

## Pure Religion #1-A

Text : **James 3: 1-12 ; Matthew 12: 33-37**

**A. Our nation is at a point in time when civil discourse has vanished.**

S#1.  
S#2.

1. Political correctness went to an extreme which became intolerable to most.
2. In reaction the pendulum has swung too far the other direction.

**B. The entire election process went in a very uncivil direction.**

1. The discussion of issues took a backseat to personal attacks.
2. The truth on any issue seemed to be irrelevant, especially if it was disadvantageous.
3. Nothing was out of bounds if it hurt the other candidate or party.

**C. Now that the election is over the losers refuse to accept the democratic outcome.**

1. The ongoing resistance is even more aggressive than was the campaigns.
  2. The language is harsh and increasingly foul. ( national discourse distasteful ) S#3.
- \* *People with poor communicative skills must reduce to profanity to express themselves.*
3. When nasty words failed to achieve their goals, the resistance has turned to violence.
  4. Such is to be expected when rhetoric is allowed to run uncontrolled by civility.

**D. We find it easy to look down our noses in condemnation of such worldly conduct, but sadly the same situation has sometimes developed in congregations.**

1. Those weak in the faith are often easily offended by unloving words.
2. Even brethren once strong in the faith have been slain by malicious words.
3. A congregation just south of us disbanded over such evil use of the tongue.
4. People in this community have been offended by the unkind words of our brethren.

**E. With this lesson we will observe that :**

S#4.

1. Our words define the validity of our religion or lack thereof.
2. Words are more powerful than a sword.
3. God requires that we control the words that come out of our mouths.
4. Words provide a standard by which we are judged.

**Primary Text :**

**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.**

S#5.

**I. Our words define the validity of our religion or lack thereof.****S#6.****A. In our modern era the word “religion” has a negative connotation.****S#7.**

1. *I believe in God and accept Jesus as savior, but I want no part of organized religion.*
2. A few years ago it was popular to say, “*I’ll take the man, but not the plan.*”
3. Such people want to feel good about themselves without living with any restrictions.
  - a. If they’re a part of a church they are supposed to attend and to participate.
  - b. They do not want to be held to any standard of beliefs. (***I believe that ...***)
    - \* *Today many do not even know what doctrines “their church” teaches.*

**B. In our text the word “religion” is not in reference to a church or denomination.**

1. Religion { *threskeia* } 1 religious worship. 1A esp. external, that which consists of ceremonies. (***Performing acts of worship*** )
2. **Col. 2: 18** ... by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels
3. The Pharisees were obsessed with appearing to be religious.
  - a. **Luke 20: 46** – Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, **S#8.**
  - b. **Matt. 6: 2** – So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they (Mat 6:16-18 .. fast) may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.
  - c. They practice their religion before men rather than before God.

**S#9.****C. The only religion that pleases God flows from a person’s heart directly to God.**

1. In a pronouncement of judgment, the prophet warned God’s people of old.
 

**Isa. 29: 13** – Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, ( Remember : **Isa. 1: 10-17** ) **S#10.**
2. Jesus quoted this prophecy teaching that God wants man’s love, NOT rituals.
 

**Matt. 15: 8** – This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. ( whitewashed tombs .. **Matt 23:27** )
3. God demands that our hearts be in our worship.
  - a. **Col. 3: 16** – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **S#11.**
  - b. **Eph. 5: 19** – speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual ( Psa 139:4, I Cor 4:5 ) songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

**D. One's words are the fruit of his heart ... the index of his soul.**

1. **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. **S#12.**
2. **Prov. 4: 23-24** – Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. **24** Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you.
3. **James 1: 14-15** ... All sin is conceived within the heart of man.
4. Evil cannot come forth out of a heart filled with the love of God.

\* **Thus, speaking evil is proof that a man's heart is not worshipful.** **S#13.**

**II. Words are more powerful than a sword.****S#14.**

A. As Edward Bulwer-Lytton wrote in 1839, "*The pen is mightier than the sword.*" **S#15.**

B. The one who says, "*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.*" told a lie that is most often repeated by those who are hurt by words.

- \* 1. Cut me with a knife and I'll heal, but cut me with words and I'm wounded for life.
2. Being wounded by words is like the bite of a Komodo Dragon, it never heal. **S#16.**
  3. Solomon warns : **Prov. 18: 21** – **Life and death are in the hand of the tongue.**

**C. Men have brought about great evil with nothing more than their words.**

1. In chapter 3 James calls the tongue a fire which "**is set on fire by hell.**"
2. When out of control, man's tongue brings great destruction.
  - a. Wars have been started by words. (*compare current political upheaval*)
  - b. Congregations of the church have been destroyed by unbridled lips.
  - c. Marriages have been destroyed by a single angry outburst.
  - d. More friendships have been destroyed by hurtful words than any other cause.
3. We would not tolerate physical abuse, but we often overlook verbal abuse.

**D. Words can have just as positive an effect as they have a negative effect.**

1. **Prov. 12: 25** – **Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down,** **S#17.**  
**But a good word makes it glad.**
2. **Prov. 15: 1-2** – **A gentle answer turns away wrath,** but a harsh word stirs up anger. **2** The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly.

3. **Prov. 16: 24** – Pleasant words are a honeycomb, S#18.  
Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.
4. **Prov. 25: 11-12** – Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances. **12** Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprover to a listening ear.

### III. God requires that we control the words that come out of our mouths. S#19.

#### A. There is no justification for harsh words. S#20.

1. Guide for my life : ***No person has the right to knowingly hurt another person.***
2. When one becomes a Christian he is required to put away ALL malicious speech.  
**Col. 3: 7-8** – and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. S#21.  
**8** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.
3. People make a host of excuses for an unbridled tongue.
  - a. That’s just the way I am.
  - b. You never have to wonder where I stand because I speak my mind.
  - c. I’m just keepin’ it real.

#### B. God hates an unbridled tongue.

**Prov. 6: 16-19** There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: **17** Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, **18** A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, **19** A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers S#22.

#### C. We are commanded to take action to insure our tongue is controlled.

1. James tells us we must control our tongue the same way we control a horse.  
**James 3: 2-3** – For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble S#23.  
in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. **3** Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.
2. We are required to consider at least four things before we speak to non-Christians.  
**Col. 4: 5-6** – Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the S#24.  
most of the opportunity. **6** Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.
  - a. “making the most” is what I am about to say the best for this situation ?
  - b. “always be with grace” are these words better than they deserve to hear ?
  - c. “seasoned with salt” are these words pleasant so as to improve the relationship ?

- d. “respond to each person” will these words be well-received from this individual ?
3. When speaking with brethren actively edit each word before it is spoken.

**Eph. 4: 29-32** – Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only **S#25.**  
 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. **30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit  
 of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all  
 bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from  
 you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tender-hearted,  
 forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

- a. “no unwholesome word” Is this a good thing to say ?
- b. “good for edification” Will what I am about to say build up my brother ?
- c. “need of the moment” Are my words appropriate to the situation ?
- d. “will give grace” Am I giving them unmerited favor ?
- e. “not grieve the Holy Spirit” Will these words please God ?
- f. “slander be put away” What is my motive in saying this ?
- g. “be kind to one another” Is this a kind thing to say ?

**C. We all need to pray the prayer of David. Door over lips**

**Psa. 141: 3** – Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door **S#26.**  
 of my lips. **4** Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, ...

**IV. Our words are part of the standard by which we will be judged. S#27.**

**A. God examines our hearts, not just our actions and the words spoken.**

1. The fact that God knows our thoughts is too awesome for us to understand.
2. God not only knows what we said, but He also knows WHY we said it or didn't.

**I Cor. 4: 5** – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but **S#28.**  
 wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things  
 hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts;  
 and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

**B. Remember, God knows what you will say and WHY before you say it. S#29.**

**Psa. 139: 4** – Even before there is a word on my tongue,  
 Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

**S#30.**

**C. Matt. 12: 36** – But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, and  
 They shall give an accounting in the day of judgment.

**SUMARIZE**

**S#31.** ... Communion slide

**Lesson Text :****James 3: 1-12**

**3** Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. **2** For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. **3** Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. **4** Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. **5** So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. **7** For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. **8** But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; **10** from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. **11** Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? **12** Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

**Matthew 12: 33-37**

**33** Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. **34** You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. **35** The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. **36** But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. **37** For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."