

Chapter 12

Pure Religion, where do you find it?

Christ came to teach people how to worship ["in spirit and truth" (John 4: 22-23)] which is "pure religion!" He was trying to save people from religious formalism (idolatry) which was present in His day and this same idolatry is present in our day too. In this pursuit, the world has made a religion out of Christ, which is ok if we embrace and immerse ourselves into the "spirit of the law" and not the "letter of the law."

If you were to just take the teachings of Christ, the first two great commandments... to love God [that means to love godliness and holiness] with all your heart, might, mind and strength and then love our neighbor and self with those same attributes [of godliness and holiness], the world would be a perfect place and dishonesty and immorality and war would not exist in us or outside us. Anyone can embrace "pure religion" if they want to be true to themselves and a true disciple of Christ! But most people get caught up in the "form and structures" of organized religion (ego) and make that their "God" of worship and it becomes their own nemesis; when they condemn or find fault with others who are not following their particular form of formalism; and hence they fall into the very pit they are trying to save others from. This is how we can tell if this is going on:

"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. ***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.***" (New Testament | James 1:26 - 27)

It does not really matter what external drama has played out in all organized religions as they came forth, all the negative stories that have surfaced then are still surfacing today. What really matters is that we recognize our own personal accountability to "divine nature" as recorded in 2 Peter:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

“And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

“And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (New Testament | 2 Peter 1:4 - 9).

How are we “purged from” our “old sins?” This can only happen when we immerse ourselves into “divine nature;” it is then that our “old sins” are literally “purged” out. “For if these things [a divine and holy character] be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of ...Christ.”

In my opinion, anything more or less than this cometh of evil and is silly gossip. Why do we judge the "form and structure" (formalism) of religions which has no power or authority to save a single soul from their sins, lies, false gossip, or bearing false witness of our neighbor? Simple answer, ego. Why not concern ourselves with the "spirit of the law" [See LDS Bible Dictionary, “Holiness”] that sanctifies and purifies the souls of men!

I see many people with real anger issues deep down inside and insecurities that keep them from the truth because they have bought into false beliefs that damn the soul [1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Nephi 28:15] and the “cunning craftiness” of men [Ephesians 4: 14; D&C 76: 75]. Many understand the surface of truth but the real depth of truth has been pushed down in their souls. As long as people continue to be angry at issues caused by different opinions they will fall into their own pit of despair. You see "pure and undefiled religion" is never founded in demeaning lies, anger, frustration about the prophet Joseph Smith (or any other person), or demeaning lies concocted about the Book of Mormon or any of the forms and structures of any religion.

Let me say something about “forms and structures;” they are here to awaken us from our deep sleep and slumber, so that we can see and understand the “Spirit of the law.” "Pure religion" is immersing ourselves in holiness of character or as Peter put it "divine nature." We should choose to honor and respect every person and their divinity and potential to become perfect as Christ and Father (Mathew 5: 43-48). I pray for all and hope all will come to see that truth! **It matters not what religion we belong to or don't belong to or what opinions we have about “forms and structures of religion... what matters is what divine attributes are we manifesting in our words, our thoughts, and our deeds that bring us into the presence of godliness and holiness of character that we may become more like Christ and Father in Heaven, which is “pure religion.”**

I have had my own faith crisis (tests) with some doctrines of Mormonism (forms and structures) and discovered I can remain a Mormon in my true faith of “pure religion” and tell my story (share my witness of the truth), my beliefs that the Prophet Joseph shared when he taught from Lectures on Faith, and what Christ taught in his teaching! This alone has grounded me to what I believe was and is the very foundation of “pure religion,” because Lectures on Faith teach the importance of becoming in character and attribute as divine, holy, and godly as one can be! This is the same message that Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Both were killed by the egos of fallen men and many others have died too, for sharing these principles!

Be "one" and if ye are not "one" (in divine nature, pure perfect love) then ye are not mine! The "forms and structures" of all religions, in general, teach this truth of becoming "one" by immersing ourselves in divine nature (the attributes of godliness)... If we have ears to hear and eyes to see, we will understand that every ordinance and ceremony within the “forms and structures” of all religions are leading us to holiness of character, that perfect love of godliness! **But what does our fallen nature do?** It gets caught up in the formalism of religion (a type of idolatry) and we go to war, debate, and have arguments over opinions. It makes no sense to me. If what we do in or out of religion (or our worship of God) does not bring us into “holiness of character” [that perfect love for virtue] ourselves, then we may know of a certainty, that what we are doing is not of God (godliness)!

I will share a dream I had.

I saw “religions” (which is a community of people) like beautiful wildflowers in a mountain meadow, each one has its own outward beauty and place in the mountain meadow (the world) we live in. The fragrance of the flowers is the Holy Spirit, which is the aroma of divine nature [perfect love] and we are each attracted to the aroma we like best. So why get caught up in all the judgement? It makes no sense. Enjoy the beauty of the earth!

The choice is ours to smell the fragrance [of the “breath of life”] and "put on" the new man (the attributes of godliness in our lives) or partake of the fallen and carnal nature of our own ego. God is love (divine nature personified in us) and “love is the fulfilling of the law” [Romans 13:10]. God bless everyone in this self-discovery journey! A journey that brings one to the understanding of “I AM THAT I AM” [Exodus 3: 14]. The same truth Moses learned on Mount Sinai. **“Pure Religion” can be lived in any religion just like the 10+commandment can** (New Testament | James 1:26 - 27).

AND God spake all these words, saying,
I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:
3. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
4. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
5. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

6. ¶ Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
7. Thou shalt not kill.
8. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
9. Thou shalt not steal.
10. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
11. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

(Old Testament | Exodus 20:1 - 17)

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