

What Religion Means To The Christian Matthew 16:24-27

The service & adoration of God or the supernatural expressed in forms of worship; commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance

Right/wrong sincere/insincere true/false useful/vain

Matthew 15:9 *'But in vain do they worship ME, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'*

James 1:26-27 *If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*

Test of "religion": What difference does it make in your life?

The Eunuch went "rejoicing" **Acts 8:39**

The Jews were "praising God" **Acts 2:47**

Paul was "...ready...to die...for the name of the Lord Jesus" **Acts 21:13**

It Means Purity Of Life

Titus 2:11-14 *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

Begins w/pure heart

Matthew 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

Heart is purified by faith

Acts 15:9 *and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.*

1Peter 1:22 *Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,*

Purity in life is shown by:

Thoughts

Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

Proverbs 23:7 *For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.*

Speech

Ephesians 4:29 *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

James 1:26 *If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.*

Actions

Philippians 2:14-15 *Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,*

1Thessalonians 5:22 *abstain from every form of evil.*

It Gives A Sense Of Direction

In life, most people want good health, homes, children, security, etc

In which direction do we want our life to go? Religion should cause you to want to be a Christian; to set a good example; to go to heaven

Causes us not be friend of world

James 4:4 *You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

1John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

Follow Christ with conviction & purpose brings a sense of well being

It Takes Away Fear Of Defeat And Gives A Spirit Of Victory

Note the seeming contradictory ideas involved

Victorious by surrender; rest by working

Matthew 11:28-30 *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

Life through death

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

Find our life by losing it

Matthew 16:25 *For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

Freedom by service

Romans 6:16-18 *Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

Jesus set the example

Matthew 26:39 *And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."*

We can be victorious in our fight

2Timothy 4:7-8 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

1John 5:4 *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

Even victory over death

1Corinthians 15:54-58 *But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

It Is A Challenge

Too many have given up the challenge (they "use to be Christians")

Some think have "arrived" & are lulled into complacency

Revelation 3:17 *Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,*

Most concerned about things rather than death

Matthew 16:26 *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Luke 12:16-21 *And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

Must use for God's glory

1Corinthians 6:20 *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

It Is Refuge And Security

Hebrews 13:5 *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"*

In a changing, transient world need a place of security - Christ

He is able to keep that which we give him

2Timothy 1:12 *For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

Give a boat, it comes back full of fish

Give water, it comes back wine

Give a boy's lunch, He feeds 5,000 with leftovers

We must plant and water but God gives the increase

1Corinthians 3:6 *I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.*

Give ourselves to Him completely, he becomes our keeper & helper

Surrender whole being

Matthew 22:37 *And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*

Trust him at all times

Proverbs 3:5 *Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.*

Let his word be our authority

2Timothy 3:14-17 *You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

Our bodies and minds must be His servants

Romans 6:16 *Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?*

Romans 12:1-2 *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

What does your religion mean to you?

If not true religion "Christianity" it means little in respect to eternity

Our religion must have meaning, but meaning from a scriptural viewpoint or it is meaningless

Matthew 15:9 *'But in vain do they worship ME, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'*

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