**Signs of a False Religion – Immorality**

Religion is not a dirty word. Some envision empty ceremony and hypocritical piety when they hear the word. But in the heart of one sincerely devoted to God, religion is simply the outward manifestation of that devotion. In fact, James wrote that there is religion that is pure and undefiled (James 1:27). The worst thing a person can do is to devote their entire lives to a religion that is impure and defiled.

**If your religion tolerates immorality, it is a false religion.** James said, “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”*

Corinth was a particularly immoral city in the first century; it is no surprise that the church in Corinth struggled with it. When Paul wrote to them the first time, he gave them divine direction for dealing with a member who had his father’s wife (1 Corinthians 5). As long as they turned a blind eye to the immorality that threatened his soul, they demonstrated a lack of love for him. They were instructed to emphasize the need for repentance by withdrawing from him. Once he turned from his sin, they were able to welcome him back with open arms. That is the demonstration of divine love. *If the religious organization to which you belong takes no action to help those caught up in immorality, you should be asking some questions.*

The Scriptures are not ambiguous regarding behavior God considers immoral. “Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Christians are not in the business of judging the world (1 Corinthians 5:12), but we need to be holding one another accountable. *If your religious organization condones immorality within your ranks, that religion is false.*

Some religions actually demand chastity from their women, but their men are allowed to engage in immoral activities. Such a double standard is simply not found in the true Scriptures. God’s standards apply evenly to men and women alike *If your religion lays oppressive standards on women and offers men a free pass, you are involved in a false religion.*

Christians are people. None are perfect. But we all must be striving to live by the standards God has defined for all of us and appealing to His mercy when we fall short. There is no excuse for openly tolerating immorality in our midst if our goal is to please Him.

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