



Bethany Bible Study & Discussion

James (Part-3) (Chapter 1 & 2)

PURE RELIGION, PURE LOVE & PURE FAITH

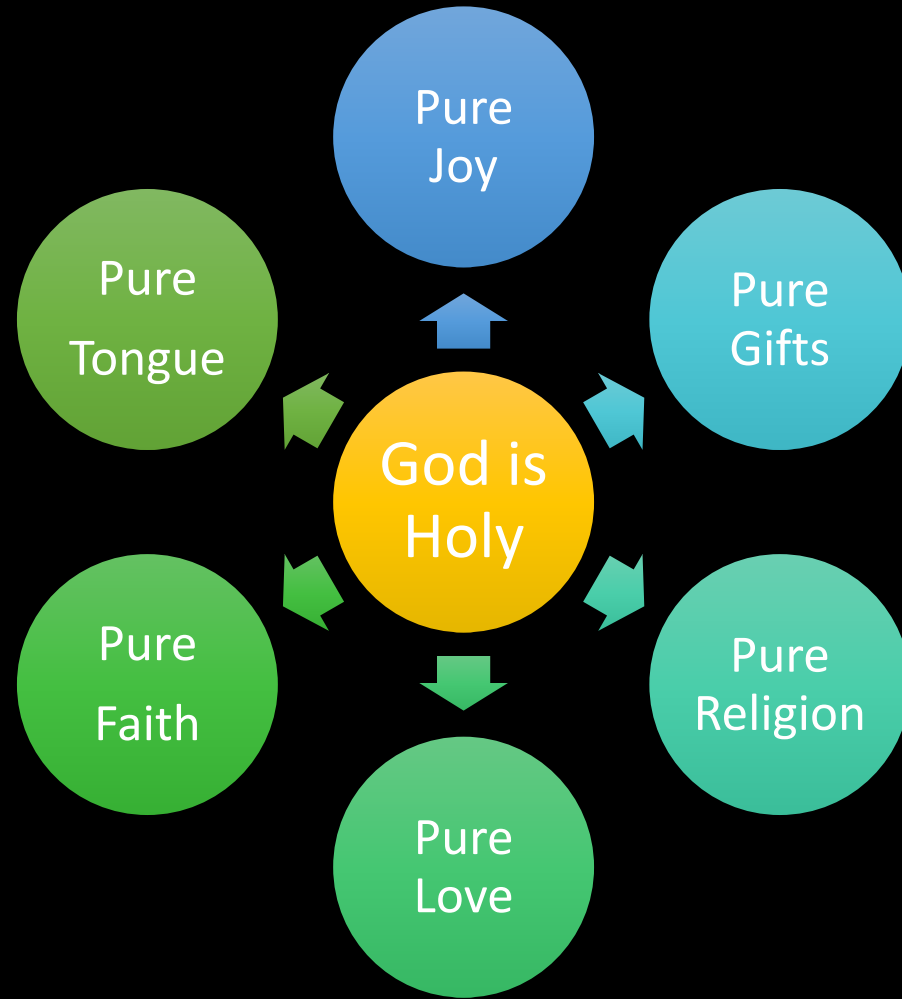
PURE Religion (1:26-27): What are two types of religion? Which religion is useless? What comprises pure religion? How does pure religion honor the two greatest commandments?

PURE Love (2:1-13): What is the title given to Jesus? What is the setting for this passage? Who are the two types of people mentioned? How is partiality demonstrated? Why is it irrational to favor the rich? Should we favor the poor? What is the royal law? Is it a sin to be partial and discriminate? What are some areas of partiality? What do we mean by transgression? Are we guilty of transgression? Why must we show mercy? Where must impartiality begin?

PURE Faith (2:14-20): How are faith & works connected? What must come first? What must follow? What is wrong with "strong believers" displaying zero works? What are some examples of works? What will outsiders have to say about us as individuals/family/church in the area of faith + works? **Abraham & Rahab (2:21-26):** Compare and contrast Abraham and Rahab. How was faith perfected in both their cases? What is common about 'body without spirit' and 'faith without works'? Are we justified by faith/faith + works/works?

Application: Our perception impacts our behavior ... with what lens are you seeing people? Do you need a new lens?

James 1 & 2



PURE RELIGION

Religion rendered useless

²⁶ If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain

By uncontrolled tongue

Pure religion

²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Pure religion is centered on love.

Pure religion fulfills the two greatest commandments,

Loving God (by maintaining a spotless testimony) and

Loving others (by being sensitive to the needy, such as fatherless & widows)

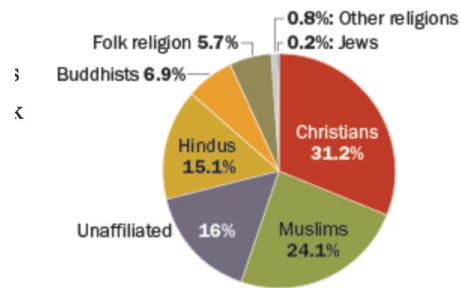
Psalms 68:5 A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, *Is* God in His holy habitation

Great Commission:

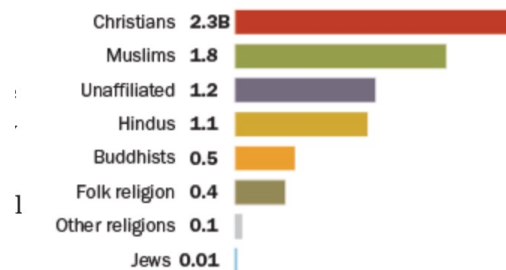
How can we increase the % of Christians?
(2015 world data)

Christians are the largest religious group in 2015

% of world population



Number of people in 2015, in billions



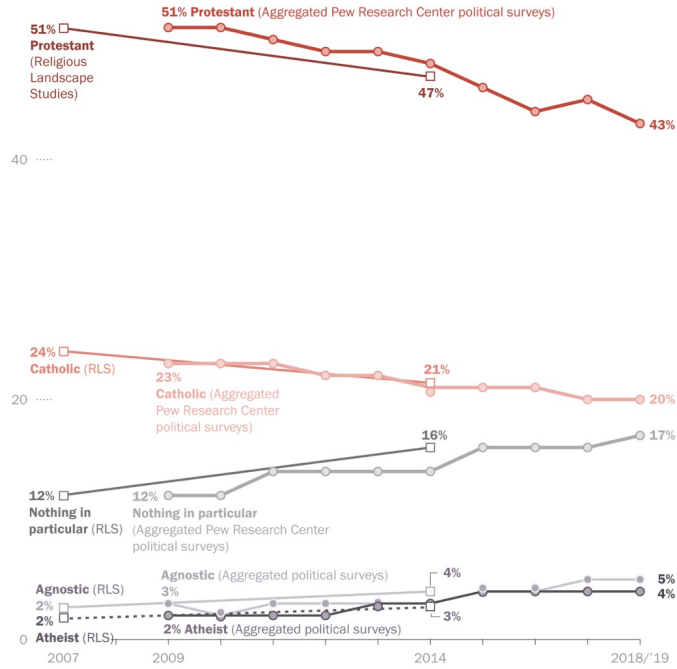
Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections.
See Methodology for details.
"The Changing Global Religious Landscape"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Region	Christians	Muslims	Unaffiliated	Hindus	Jews	Buddhists	Folk
North America	74.6%	1.3%	19.2%	0.8%	1.6%	1.2%	0.4%
Latin America-Caribbean	89.7%	0.1%	8.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	1.8%
Europe	72.2%	6.8%	20.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Middle East-North Africa	3.6%	93.1%	0.6%	0.6%	1.6%	0.2%	0.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa	62.0%	31.4%	3.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	3.2%
Asia-Pacific	7.2%	25.7%	20.0%	26.0%	0.1%	11.3%	8.6%
World	31.0%	25.0%	15.6%	15.2%	0.2%	6.6%	5.6%

Protestants and Catholics shrinking as share of U.S. population; all subsets of 'nones' are growing

% of U.S. adults who identify as ...



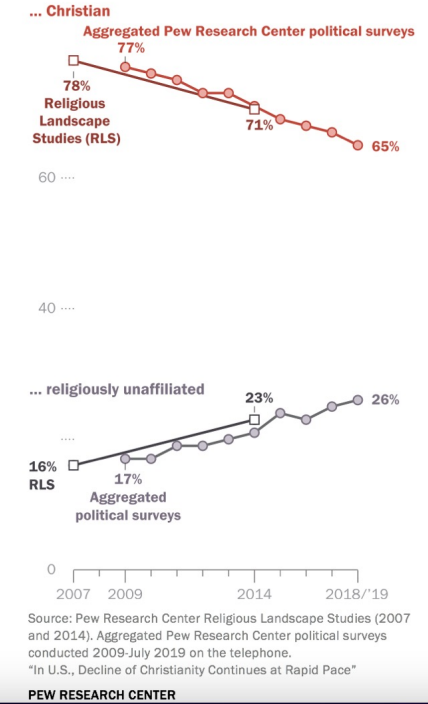
PEW RESEARCH CENTER | OCTOBER 17, 2019



In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace

In U.S., smaller share of adults identify as Christians, while religious 'nones' have grown

% of U.S. adults who identify as ...



2019 US data, Pew Research Center

PURE LOVE

Pure Love (2:1-13)

1. What is the title given to Jesus?
2. What is the setting for this passage? Who are the two types of people mentioned? How is partiality demonstrated?
3. Why is it irrational to favor the rich? Should we favor the poor?
4. What is the royal law?
5. Is it a sin to be partial and discriminate? What are some areas of partiality?
6. What do we mean by transgression? Are we guilty of transgression?
7. Why must we show mercy?
8. Where must impartiality begin?

Introduction (1-2)

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. ² For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

- Title for Jesus = Lord of Glory (Shekinah, divine glory) (1)
- Setting = Synagogue (first believers (Jewish converts) must have met there) (there was no physical church for believers) (2)
- Two types of people: Rich & Poor (2)
 - How did the assembly make the distinction?
 - How did that influence their behavior?

Social injustice & discrimination

Our behavior is often influenced by our vision, biases, and perception of people:

Wealth

Social Status/Position

Race, Color, Gender

Language

Past interactions

etc.

But God looks at us differently

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see as man sees*; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the **Lord looks at the heart.**” (1 Samuel 16:7)

"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

— Martin Luther King, Jr. / "I Have A Dream" speech, August 28, 1963



James had a *similar* dream like MLK, Jr.

Partiality demonstrated

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

Should we favor the rich or poor? (5-7)

⁵ Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? ⁷ Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

- Why favor the rich?
 - They oppress us and drag us to courts
 - They blaspheme
- Why do we tend to favor the rich and influential people?
- Should we favor the poor?
- He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great (Psalms 115:13)

Some
examples of
partiality

?



Is partiality a
sin?

What is sin?

Sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4)

- We cannot be selective in deciding what laws we want to obey
 - Guilty of one means guilty of all (10,11)
- **OT laws:** Ceremonial laws, Dietary and Moral laws
- **NT law:** Ceremonial/Dietary laws fulfilled in Christ (Colossians 2:16-17); we are responsible for moral laws

Partiality
violates God's
character

For the Lord your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality. **Deuteronomy 10:17**

God is no respecter of persons, **Acts 10:34**

Partiality violates the Royal law (8)

- **Royal law**
 - you shall love your neighbor as yourself:
 - Does not describe the neighbor as rich or poor
- **Jesus elevates the royal law**
 - A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another (John 13:34)
 - Paul applies this to marriage ... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25)

Partiality
disrespects
others, God's
creation

- God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)
- but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (Philippians 2:3)

CONCLUSION:

Partiality is a sin

- It violates God's commandment to love our neighbors
- It is not consistent with the character of God
- It is disrespectful to fellow humans created by God

- **How must we respond to Sin?**
 - Confess to God
 - Seek Forgiveness and Reconcile



Where must impartiality begin?

Home
Church
Work/School
Community

Application:

Pure religion &
Pure love

Our perception impacts our
behavior ... with what lens do
we see/judge people?

Do we need a new lens?

