Pure Religion Sunday

November 8, 2026
Bible Passage: James 1:26-27

Fighter Memory Verse
NOVEMBER
Romans 15:13
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Big Idea: **Christianity is an inside working its way-out kind of _____.**

#1- Pure religion controls your _____ (James 1:26)

- Speech is a spiritual diagnostic tool.
- James is saying that your words REVEAL _____.
- James is building on the teaching of Jesus Luke 6:45
- Application:
  - Pure religion ***does not*** insert a filter between your heart and your mouth
    - It keeps you from thinking, so you don't speak;
    - The fuel in your heart is changed;
  - When James discusses the tongue, he is speaking to *who we*_____ _____.
    - What you are drives what you do.

#2-Pure religion cares for people on the _____ (James 1:27a)

- Pure religion has a _____ that acts
  - "widows and orphans"—James is pointing to the most marginalized people in his culture.
  - "visit"—is a powerful Greek word; it does not communicate a "drop in and look at" but to get close and care for them.
- Christians were known for their sacrificial acts of love –**because Christ's _____ love had changed their love.**
  - Agape love does not care what it gets back in return
  - Agape love not count the cost—IT JUST DOES

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#3-Pure religion cast off _____ influences (James 1:27b)

- Pure religion is a life of vertical devotion to God.
  - In the New Testament, "the world," refers to the corrupt human system—the prevailing culture, mindsets, and values that operate completely apart from, and in rebellion to, God.
- Pure religion creates a "_____" place for the weak and vulnerable.

TRUTH INTO ACTION

- **The Bridle Challenge:** Before you send a fiery text, repeat a piece of gossip, or voice a complaint this week, practice a "3-second pause" to ask: Does this reflect a transformed heart?
- **The Compassion Challenge:** Identify one person in your immediate orbit who is lonely, grieving, or struggling under economic pressure (a single parent, an isolated elderly neighbor, a foster family). Reach out to them with a concrete offer of help or quality time.



Please understand we want to help you know Jesus personally and journey with you in taking fresh steps of obedience daily for Jesus. We would love to pray with you and for you. Join us at the end of the service for prayer or send us your request on the Connect Card and we will lift them up throughout the week.

Table Talk -- Please take the time this week to process the table talk lesson in your community group or around your own kitchen table.

Warm Up: Share a funny or embarrassing time when you spoke too quickly before thinking, or when your mouth got you into a bit of trouble.

Read James 1:26-27

1. "Pure religion" tames your tongue (James 1:26).
    - In verse 26, James highlights the "tongue" as the ultimate test of someone's religion. Why do you think our speech is such an accurate spiritual thermometer for our hearts?
    - True religion changes the fuel that your heart is burning so that what comes out in your words is pure. Think about your words this past week - what did your speech reveal about what was in your heart?
    - Talk about an example or two of when words encouraged you, built you up, or filled you. What about when words had the opposite effect?
    - James mentions that a person with an unbridled tongue "deceives his heart." How can someone be deeply involved in church or religious activities and still completely fool themselves about their spiritual maturity?

2. "Pure religion" causes you to care for people with a genuine love (James 1:27a)

    - James uses orphans and widows as examples of people who should be cared for by the church. How does Matthew 25:36-40 help us understand why this is so important to the Lord?
    - "Agape" love doesn't care what it gets back in return. This is the kind of love that God has for us (1 John 4:8). Do you think it's possible for humans to love with agape love? Why or why not?

3. "Pure religion" keeps one safe from the stains of the world (James 1:27b).
    - James calls us to do two things simultaneously: dive into the mess of the hurting (visiting orphans/widows) while staying out of the mess of the culture (keeping unstained from the world). Why is it difficult to maintain both of these at the same time? What happens if a believer only focuses on one or the other?
    - The "world" isn't just a geographical place; it's a value system built on greed, status, and self-preservation. What is one specific cultural "stain" or mindset that you find trying to creep into your heart most often?

4. Think of one person in your immediate circle (a widow, a single parent, or an isolated neighbor) and send them a text or call them this week to ask how you can practically help them.
5. Identify the one area of "worldliness" you struggle with most (e.g., social media envy, harsh speech, or workplace dishonesty) and invite a trusted friend to keep you accountable to walking away from it.

Prayer: Father, thank you for the transforming power of the gospel. Thank you that it can tame my tongue and purify my love for others. Please raise up an army of people who practice "pure religion."