

Real Religion 4

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Religion makes us live from the “outside-in,” rather than the “inside-out.”

Romans 7:22 - For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. NKJV

What motivates our actions is equally important as the actions themselves.

Religion motivates actions through:

- Fear
- Self-righteousness

God intends that we “live out of our hearts” based upon a relationship with Him born of love and not through the superficial external pressure of religion.

James 1:27 - Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. NKJV

“Real religion” is when you live out of your heart and what you believe governs your **everyday life**.

“Real religion” is expressed by **living out** of a **giving heart** to those in need.

The principle expression of love is to **GIVE**.

Love without **giving** is like rain without wet.

John 3:16-17 – ¹⁶ For God **so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world **to condemn the world**, but that **the world through Him might be saved**.**

God **so** loved.

Christians have been conditioned to give **externally**, rather than from the outflow of their hearts.

II Corinthians 9:6-8 – ⁶ But remember this-if you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. ⁷ Everyone must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. **Don't force anyone to give** more than he really wants to, for **cheerful givers are the ones God prizes**. ⁸ God is able to make it up to you [the cheerful givers] by giving you everything you need and more so that there will not only be enough for your own needs but plenty left over to give joyfully to others. **TLB**

Most Christians have been conditioned to give by **guilt** or **greed**.

GUILT

- Today the house of God lies barren.
- Today the cupboards of God are bare.
- Today children are starving.
- Yet today, you have a warm place to sleep and food to eat.
- The wrath of God will soon come upon those who put themselves before the Almighty.
- Either give your money or God will take it out of your hide.

GREED

- Today we are going to receive a special offering that must be given in multiples of 7s.
- 7 is the number of God.
- When you give, we are going to place your offering upon this altar.
- We are going to pray and then go to Israel and pray for you in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- For those who give in the next 14 minutes, God is going to double the blessing.
- For those who do not give—all your troubles and sorrows from this time forward are a result of your disobedience and rebellion toward God.

The Apostle Paul's life was governed by his desire to bless others.

I Corinthians 3:10 - **According to** (*gr.kata*) the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. **NKJV**

- Kata – subjugated or dominated by the Grace of God
- This denotes that Paul had to surrender to the grace of God given to him.

- We are to “take heed” to the “grace” subjugating or dominating us and build according to that grace!

Paul yielding to His grace:

- Paul left Corinth and traveled to the port city of Cenchreae and sailed across the Aegean Sea and landed in Ephesus.
- From Ephesus he started the church in **Smyrna**, then **Pergamus**, then **Thyatira**, then **Sardis**, then **Philadelphia**, then **Laodicea**, then **Miletus** and **Colossae**.
- From Ephesus all of Asia Minor heard the Word of God.

Acts 19:10 - This went on for two years, so that **all the Jews and Greeks** who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. *NIV*

The call and grace upon our lives demand that we **abandon the present**, to **embrace our grace**.

We will all be tempted to remain in Corinth, even when it is troubled.

We often chose predictable mediocrity over the risk of abandonment to the grace of God.

We forfeit great measures of power when we remain in Corinth.