

In verse 25, what does James call God’s law?

In what way is the law “a law of liberty”? Wouldn’t you think it does the opposite?

Verses 26–27 focus on “religion.” How would you define “religion”?

Do you think of religion as a good thing or not? Do you think your neighbors think of religion as a good thing?

A lot of people these days consider themselves “spiritual but not religious.” To them, religion seems narrow, restrictive, maybe even hateful toward people outside the religion.

For the last several decades, many Christians have emphasized that their faith is about “a relationship not a religion.” That is, it’s not about following rules or rituals, but a connection with God through Jesus.

The Greek word James uses here for “religion” is rather rare in the New Testament. The other two uses of the word refer to the strict practices of the Pharisees (Acts 26:5) and the cult-like worship of angels (Colossians 2:18). Apart from James (possibly), the New Testament doesn’t tell people to be more “religious.”

With that in mind, do you think James is using the term “religion” in a positive way? Why or why not?

In verses 26–27, how does James define “religion”?

There are three specific actions he includes in his definition. **What are they?**

Why do you think he mentions these three? Aren’t there other good deeds he could name?
