

Sermon Notes

Theme: Our relationship with God has tremendous implications for our relationship with each other. Especially in the area of mercy and compassion, God calls us as Christians to extend ourselves to those who need such.

James 1:26-27 (NIV)

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.

An outline of the passage:

1. Worthless religion
2. Biblical and God-honoring religion
 1. The call to care about others
 2. The call to extend grace and compassion to those who are powerless. We are to be God-imitators. Even more, we are to express God's passion and character in our actions to others.
 3. The call to maintain integrity in our commitment to Christ

A parallel from the Law of Moses

Deuteronomy 10:18 (NIV)

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

A poetic perspective on the nature of God

Psalms 68:5 (NIV)

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

A parallel prophetic perspective on religion

Micah 6:8 (NIV) **He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**

So you must ask yourself:

- a. Where do you have vital relationships with other believers (we call that "fellowship?")
- b. In what ways do you extend (God's) grace and mercy to others?
- c. How do you live as children of God rather than simply people of the world who do not care?