

Undivided Devotion: Following Jesus as Lord in All of Life

The Letter of James

October 10th, 2021

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The Two Sides of True Devotion (James 1:26-27)

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this...” (v. 27)

1. Embracing the Vulnerable in the World

“to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,” (v. 27)

2. Rejecting the Values of the World

“and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” (v. 27)

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week’s sermon? What didn’t you understand?

Going Deeper:

2. What's the theme of verses 26-27? How do these verses connect to what James has said previously (see vv. 19-25)? What, according to James, is genuine "*religion*"? How does James' idea of "*religion*" differ from modern conceptions of this term?
3. How do verses 26-27 serve as a summary statement for the letter of James (compare 1:26 with 3:1-18; 1:27a with 2:1-26; 1:27b with 4:1-17)?
4. How does embracing the vulnerable demonstrate our devotion to God (see Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Psalm 68:5)? How does James echo the teaching of the Old Testament prophets in this verse (see Jeremiah 7:5-6; 22:3; Ezekiel 22:7; Zechariah 7:10)?
5. What does it mean to keep ourselves "*unstained from the world*" (v. 27)? What doesn't this mean? What, according to James, is "*the world*" (see 3:6; 4:1-12)? How does maintaining our distinctiveness from the world demonstrate our devotion to God (see Psalm 24)?

Application:

6. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus calls us to be both "*salt*" (to retain our distinctiveness from the world) and "*light*" (to display God's goodness to the world). Why are both necessary if we are to engage the world God's way? Why are both necessary if we are to have a transformative influence in the world? Why will doing both lead to hardship? How have you experienced this?
7. Which of these comes more naturally to you; rejecting the world's values, or engaging the world's vulnerable? Where do you need to grow?
8. Jeff listed a number of ways to engage the vulnerable at Creekside. Which of these do you feel drawn towards? What would it look like for you to do this?
9. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?