

Lecture 12 – James 2: Good Works Demonstrate True Religion

If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:26-27

Key Terms

True religion, favoritism, worldliness, law

Lecture Objectives

- Describe the relationship between “true religion” and works
- Outline the pastoral concerns that James is addressing in chapters 1 and 2

Preliminary Questions

- What are some ways that our behavior or attitudes reflect our beliefs? What are some examples from your experience?

James 2: Good Works Demonstrate True Religion

I. Introduction to James 2

A. Seamless transition from 1:27

II. Favoritism: (Example of True Religion; 2:1-13)

A. The concept of favoritism

1. A church scene
2. Defined & explained
3. _____
4. _____

B. The folly of favoritism (2:1-7)

1. Favoritism is false judgment; it contravenes God's determinations
 - a. Example of Jesus
 - b. _____
2. Favoritism gets at all three aspects of true religion. (5-7)
 - a. Favoritism uses tongue to hurt the poor; true religion controls the tongue (2:3, 5; 1:26).
 - b. Favoritism harms, insults poor; true religion helps them (2:5, 1:27,)
 - c. Favoritism is worldliness (2:6,7); true religion is keeping oneself unstained by the world (1:27)

C. The stakes in favoritism 2:8-11

1. Connection of favoritism with the royal law (v. 8)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. Break this law and you become guilty of breaking the whole.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
3. Unified character to God’s law. Example: lying.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

- e. _____
- 4. Therefore, obedience to law is all or nothing (v.10)
- 5. Yet...mercy triumphs or boasts (*katakauchátai*—verse 13) over judgment
- 6. Summary: what is faith?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____