

“If Any Man Among You Seem To Be Religious”

I. Introduction:

A. Things aren't always the way they seem to be (**Proverbs 14:12**).

1. Even knowing that, people focus on appearances (**II Corinthians 10:7**).
2. We have to understand that the Lord doesn't look on how things seem on the surface (**Proverbs 16:2**), He looks deeper (**I Samuel 16:1-13**, **Proverbs 15:11**, and **Hebrews 4:13**).

B. When we talk about “religious” or “religion” in this lesson, we are talking about one's worship and/or religious discipline (**Acts 26:1-5** and **Colossians 2:18**).

1. Some [many/most] appear to be servants and worshippers of God, but that appearance isn't genuine (**Jeremiah 7:8-11**, **Ezekiel 33:30-33**, and **Luke 20:45-47**).
2. This lesson, like many before and many more to come, is one wherein the overall point is that ACTIONS speak louder than words (**Titus 1:16-2:14**).

II. Body: **James 1:19-27**

A. Listening, learning, and properly doing what the word of God teaches (**Psalms 119:1-11** and **Luke 6:46-49**).

1. Real learning and application must start with a longing for, a desire to learn and practice what is right (**I Peter 2:1-2**).
2. So that learning doesn't generate just the right appearances, we have to examine our motives. Are your motives pure (**Psalms 66:18** and **Matthew 5:8**)?
 - a. Am I going to learn and do to please or impress somebody other than the Lord (**I Thessalonians 2:4-6**)?
 - b. Am I just practicing “eyeservice” [just doing things when people are watching] (**Ephesians 6:5-8**).

B. Bridle the tongue (**Psalms 39:1**, **Proverbs 18:21**, and **James 3:1-18**).

C. Realizing the vanity of faking proper religion (**Mark 7:1-13**).

1. A good show is wasted on the Lord (**Psalms 44:20-21**, **Jeremiah 23:23-24**, and **I John 3:20**).
2. He doesn't “understand” fraudulent behavior (**Luke 11:39-40**).

D. The practice of “pure religion” (**Proverbs 21:8** and **Titus 1:15**).

1. With the book of James being written to Jewish followers of Christ (**James 1:1**)...
 - a. They had a history of preying on the afflicted (**Isaiah 3:14**; **10:1-4** and **Matthew 23:14**).
 - b. To show their conversion from this mentality, they needed to visit [go see; look after; inspect with their eyes] their widows and fatherless (**Isaiah 1:16-17** and **James 2:12-17**).

2. What is it that you may have overlooked, maybe habitually, in your service to God? Now is the time to change that as they were told to do with what they habitually failed to do (**Isaiah 55:6-7** and **Micah 6:8**).

E. Unspotted from the world (**II Peter 3:9-14**).

1. This is on us to accomplish in the midst of a wicked world (**I John 5:18-21**).

2. The motivation to be unspotted from the world is the looking forward to the hope of eternal life with our Father above (**I John 3:1-3**).

III. Conclusion: Is your profession of being religiously right in truth and righteousness or is it just a show like the Israel of old (**Isaiah 48:1-22**)?