

# The Bulletin

## Meeks Street Church of Christ

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January 15, 2023

### **“Pure Religion”**

By Sean P. Cavender

Many people today seem to be turned off by "organized religion." They do not want to hear about the church, morality, or responsibility towards God. There is an arbitrary distinction that people have drawn between being spiritual and being religious. Being "spiritual" is portrayed as having a direct connection with Deity; while being "religious" is thought to be a useless endeavor of "going to church."

These distinctions are arbitrary and rather silly.

The Scriptures teach us about pure and undefiled religion. *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,"* (James 1:27).

Being religious is not merely equivalent to being a regular church-goer. Being religious does not mean that a person is a theologian. Being religious is something much more important - it is how you live your life in accordance with God's word. Thus, being religious is being spiritual (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:12-15).

In the context of James' epistle, he reminds us of the attitude we must first have towards the word of God. We must be "swift to hear." At all times we should be ready to hear and receive instruction from God's word because that is how we will receive the righteousness of God (James 1:19,20). Furthermore, James instructs us to put aside evil deeds, receiving the word of God that is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

The one thing that will prevent the word of God from taking full effect in our lives, thus making us a non-religious person, is wickedness. If our hearts and minds are set on wrath, anger and filthiness then we will never be as religious and committed to God as we should be.

Then James begins to really describe the attributes of the religious man in James 1:22-27.

#### **1. Be a doer of the word.**

You can listen to the word. You can appease your friends or family members by hearing the word of God and sermons that are preached. But until you become a doer and act upon those words you are deceiving yourself. *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves,"* (James 1:22). The wonderful illustration James uses is timeless. He compares a "hearer only" as someone who would look at themselves in a mirror, does not fix anything and forgets what he looked like.

However, those that are blessed will be saved are those who look into the perfect law of liberty, examine their hearts and attitudes and become doers of the work that is set before him (James 1:25). The first step in becoming a religious person is doing what God tells you to do.

#### **2. Control your tongue.**

The next aspect of being religious is controlling your tongue. *"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain,"* (James 1:26).

Being religious means it not a mere show or act, but that it must penetrate our heart which will be evident by the way we speak. James warns about a vain and useless religion. This vain and useless religion is practiced by someone who is inconsistent and hypocritical. He merely "seems to be religious" and his heart is deceived. Perhaps



what is the saddest part is that this man believes he is religious, but he is so deceived that he does not know he is wrong.

If a person who is a child of God and is a doer of the word, then he must also bridle his tongue. He must control and regulate his speech. The words that cross his lips to the stories and jokes he participates in - everything must be consistent with what God's word teaches.

If there is one thing that is able to show a person's inconsistency with what the Bible teaches, it is our speech. If we gossip, like, curse our brethren or neighbors, then we are practicing useless religion. If we do not use our speech for good, seasoned with salt, teaching others about the grace of our Lord then our religion is void (Colossians 4:6).

Our speech will show our interests - are we genuinely interested in spiritual and religious matters? Or are we so deceived to the point that we have a defiled heart and we just do not know it?

### **3. Care for those in need.**

A responsibility of every Christian is to "visit the fatherless and widows." We are to provide care, comfort and necessities for those who lack the fortune of having someone to provide for them. Christians are called to be selfless caregivers. We may provide for the needs of the needy. God has established and provided a way for those who are lonely to be a part of a family. "God setteth the solitary in families..." (Psalm 68:6).

If we are to truly be religious then we must make certain the needs of the needy are met. We are not to ignore those who are in need. God judges those people who treat the poor, widows and orphans unfairly. *"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless,"* (Isaiah 10:2).

True and undefiled religion calls upon Christians to serve those who are in need. We are to provide and see that they are cared for. We are called to have mercy upon our fellow man and be Good Samaritans, loving our neighbor as our self.

Pure and undefiled religion calls us to act. It is never self-serving, but it is about obeying God. True religion is never satisfied with a mere form of godliness, but it pierces the heart. Those who are religious, in the Scriptural sense of the word, obey God, regulate their speech and care for those in need.

Being religious is a good thing and should never be criticized. Yet, being religious also means we must be vigilant. There cannot be room for hypocrisy in our lives. We must continue to serve God faithfully each and every day.

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## ***“What Can We Do To Help Our Young People With Their Modesty?”***

By Joanne Beckley

- 1. Education!** – confront the problem before the problem exists. Teach with great regularity and boldness the principles of godly living.
- 2. Teach by example!** Titus 2:3-5,7. Live godly lives before one another and this will accomplish more than a hundred sermons and classes.
- 3. Expectation!** – We need to EXPECT those who say they are children of God to act like it!
- 4. Examination!** – It is critical that we “examine everything carefully and prayerfully, lest there be any among us who may fall short of God’s gracious gift of salvation” (Hebrews 12:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). If one among us is behaving immorally, including provocative apparel, designed to entice lustful thoughts in others, to be something less than walking in holiness – then we owe it to that person, as well as to the congregation, to call them to more responsible behavior.
- 5. Talk!** – Reason with Bibles opened when talking to a Christian who is not dressing modestly. Help them to write the meanings of important words in their Bibles and make sure they understand the words. Not only should young people be brought to an awareness of how to dress herself, but their parents also need to be educated. If such a talk is done in love, and with God’s Word as the guiding standard, then precious souls can be steered back onto the straight and narrow way of Christ.

The church is the bride of Christ. Let us honor and protect His bride!

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, and Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Danny Cottrell, Jerry Trimble, and Brandon Briggs, Jimmy Briggs, Chad Harris, Randy Ferrell (Brandi's brother in law), Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones (cancer).  
Update on Susan Farler— She is in hospice.

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Tim Harris Sr.  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** "God's School Of Life"

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Jerry Kennemur  
**Author:** Philippians  
Paul R. Blake  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #50, Question #11

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Doug George  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Danny Sheffield  
**Scripture Reading:** Romans 1:19-21  
**Song Leader:** Paul Busby  
**Lord's Supper:** Paul Busby  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #2:** "Being God Conscious"  
**Closing Prayer:** Lee Busby

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**January 18th:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Russell Briggs  
**Workbook:** The Miracles Of Jesus  
**Author:** Mike Willis  
**Starting Page & Question:** Page #68, Question #1  
**Invitation:** Doug George  
**Song Leader:** Brian Meade  
**Closing Prayer:** Blake Briggs



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# **“God’s School Of Life”**

Lesson Text: **Psalm 143:10.**

## **I. Consider The Teachers, The Text, And The Students.**

- The Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.
  - **Isaiah 54:13; John 6:44-45; John 14:26; 1 Timothy 4:1.**
  - God Is A Qualified Instructor.
    - 1 Timothy 2:4; Job 21:22; Romans 11:34.**
- The Church Edifies Itself Under God’s Direction.
  - **Ephesians 4:11-15.**
- The Students (Disciples).
  - **John 8:31-32; Mark 16:15-16.**

## **II. The Valuable Life Lessons We Learn From God.**

- The History Of Man.
  - How Things Came To Be: **Genesis 1-2.** Beginning of Man And All Animals.
  - 1st Marriage; 1st Children born; 1st Temptation; 1st Sin, 1st Murder, 1st Offerings, 1st Farmer; 1st Musician; 1st Craftsman; 1st Flood; 1st Rainbow; 1st Covenant....
- Wisdom And Knowledge.
  - How To Succeed In Life- **Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-7.**
  - Avoid Foolish Behavior- **Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 17:28.**
  - Receive Corrective Discipline- **Proverbs 10:17; 17:10.**
- Good Work Ethics In Life.
  - **Ecclesiastes 9:10; Proverbs 6:6-11.**
- Marriage And Family.
  - **Ephesians 5:22-33.**
  - **Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 22:6.**
- Righteousness, Purity, & Holiness.
  - **Psalm 23:3; Proverbs 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:16.**
  - **2 Corinthians 7:1.**
  - God Teaches Us Self- Control.
    - Galatians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 9:27.**
- The Rewards Of Being A Good Student.
  - **Psalm 119:98-100.**
  - **Proverbs 11:5; 12:28; James 1:25.**

## **III. The Final Exam And Graduation Day!**

- A Day Of Final Testing.
  - **Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10.**
  - **Matthew 25:31-46.**

# ***“Being God Conscious”***

Lesson Text: **Romans 1:19-21.**

## **I. Being God Conscious In All Our Thoughts.**

- **Question:** How Often Do We Think About God In Our Day?
- **Romans 8:6.**
- Contrast: **Psalm 10:4** With **Psalm 119:54-55.**

## **II. Being God Conscious In All Our Actions.**

- **Proverbs 3:5-6.** *“In All Our Ways.*
- Sin Can Have Dominion Over Us.... **Psalm 119:133; Romans 6:12.**
- To Whom Are We More Conscious? **Romans 6:13.**
- That’s How Many Leave God- **Romans 1:28-32. (Genesis 6:5).**
- The Righteous Are Conscious Of What Does  
And Does Not Please God! **2 Corinthians 5:9.**

## **III. Being God Conscious In Our Speech.**

- Filthy Talking Doesn’t Consider God- **Ephesians 5:4;**
- Especially, Profaning God’s Name.
  - **Deuteronomy 5:11; Psalm 30:4; 111:9.**
- We Must Be Conscious Our How We Talk Before Others.
  - **Psalm 39:1; Colossians 4:6.**

## **IV. Being God Conscious In Our Plans.**

- **Luke 12:16-21.**
- **James 4:13-15.**

## **V. Being God Conscious In Our Accountability.**

- **Ecclesiastes 11:9– 12:1; vs. 13-14.**

## **VI. How To Increase Our Level Of God Consciousness.**

1. By Drawing Near To God Everyday.
  - Studying the Word **Psalm 119:114-120.**
  - Worship God **Hebrews 10:22-24.**
2. By Loving God More Everyday.
  - **1 Peter 1:8-9.**
3. By Embracing Our Identity In Him.
  - **Colossians 2:6.**
4. By Being Thankful To God For Everything.
  - **Colossians 3:16-17.**