

JAMES 1:27

February 25, 2007

“**religion**” – the **external** ceremonies and practices of worship

This text is trying to move us to true expressions of **authentic** worship in our lives.

“**visit orphans and widows in their distress**”

The big principle behind this specific test is: If your life is not characterized by **love**, you are not a Christian.

Matthew 22:37-40

“**visit**” – to **care** for, to look after, to protect

- describes an attitude which is **constantly** expressing itself in **action**

“**distress**” – under **pressure**

James is saying true religion **loves** those who are in distress even when there is absolutely no earthly **benefit** for you doing so.

Mercy isn't an **option** for the believer.

Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; James 4:17

Matthew 25:31-46

True believers prove themselves to be children of their Father by demonstrating His **concern** for the helpless.

“**keep oneself from being polluted by the world**”

- Keep yourself from being **stained** by the world.

This anti-**God**, anti-Scripture, anti-truth world wants to leave its stain on you.

Daily we have to commit to watching out for the world's contamination, to renewing our **minds** by the Word of God, to accountability with other believers, to prayer, and to discipleship.

“It is not our **perfection** that proves our salvation, but rather our hating our imperfections and seeking with God's help and power to **correct** them.”

Does the characteristic **pattern** of your life reveal true faith and authentic worship?

Do you control your **tongue**?

Do you care for the **needy**?

Do you struggle to keep yourself **pure**?