

Foundations 10

True Religion

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Introduction: I was doing a bible study at the Senior Citizens center in Phillipsburg Kansas. I always ate and spent time in fellowship before hand. I will never forget what was said to me on one occasion. One elderly gentleman whom I had known for awhile, his Great grandson started coming to High School youth group. I was excited to share this good news because I knew he prayed for the young man. He got real quiet and said to me: I am not sure a young man every recovers from not having a Father! After a pause he went on to tell me how his dad died early in his life and how hard it was.

I am not crazy I know it's Mothers Day. But I believe his point was that God designed husband and wife to raise their children and for whatever reason if one is missing, the child looses. Think about it for a moment what did your Mother teach you that was life hanging? To say happy Mothers Day is their any one who would be willing to share something Your Mother taught you?

We have made today Notional Orphan Awareness day. So today's

*text is James 1:26,27 in KJV If any man among you seem to be
creligious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own h
eart, this man's religion is vain.*

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

I believe we can all agree, only having one parent is a grave loss.

*But think of the tragedy of growing up with no parents and just an
orphanage or Social Services system to raise you. Think of the
things that would be missing in your life today if you grew up an
orphan?*

*Explain James 1:26,27 NASB²⁶ If anyone thinks himself to be
religious, and yet does not ^(AZ)bridle his tongue but deceives his own
heart, this man's religion is worthless.*

*⁷Pure and undefiled religion ^(BA)in the sight of our God and Father is
this: to ^(BB)visit ^(BC)orphans and widows in their distress, and to
keep oneself unstained by ^(BD)the world*

Religion

*For us Religion is a very negative term that means the man made
rules and rituals to assist you in connecting to God. For many in
James day Religious practices were a noble pursuit. The term
religion literally means the out word rules and rituals to serve the*

cultic God's of James day. In the Christian circles it would have included Public Worship, prayer, fasting and Charitable giving. Today, we have a similar public scale how does a person appear, Does a person go to church on Sunday and do they pray in public. James is not condemning these acts persay but makes the point ones private decision to keep one's mouth shut, caring for helpless and purity says more about ones true relationship to Jesus!

The meaning of this pericope goes back to verse 22 where James declares: James was trying to get the point across that pure religion has nothing to do with Church attendance, holy b places, Christmas or Easter. True love for God shows up in people who practice God's Word and sharing it with others through speech, service, and separation from the world. Religious rituals are all well and good but if we are not living a lifestyle that loves God and others-they are worse than useless, for they deceive us into thinking how good we are! I have found the best mirror into my soul is serving others: in serving others I see just how mixed my motives truly are, it give me true hatred for sin and all it destroys and appreciation for others struggles. One momism that is so true is: What goes around comes around!

Worthy Practices

Keep Mouth Shut

James specific concern is the control of the tongue when we are angry. It is far easier to control our mouth when things are going well-when we have had a good day! But what about the days we are tired, the job was torturous, we got a ticket on the way home and the kids are in rare form-these are the situations that truly reveal the condition of our heart! When we are Hungry, Angry, Lonely or tired do we kick the car or keep our mouth shut? Remember; mom use to say: if you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all!

Care for Orphans and Widow

In the first century, orphans and widows had very little means of economic support. Unless a family member was willing to care for them, they were reduced to begging, selling themselves as slaves, or starving. By caring for these people, the church put God's Word into practice. When we give with no thought of receiving, we show what it means to truly serve others.

Remember when you bought home a stray cat or dog and mom would say: who will end up walking, bathing and feeding it? The world's power system has made a lot of strays out of the sons and daughters of Adam-God wants to know who will bathe and feed my

children? The core of Christianity is that now that we have experienced the goodness in the love of God we are to share it with the orphans, widows and helpless of this world in practical ways.

Keep Pure

To keep ourselves from letting the world corrupt us, we need to commit ourselves to Christ's ethical and moral system, not the world's. We are not to adapt to the world's value system, which is based on money, power, and pleasure. True faith means nothing if we are contaminated with such values.

Have you ever noticed how we have a tendency to only scratch the back of those who can scratch ours?

The Iraq war began in March 2003 in response to alleged weapons of mass destruction. There was no weapons found but it meant liberation for millions of Iraqis. It was awful conditions to live under Saddam Hussein. So we rightly celebrated the liberation of those under his bloody rule. We were joined by several countries.

But around the same time another tragedy was happening in Sudan Darfur. In 2004 alone there was 50,000 killed and 1.4 million forced from their homes. Which translates to what? Orphans and Widows. It causes me to ponder why has no country in the world intervened in Sudan! Could it be that Sudan has little resources and even less power! This is what James wants us to avoid! As followers

of Christ we are not to be influenced by a persons wealth and power-instead we are to do right not matter a person status in the world! Just remember what mom always asked: Well if every one jumped off a cliff? Would you do it too?

Illustrate James 1:26,27 NCV People who think they are religious but say things they should not say are just fooling themselves.

Their "religion" is worth nothing.²⁷ Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence.

A priest, a minister and a Rabbi went to see who was best at his job. So they each go into the woods, find a bear, and attempt to convert it. Later they get together. The priest begins When I found a bear. I read to him from the Catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. Next week is his first Communion!

I found a bear by the stream said the minister, "and I preached God's Holy Word. The bear was so mesmerized that he let me bbaptize him. They both look down at the rabbi lying on a gurney in a body cast. Looking back he says maybe I shouldn't have started with circumcision.

The family in America is in trouble, but we have not idea where to start fixing the issue. For all the changes in fertility and mortality

that Americans have experienced from the colonial period till now, there has been surprisingly little change in the structure of the family until the past quarter of a century. Until that point, the age of marriage changed from time to time, but only a minority of women never married and births outside of marriage were traditionally less than 10 % of all births.

Clearly the American family, like all families in the western industrial countries, is not profoundly different from what it had been in the recorded past. It typically is a household with few children, with parents working, and with mothers producing their children at ever older ages. . At the same time, more adults than ever before are living alone or with unmarried companions and more women than ever before are giving birth out of wedlock. These trends have profoundly changed the American family and are unlikely to be reversed at any time soon. ¹

This is just the story of intact families but these trends have also impacted those children not part of a family. I am neither a statistician or a sociologist but according to the handbook of Parenting: Children and parenting by Marc H. Bornstein. During the Sexual revolution of the late 60's and early 70's the foster car system grew to 500,000. But after it subsided in the early 80's

¹ The changing American Family by Herbert S. Klein Hoover Digest 2004 III

Foster children decreased to 250,000. In 1980 the child Welfare act became law. From 1982 to 1992 Foster Children grew by 69% by 1992 Their were 460,000 children in foster care. Most were taken from their parents because of neglect and Abuse: mostly because of drug dependency, homelessness and domestic violence. What was unusual was the growth of these numbers were almost exclusive in newborns and very young children. What the government study does not mention the others do is that at the same time younger women were giving birth out of wedlock and older women giving birth without marriage.

Children with out one or bath problems is as old as mankind. But how a nation handles the issues defines it as just or in just. With that in mind let me share some sobering news.

Orphans and foster children are often stigmatized and discriminated against: Their futures are bleak. In addition the wrenching human needs: 1in 10 will commit to suicide as young adults. Less than half will finish high school. 1 in 3 will experience homelessness. 50% will end up in jail. 1 in 4 will become parents before age 20, and their children will also likely end up in foster care or orphanages.

In the united states, more than 140,00 children are waiting to be adopted. Each year, nearly 25,000 of these youth will age out of

the system, turned out on the streets with no family to support them and little hope for the future. It's not okay for children to grow up without families. It is time for change. "Kid's save international web page" Can we agree whatever the cause the plight of the orphan grieves the heart of God? Should it not grieve our heart as well?

Remember what mom used to say: What's good for the goose if good for the gander! This is the clue where to start: we could say what's good for families is good for children!

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27
Male and females are different biologically, chemically and emotionally and the two halves put together make a complete image of God. Males tend to be protectors and women tend to be nurturers. Males need respect women need love Together they are a mirror of God's justice and *love*.

Genesis 2:24,25 says: For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. This verse makes clear that sex is God's idea. That when men and women become one flesh it is a spiritual act that points to our creator. God loved mankind enough to give sex for pleasure and

procreation. But as all good gifts given by God, man has abused them. God knows the Physical love of a man and woman is a raging river-that if it is not confined to the riverbanks of marriage it can destroy all in it's path!

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. Proverbs 5:15-18

Those of you who are unmarried know this God wants you to enjoy sex, that is why he has established the boundary of marriage.

Because it is obvious you can enjoy sex in or outside of marriage-but what a society can not do as a whole is nurture children with out the structure of marriage that makes family a possibility Moms and dad's are where we begin to solve the world crisis of orphans!

Let me also say in the past the church has made sex the unforgiveable sin, but scripturally that is not true! There is no sin beyond God 's forgiveness except Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit! Understand that it is a sin because your decision will negatively impact many whom you know. But it certainly will impact your children if they are born outside of marriage: your child will grow up with only one parent, you are likely to live a life of poverty, your

child has greater chances of mental illness, greater chances of struggle with substance issues and intern having more children out of wedlock.

A truth not stated in world that needs to be shouted in every church is that no matter what birth control you use they fail and children are conceived when you are sexually active! The only way to not conceive children outside of marriage is abstinence. This is exactly why God commands us to engage sex only in the boundaries of marriage!

Young men listen up you are just as much part of the problem as the unmarried woman-maybe more. The culture, the media and your friends celebrate sexual promiscuity. Sexual conquest has become a accepted as a sign of manhood!

The truth is sex in a very basic way is a biological process and has absolutely nothing to do whether you are a man or not! If you decide to engage in se just for selfish reasons it is likely you may have daughter treated in the same manner. You may find yourself with a child that you will never know or share your life with. You may live life with regret the rest of your life by simply giving into your impulse.

In scripture manhood happens when a male sacrifices for the betterment of others! That takes self-control, patience and

endurance in short true manhood! If you truly want to be a man don't just father a child-willfully be a father who raises his children and loves his wife!

Listen to Ephesians 5:25 Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. We have illustrated the problems of the home, God's solution is for us to keep our mouth shut about promiscuity and promote marriage. God' want us to be different from the world-he wishes us to open our eyes and the world to the poverty and tragic social issues promiscuity causes! Lastly, God's solution is we come alongside single parents, widows and orphans to encourage, equip and give up our resources when marriages fail or is not tried!

Demonstrate James 1:26,27 ESV If anyone thinks he is religious^(A) and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's^(B) religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this:^(A) to visit^(B) orphans and widows in their affliction, and^(C) to keep oneself^(D) unstained from the world.

What I wish to demonstrate here is that the crisis is not only here in America but it is a world wide crisis, for a variety of reasons.

Let me share with you just some of the stats, but please remember these are not just numbers, but each one is a precious

child of God! There are 143 million orphans in the world. There are an additional 20 million displaced children in the world. Combined it would make it the 7th Largest nation on the planet- slightly more population than Russia. In eastern Europe of the orphans that survive their 20th birthday 50% will end up in organized crime, drugs or prostitution. In Africa, homeless children are arrested and used as soldiers. In Africa there is an effort to extend the life of a child beyond the age of 5.

When I hear these numbers I am grieved and overwhelmed. I feel like throwing up my hands and giving up! But it is also a reminder of just how important moms are! There is a Jewish momism that goes like this: God Could not be everywhere so he created moms.

Biblically that is all wrong but the concept is right! Our planet is as healthy as Motherhood is! AS we promote orphan awareness it can promote resignation and apathy, it being such a huge problem we are likely to throw up our hands and say there is nothing we can do!

Wrong! It all simply begins with you being the best mother you can Be to the children blessed you with! Moms and dads you already know your failures-I don't need to bring them up-they are already in the front of your mind! What you and I need to do is to bring the faults out one by one to your heavenly Father, so Jesus may forgive you and the Holy Spirit may empower you to grow into God's

likeness. You will never be a perfect parent but as you grow the odds that your child will also become good parents also increases! It is the first step in keeping your mouth shut and begin doing what is right! The second step in caring for widows and orphans is too stay committed to the wife of your youth. The third step is not to become polluted by the worlds values and learn to cherish celibacy before marriage, faithfulness during marriage and to what you can with what you have -with those orphans God sends your way!

Application of James 1:26,27 NLT If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

Hopefully you are now wanting to do even more, so let's apply this verse.

Adoption-Taunchy

I have a Courageous guest speaker-who fears talking in front of people-but her life has been so impacted she can not keep quiet. So at this time I want Taunchy Maben to come up front would you please pray for her as she come up to testify how adoption has impacted her life.

Be a Parent Figure

Because there are so many children without birth or little parental figures it takes a church, community or a village if you like to raise children. WE must wake up children have lots of friends who tell them what they want to hear. They don't need another friend, they need a parent. Whether at home, church, school or play children need us to voice to them what is acceptable and what is not.

Explain to them why you believe what you believe. Give them \ examples in your life how people were hurt by bad choices. We must start not only teaching God's word-we must demonstrate to them why the bible is wise enough to live by.c

Plug into a child's world. If you want to be a part of the solution be a surrogate mother or father by signing up to teach Sunday School, coaching a youth sport or take on some sort of task your gifted at so you can begin to understand some of the issues and struggles children face today! But not only understanding to interject some motherly wisdom in the wisdom in the madness of this world!

Lastly, don't rescue! When children make mistakes let natural consequences take their course, so they learn to avoid the pain and shame that immoral decisions brings!

Cash for help

There are thousands of Godly organizations seeking to help the

orphans and widows of this world. Duane Hull was a minister here at cElbert Christian in the early eighties and he is now director of Education of Lifeline of Hope, which, is a nearly decade old International Orphan Care Organization, providing food, clothing, medicine, education, a home and HOPE to thousands of orphans around the world every day! They do this for a grand total of about \$30. The point is we who have much can share with those who have nothing!

Conclusion: Eve was the mother of all living people who have been and who will be. Her name, "Eve, " means "living." She was the first mother and the first woman to ever give birth to a child.

I wonder if she knew what to expect when it came time for Cain to be born? I wonder if she was afraid of motherhood... no one had ever done it before?!

I wonder if she knew what an important and influential job being a mother is?

She had three sons mentioned by name in Scripture: Cain, Abel and Seth. Genesis 5:4 tells us that they had many sons and daughters in their life together, but we focus on these three boys. Cain had murdered Abel. Eve is not only the first mother, but also one of the

first parents to lose a child in death.

Really, they lost two sons because the other left and wandered the lands. It was through the line of Seth that people began to call upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 4:25-26).

Since the time of Eve, it has fallen to mothers to raise their children for the Lord. Our mothers bring us into the world. They nurture us. They provide for us. They raised us up. They teach us. They discipline us.

Mother's have a remarkable ability to change the world through their children.

Thanks Mom!

If you need a new beginning I would ask you to come up front at this time and give your life to Jesus.