

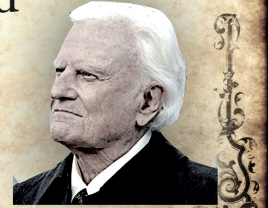
THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

James 1:26-27
Lesson #7
True Religion
04/11/2021

“There are few things worse than bad religion and there are few things better than good religion.”

Billy Graham



1

What constitutes “**Good Religion**” from a Biblical perspective?

- Bible based - “**in the Word**”
- Holy living - **live a morally disciplined life following the moral code of Scripture.**
- Spiritual fellowship - **involved in a church that preaches sound doctrine.**
- Great Commission - **win others to faith in Christ.**



- **Promote the kingdom - transform the culture of the nation.**

2

What constitutes “**good & bad religion**”?

Jesus addresses this issue.

Prodigal & his brother (Lk.15:25-32)

Pharisee & Publican (Lk.18:9-14)

Ungrateful servant (Matt.18:21-35)

Eight Woes to Pharisees (Matt. 23:13-36)

Final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46)

The Apostles address this issue.

Ephesians 4

Romans 12

2 Timothy 3

1 Peter 2

James 1:26-27

3

Context

James 1:22

“But prove yourselves **doers** of the word, and not merely hearers who **delude** themselves.

Delusion #1

Orthodox knowledge and confession is enough. Orthopraxy is optional.

Delusion #2

Orthopraxy defined as: Show up, shut up, cough up, act busy, look holy, and spread the good news.

4

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.

The source of deception

27 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.”

The signs of defilement

5

“Religiosity” exposed

“deception”

**Starts with how we talk
to ourselves and each other.**

“defilement”

**What we
choose to
ignore**



**What we
choose to
embrace**

6

“Religiosity” exposed

“deception”

**Starts with how we talk
to ourselves and each other.**

“defilement”

**Detachment
from other’s
PLIGHT**

**Attachment
to the world’s
PERSPECTIVE**

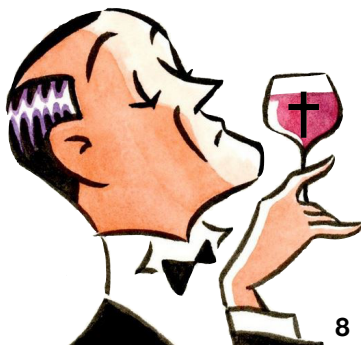
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Religiosity

“Religion is about orthodoxy,
optimism, and optics.”

“I am a member
of the church of
the good looking
sheep.”

“God is blessed
to have disciples
like ME!”



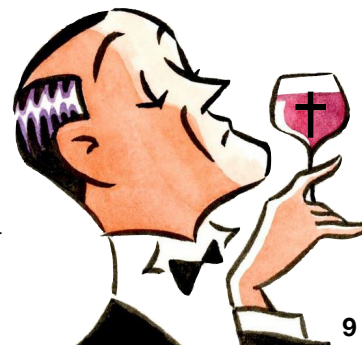
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Religiosity

It is more talk
than walk.

The walk is more
superficial than
compassionate.

The values are
secular, disguised
as religious.



9

2 Timothy 3

“¹ But realize this, that in the last days
difficult times will come. ² For men will be
lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful,
arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents,
ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable,
malicious gossips, without self-control,
brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous,
reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather
than lovers of God; ⁵ **holding to a form of
godliness**, although they have denied its
power; and avoid such men as these.”

**Religiosity is
form & optics without substance & Spirit.**

10

“Fundamentalism has fallen
into the error of textualism,
which is simply orthodoxy
without the Holy Spirit -
“Bible taught” but
not “Spirit taught.”



A.W. Tozer

11

“Holiness, as taught in the Scriptures, is not based upon knowledge on our part. Rather, it is based upon the resurrected Christ indwelling us and changing us into His likeness.”

A.W. Tozer



12

“Truth that is not applied is no better than error and may be a whole lot more damaging. The Devil is a better theologian than any of us and is the Devil still.”

A.W. Tozer



13

Romans 12

From the Word to the Way of the Cross

vs 1a

1. Grace of God deeply sensed

vs 1b-2

2. Cross of Christ willingly carried

vs 14-21

6. Response to the world graciously offered



vs 3-5

3. Body of Christ rightly discerned

vs 9-13

5. Love for the brethren openly shown

vs 6-8

4. Gifts of the Spirit properly used

Paul's Great Commission

14



The Word of the Cross

Romans 12

“¹ I urge you therefore, 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**. ² And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that you may prove what the will of God is**, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

15



The Way of the Cross

Romans 12

“¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷ Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. . . . ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

16

“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.”

Close the doorway to deception

• **Speaks truth and grace to oneself & others.**

Psalm 42:5

“**Why are you in despair**, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? **Hope in God**, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence.”

Ephesians 4:15

“but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,”

17

Luke 6:45

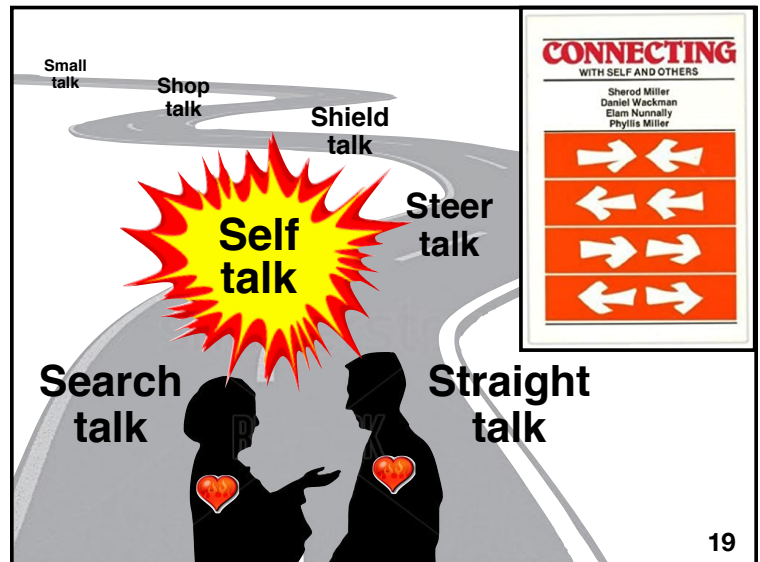
"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; **for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.**"

The way we speak to ourselves & others:

- Will reveal the condition of our heart.
- It is one of the greatest influences shaping the conduct of our life and that of others.

*It is putting our heart
"on record".*

18



19

*Be careful what you say
to yourself because
your soul is
listening.*



*The worst lies
that we tell are the
ones we tell to ourselves
about ourselves and God.*

20

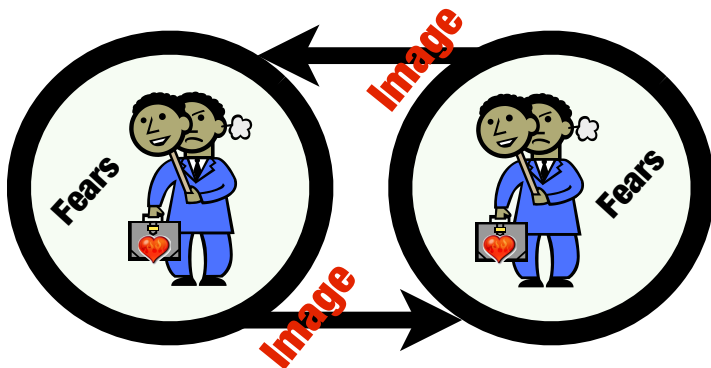
**Shame & Blame
Pride & Defense**



*"God is not there,
is not fair, and
does not care."*

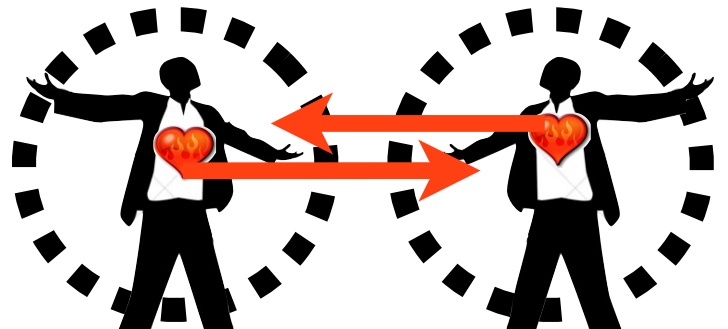
*"If God loves me He will
keep my commandments."*

21



When my image and fears relate to your
image and fears we may feel safe but
we are not connecting

22



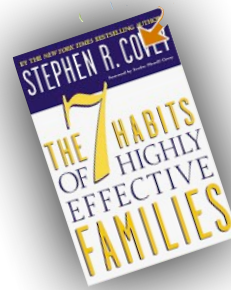
Don't just communicate with your heart
but from your heart.

23

How do you respond to the ideas and feelings of others with whom you disagree?



24



Making a family covenant - purpose and core values

We covenant as a family to make effective communication a priority which means that:

- ✓ We will be **honest** in our interactions (not deceptive, manipulative, or self-protective).
- ✓ We will **make it safe for others** to be effective communicators by empathetically listening to their minds and hearts.

25

“27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: **to visit orphans and widows in their distress,**”

We are defiled by

what we choose to ignore

those who bear God's image but are disrespected

Undefiled religion chooses:

Empathy expressed in Compassion

26

“27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: **to visit orphans and widows in their distress,**”

Empathy is a path of **worship.**

Matthew 25:40

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, **to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.**’ ”

27

When asked about her ministry as a social worker she replied,
“My ministry is not social work, it is worship. My care for the suffering is my love for Jesus.”

Mother Teresa



28

Empathy is the front door to the house of human ethics.

To enter by any other way is to never quite be at home there.

29

Matthew 22

“³⁶ You shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart**, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, You shall **love your neighbor as yourself**. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

The “**Golden Rule**” finds expression in all major religions.

30

It is an important attribute of God.

Psalms 56:8

“You have taken account of my wanderings; put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?”



31

It is the essence of the Incarnation.

Matthew 1:23

“And they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, “God with us”.”



32

Jesus’ ministry shows us God’s Empathy.

Hebrews 4:15

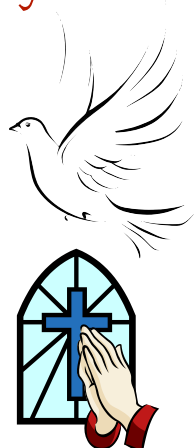
“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

33

The Spirit’s ministry is Empathetic.

Romans 8:26-27

“And in the same way **the Spirit also helps our weakness**; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”



34

Philippians 2

“⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

35

Humility is
not thinking less of ourselves
but thinking of ourselves less.

Narcissism is
thinking about how our
behavior will make us look.

Empathy is
thinking about how our
behavior will affect others.

36

***“If you find yourself saying
‘But I’m just being honest’,
chances are you’ve just
been unkind.***



***Honesty
doesn’t heal.
Empathy does.”***

*Dan Waldschmidt
(Business Strategist)*

37

*“²⁷ 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.**”*

We are defiled by

**what we
choose to
embrace**



**This will be
the subject
in the lesson
next week.**

38

Virtues
*are **gifts** that come to us with God’s image
along with **choices** from that same image.*

Empathy
*may come more **naturally**
to some human temperaments.*

*But all of us can **choose** to put ourselves
in another’s shoes and put their welfare
ahead of ours.*

***It starts with how we
talk to ourselves.***

39

James 1

*“¹⁹ This you know, my beloved brethren.
But everyone must be **quick to hear**, slow
to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰ for the
anger of man does not achieve the
righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore, putting
aside all filthiness and all that remains of
wickedness, **in humility receive the
word implanted**, which is able to save
your souls. ²² But prove yourselves
doers of the word, and not merely
hearers who **delude** themselves.”*

40