

Real Religion

James 1:22-24 & 2:14 – 16 ~ May 15 & 16, 2010

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it's like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

James chapter 1 verses 22 - 24 (930)

Looking into God's mirror

- ***Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church....***
Ephesians chapter 5 verse 25 (898)
- ***Serve one another in love....*** *Galatians chapter 5 verses 13 (893)*
- ***We must not engage in sexual immorality....*** *1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 8 (875)*
- ***Blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!*** *James chapter 3 verse 10 (931)*
- ***Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.***
Romans chapter 12 verse 11 (866)

Acting on what I see in God's mirror

What I do AFTER I sin (AGAIN!) makes ALL the difference

- It starts with confessing my sin to God (*1 John 1:9*)

I need to put a plan together to address this area of struggle in my life

- Bible study on the subject
- Memorize verses on the subject
- Ask other Christ-followers to hold me accountable, to ask me about this regularly & to pray for me
- I need to spend time with those who value & live out what God says about this area

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? *James chapter 2 verse 14 (931)*

- Talk is cheap. Unsubstantiated claims are worthless
- I'm not fully-devoted to Christ because of what I know or say
- I show that I'm fully-devoted to Christ through my actions
- ***Jesus said, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."*** *John chapter 13 verse 35 (823)*

MY love for other Christ-followers PROVES that I'm for real!

- ***Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring*** (giving value & dignity) ***each other.*** *Romans chapter 12 verse 10 (866)*
- ***Each of us will give a personal account to God. So let's stop condemning each other.***
Romans chapter 14 verses 12 & 13 (867)
- ***Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you....*** *Romans chapter 15 verse 7 (868)*
- ***...Live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought & purpose.*** *1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 10 (870)*

- **Encourage each other. Live in harmony & peace.**
2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 11 (889)
- **Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.** Ephesians chapter 4 verse 2 (896)
- **Don't grumble about each other....** James chapter 5 verse 9 (932)

Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" - but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? James chapter 2 verses 15 & 16 (931)

- God's not asking me to fix world hunger or the world's homeless problem
- He's asking me to be a good citizen & generous to those around me
- **Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let's show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth....**

1 John chapter 3 verses 18 & 19 (942)

Who am I suppose to help???

- God's asking me to slow down & to look at my world through eyes of faith
- **And Jesus will say, "I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me!"** Matthew chapter 25 verses 35 - 40 (756)

If I start meeting the needs of those around me, won't I be taken advantage of ??

- YES!!! God doesn't ask me to protect myself. He asks that I respond to the needs around me with a compassionate heart
- When someone takes advantage of me, they're really taking advantage of God...and they'll answer to Him one day
- Jesus was repeatedly taken advantage of...but he refused to get bitter about it & he kept on loving people by meeting their needs

If you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. James chapter 1 verse 25 (930)

More...

- What are the 1 or 2 areas that I already know God wants me to "do" something about? When will I finally get serious about this sin issue in my life?
- Purpose to start taking the steps in these areas that God is asking you to take. List each area and write out what action-steps you will take (asking someone for forgiveness, starting to study the topic in the Bible, getting counseling in this area, becoming a part of a group at Bethel that will help you in this area, getting into accountability, asking others for prayer, etc).
- Share this with a friend for prayer, encouragement & accountability.
- Spend time this week reading & thinking through the verses on this notes page. As you do this, write down what God is prompting you through each of the verses.