

November 16, 2003

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Next Weeks Lesson: "A Chosen Generation" ([1 Peter](#) and [2 Peter](#); [Jude](#))

Today's Lesson: "Pure Religion" ([James](#))

- What does the word *pure* mean? What does *religion* mean?
- How would you define pure religion?

Let's read [James 1:27](#). This lesson discusses how we can apply James's teachings to help us live a "pure religion" and be "undefiled before God."

Each concept taught by James can help us live a pure religion. The writer of the book of James is generally thought to be the brother of Jesus Christ. After Jesus was resurrected, James served as an Apostle and was an important leader in the early Church ([Acts 12:17](#); [Acts 15:13-20](#)).

1. We should endure affliction patiently. ([James 1:1-4](#); [James 5:10-11](#))

- A. What did James teach about facing trials of our faith? (See [James 1:2-3](#) and footnote 2a, which shows that in the Joseph Smith Translation, the phrase *divers temptations* is changed to *many afflictions*.) How can trials help us develop patience? How are we blessed when we endure afflictions patiently? (See [James 1:4](#); [Romans 5:3-5](#); [Alma 36:3](#).)

Elder Orson F. Whitney wrote: "No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God" (quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 98).

- B. Whom did James mention as good examples of patience in affliction? (See [James 5:10-11](#).) How have you seen latter-day prophets demonstrate this patience? How has their example helped you?

2. We should pray to God in faith. ([James 1:5-7](#) and [James 4:8](#))

- A. What counsel did James give to those who "lack wisdom"? (See [James 1:5-6](#).) What will Heavenly Father do if we ask in faith? What experiences have you had with receiving answers to prayer?
- B. How was the Prophet Joseph Smith influenced by the counsel in [James 1:5](#)? (See [Joseph Smith—History 1:11-13](#).) What can we learn from his experience? How did Joseph's decision to follow the counsel in [James 1:5](#) affect us? (See [Joseph Smith—History 1:14-20](#).)

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “Because the fourteen-year-old boy went out in the woods to pray, having read in the scriptures, ... because he did live the revelations from on high, we have The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have all of the blessings that can make us the happiest people in the whole world, because a boy of fourteen went out into the woods to pray” (in Conference Report, Melbourne Australia Area Conference 1976, 23).

- C. How did James describe those who pray without faith? (See [James 1:6-7](#).) What can we do to strengthen our faith?
- D. James taught, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” ([James 4:8](#)). How does sincere prayer bring us closer to God?

3. We should control our tongues and be “slow to wrath.” ([James 1:19-20](#), [James 1:26](#); [James 3:2-18](#))

- A. James taught that we should be “swift to hear, slow to speak” ([James 1:19](#)). What experiences in your life have confirmed the wisdom of this counsel? How can we become better listeners and more thoughtful speakers?
- B. James also taught we should be “slow to wrath” ([James 1:19](#)). What are some consequences of speaking or acting in anger? What experiences in your life have confirmed the wisdom of James’s counsel? How can we overcome or control feelings of anger?
- C. James taught that we should bridle our tongues ([James 1:26](#)). What is the purpose of a horse’s bridle? How can we apply James’s counsel to “bridle” our tongues? (See [James 4:11](#).)
- D. Read [James 3:3-5](#). What did James compare the tongue to in these verses? What can we learn from these comparisons? How can learning to control our words help us control other aspects of our lives?
- E. Read [James 3:9-13](#). What did James teach in these verses about controlling our speech?
- F. How can controlling our tongues help lead to peace? (See [James 3:16-18](#).) Why is controlling our tongues an important part of pure religion?

4. We should be “doers of the word,” showing our faith by our works. ([James 1:22-25](#), [James 1:27](#); [James 2:14-26](#); [James 4:17](#))

- A. What does it mean to be “hearers only” of the word? ([James 1:22](#)). In what sense do “hearers only” deceive themselves? (See [James 1:22-25](#); [James 4:17](#).) What

are the blessings of being “doers of the word”?

- B.** What did James teach about the relationship between faith and works? (See [James 2:14-26](#).) Why is faith dead without works? How do good works strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ?
- C.** What did James emphasize that we should do to live a pure religion? (See [James 1:27](#) or remind class members of the attention activity.) Why do you think visiting and helping people in need is part of pure religion?
- D.** What can we do to stay “unspotted from the world”? ([James 1:27](#); see [D&C 59:9](#)). How does attending church and partaking of the sacrament each week help us stay unspotted from the world?

James’s teachings are true. We can live our religion more purely by being patient in affliction, praying to God in faith, mastering ourselves, and doing good works.