

1. It is necessary to practice what the Lord has told us, otherwise we are lying to ourselves (1:22-24).
 - a. The Greek word translated as “religion” is *threskeia*. The word means “the doing of ceremonies or practices in service of a deity. The word “religion” is based on the Latin word *religare*, which means “re-binding.” The word “religion” speaks to a bond between the devotee and the deity.
 - b. The letter of James offers a religion that “binds” or presents “practices” that the believer must take up in her effort to please God. James is concerned with orthopraxy (right practice) rather than orthodoxy (right belief).
 - c. Here, the right practice of religion is both to hear what the word of God says and then do it.
 - d. Hearing the word of God without doing it is akin to forgetting what you look like. If you hear the truth of God’s word but you never try to do it, then you are unaware of who you are supposed to be. You have an identity crisis.
2. The key to being effective in the work of God is persevering to see God’s work completed (1:25).
 - a. Practicing God’s word, submitting oneself to God’s perfect law, the love of God and neighbor, requires perseverance.
 - b. You will mess up with the word of God, but you must always come back to do it over and over again. Then, and only then, will you be blessed with what God wants to give you.
3. Good religion is in what we do, in our speech, helping the poor and weak, and remaining holy. (1:26-27).
 - a. With these concepts established, James challenges the believer to one, bridle her tongue. You cannot be reckless with what you say to people and be properly religious.
 - b. You cannot be properly religious and be unwilling to help the weak, particularly widows, orphans, and other people who are impoverished.
 - c. You cannot be properly religious and not practice holy living. If there is no difference between the way you live and the way other people live besides your going to church, then there is a problem.