on you to wipe off the remainder. --- those internal sins of wrong attitude.

Sin prevents you from (soaking in) taking in God's Word.
The only reason people don't come to church is sin.
If a person stays away from church for a couple of weeks, I don't look at them as backsliding, but as one who is already backslidden. He doesn't want to hear the Word, because he is clinging on to his sin.

"All" - "God is never satisfied with partial purity, partial goodness, partial righteousness." (Gaebelein, p. 50)
And any known sin in your life will block your reception of the Word.

B. REMAIN TENDER HEARTED

V. 21 "Meekness" = mildness, gentleness (it's a fruit of the Spirit). It is a humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself in a patient submissiveness to that which you don't want to hear, or like to hear.

*This word stands in contrast to the word "wrath" (v. 19, 20).

Moses and our Lord are the only two men referred to as being meek.

"Meekness" - the kind of man whose feelings and emotions are under control.
He is one who opens his heart with teachableness.

"Engrafted" - implanted.
Not referring to birth (as v. 18) but to growth.
God's word like seed has been planted into your heart. Is it growing and producing fruit? **See Mt. 13:1-9**

"Save your souls" = deliver you life! Rescue your life.

"Soul" (psucha) is the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life. "Spirit" (pneuma) relates to God.

By receiving (accepting) the Word, you are guaranteeing a life without ruin, spiritual tragedy.

III. OBEY THE WORD - INTENTLY (v. 22 - 27)

"Doer" - present tense = continual action. (a habit of life).
A key word in Deut. : DO Obey the Law!

"To whomsoever much is given, much shall be required"

It's easier to know what is right than to do what is right.

To learn and not to do is not to learn. Unless a message is acted upon, it is never learned.

Illus. - Spiritual obesity. Fat and lazy Christians (who know everything and do nothing).

"Arm-chair Quarterbacks - have all the answers but never play the game.

Ex. - The failure in Christian schools today is that the kids have no outlet to live what they have learned.

Knowledge puffs up (proud attitude) Love builds up (proper action).

V. 22 "Deceiving" = to misjudge, miscalculate. To miss the point.

You miss the whole point of God's word if you know and don't do. This is the height of foolishness.

Deceived because he thought he really benefitted. Illus. Wise man (a doer) and foolish man (one who does not do Christ's sayings). Mt. 7:24 - 29.

The gospel should have changed your life! We learn truth to live it! Not admire it, worship it, etc.
Illus. of a plow that was donated and sent to Africa. A primitive tribe did not know its purpose, so they set it up on a pedestal and worshipped it. They perverted it from its original design and purpose.

A. THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE "HEARER ONLY"

V. 23 - "Hearer" = an attender at a lecture (ex. Acts 17; Paul at Mars HIll - Greeks wanted only to hear new things).

Applic. : Going to church is not to see and hear a performance. It is to equip you to serve. You are the performers!

"A man beholding" = Gk. word for male in contrast to female. Women are more sensitive by nature. See flaws more easily. (spend more time in front of the mirror)

The Bible is like a mirror. It reflects defects, needs, areas that need change.

A hearer just likes only his ears tickled. II Tim. 4:3

V. 23, 24 - One who knows the Word but does not obey it is like:
l. a man who is lost while holding a map in his hand
2. a man who knows what is wrong with his health but does nothing about it.

Why are some people content to hear the Word and not do it?

1. They are self-deceived (v. 22). Illus. of intellectuals who lack common sense (not practical). They are deceived into thinking that knowing equals righteousness.

This is not true! Ex. The devils believe (know about God) and tremble (Ja. 2:19).

It's your actions that will one day be judged (these are undeniable).

2. They are careless.

--They take too quick a look (v. 24)
--They look without any intention of changing

Or he may:
--look with someone else in mind
--look with good intentions but never get around to doing them.

B. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE "DOER" (v. 25 - 27)

l. He is conscientious (v. 25)

a. He is a serious reader.

"Looketh into" = to bend over and look intently. To stoop down to see exactly. To examine it minutely. (ex. Bereans).

"Looketh" - the word was used in secular Greek when referring to those who were bent over looking out their windows at someone else's party.

Ex. Jn. 20:5,11 - Disciples bent over and looked intently into the empty tomb.

b. He is a steady reader.

"Continueth" = remain, stay

c. He is a submissive reader.

"Doer" - He puts it into practice.

The way to prevent forgetfulness is by practicing what you know. We remember very little of what we read, a little more of what we hear, a little more of what we see . . . most of what we practice.

Blessing is only in doing!

(the reward comes only to the doer)

Ex. of learning to ride a bike, drive a car, play trumpet, play a sport, etc. -- You can read all the books you want; you don't gain the blessing of learning how until you do it!

2. He is consistent in his practice (v. 26 - 27).

a. Doing the Word takes self-control (v. 26)

"Seem to be" - He is supposing himself to be religious. The picture here is not of a conscious hypocrite, but of a self-deceived religionist.

"religious" - one who supposedly stands in awe of God. He is one who is very interested in everything (every minute detail) that regards worship of God.

"Bridleth not his tongue" - NOTE: the picture is that of a man putting the bridle in his own mouth, not in that of another.

"Vain" = empty, hollow, useless, dead. Illus. of hollow Easter bunnies -- they look promising but there is nothing on the inside).

V. 26 What you say is an evidence of whether or not you have true religion.

V. 27 How you serve is an evidence of true religion.
How you are separated is an evidence also.

b. Doing the Word takes sacrifice (service) (v. 27a)

"pure" - clean

"Undefiled" = free from contamination (Jews were very interested in this) Ex. priest and Levites who excused themselves from helping the man who fell among thieves.

Good Samaritan had real religion!

- "fatherless and widows" are mentioned because they could never repay you.

--Real living of the Bible is serving, helping, giving, etc. to those who can't pay you back. When you give to them, this shows true, pure motives.

"Affliction" = - stress, pressure, tribulation, trouble.

Serving - Christ "came not to be ministered unto but to minister . . ."

Illus. Christ washed the Disciples feet then said, "You ought to wash one another's (Jn. 13:14) Then He said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (v. 17).

c. Doing the word takes separation.

"Keep himself unspotted from the world" -
"keep" = guard
"unspotted" = unstained
"world" = world system (see Ja. 4:4)

"In the world but not of the world"

"We reach into the world and get involved. Practice the Bible. We pull men out of the filth without swimming in it ourselves.

A doer will not have the world's mark on his life.

CONCL: l) Do you have devotions or devotion?

2) Are you playing Christianity? Is it a game?

PRACTICAL TIPS:

l. Take notes in church
2. Keep notes at home (ex. post them)
3. Take notes during devotions

l. Listen with "ears to hear"
"mind to obey"
2. Listen to see how it applies to you (don't compare self with others)
3. Examine self daily.
Take the time -- think --
"examine yourselves to see whether ye be in the faith"

1. Plan - schedule obedience to what you know
2. Be determined to practice one truth that God teaches or reminds you of each day.