

Things Are Not Always as They Seem

James 1:26-27

Introduction: Dealing with things that are not as they seem can be frustrating. For example, James tells us that a Christian with an uncontrolled tongue is wasting his time trying to please God (Jas. 1:26). Yet, we would like to think the Lord won't care if I use certain euphemisms from time to time. Likewise, real religious conduct is observed by those Christians who care for widows and orphans (Jas. 1:27). Yet, how many Christians care for people who can't help themselves?

I. Eve was the first one to learn that things are not as they seem.

A. The tree of knowledge was beautiful, and it could make a person wise; therefore, Eve thought eating its fruit would be a good thing (Gen. 3:6).

B. Yet, what it brought was a life of hardship and pain in childbearing (Gen. 3:16-19).

II. Solomon points out that many things in life are vain.

A. More wisdom means more sorrows (Eccl. 1:17-18).

1. Yet, it brings happiness, peace and contentment. It increases wealth and length of life and is worth more than great wealth (Prov. 3:13-18).

2. Incidentally, God gives wisdom generously to those who ask (Jas. 1:5).

B. Work (Eccl. 2:17-19; 3:9).

C. Wealth (Eccl. 5:10-11)

III. Wisdom of this world is foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18-25).

A. Eternal Salvation can only be achieved through God's word!

B. Worldly wisdom teaches that religion is a waste of time or even detrimental to real education.

IV. Developing patience means going through trials (Jas. 1:2-3).

V. Food doesn't sustain life (John 6:26-27).

A. Food perishes; one meal does not satisfy all of a body's nutritional needs for a day much less a week. We must constantly feed ourselves or we will die.

B. Christ provides food that will last for eternity (John 6:35, 47-51).

C. Christ's sacrifice on the cross, our obedience and reverence to Him, and feeding from the word of God is what sustains eternal life (John 6:53-58, 63).

Conclusion: One last thing that is not as it seems. The act of baptism saves us from our sins (1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16). To the world it seems like a ritual that has no purpose. Yet, it is actually the response of a good conscience toward God in obedience to his commands (Mk. 16:16). Things are not always as they seem and if you want to be saved from your sins, arrangements for your baptism can be made.