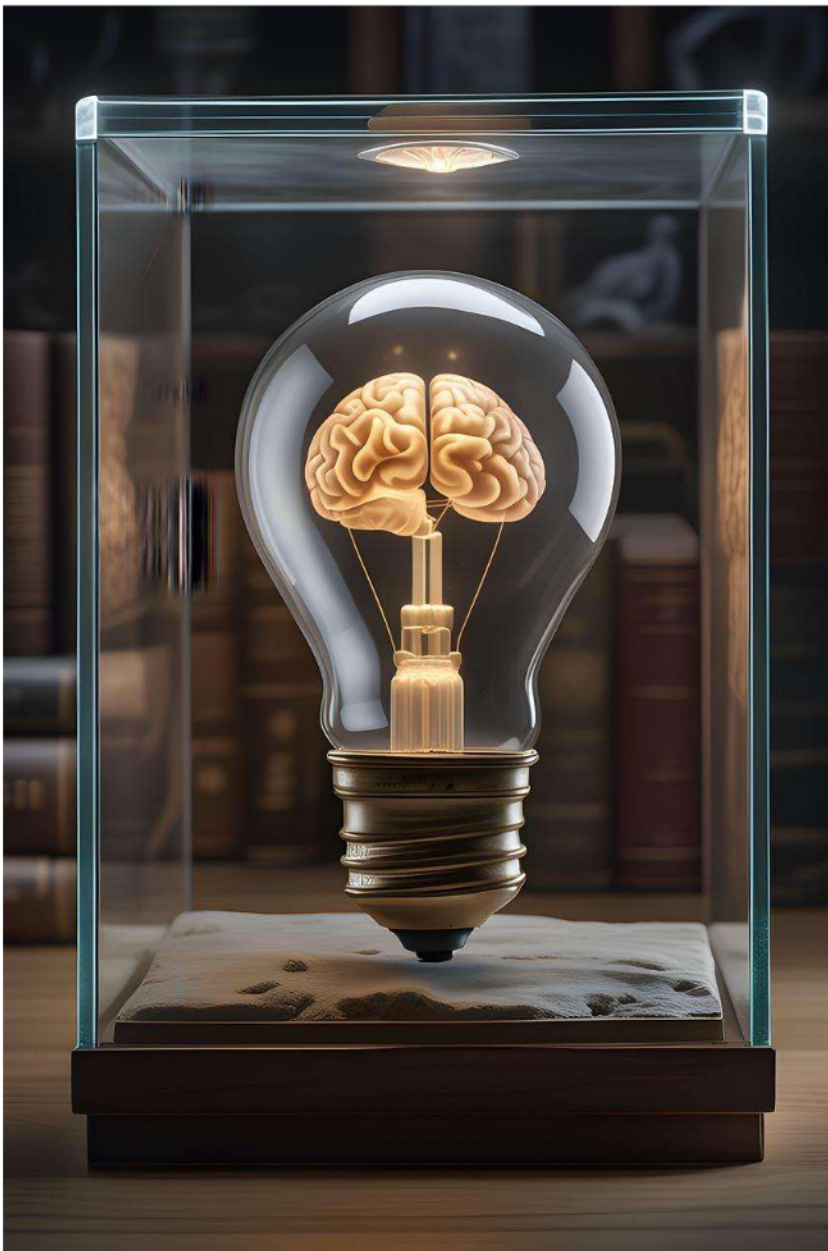


Religion: How It Helps or Impairs Mental Stability



Chapter 1 - Impact on Mental Stability and Spiritual Growth

“Religion” broadly encompasses diverse cultural views, beliefs, and systems worldwide, with thousands of forms and practices. While religion can be a commitment to organized systems, “Christianity” goes beyond just being a religion. It is a “way of living” and a “daily lifestyle” based on following Jesus Christ and applying God's Word.

Religion, particularly Christianity, offers a framework for navigating life's complexities and anxieties, contributing to mental stability through a spiritual journey. This is a journey towards knowing God, the Creator, which can lead to greater self-awareness, sensitivity to moral principles, and a desire to live in alignment with divine will, ultimately contributing to mental stability.

Life is a cavernously deep expeditious journey. It is a complex menagerie of diverse emotions, feelings, thoughts, interactions, relationships and occurrences. How long or short will each of us be here no one really knows. As we grow, we encounter a multiplicity of experiences that cause us to look deeper into what life is really all about.

Each day is a new opportunity to discover something new no matter how small or seemingly inconsequential. As we grow it becomes evident that there is so much more to life than meets the eye. We embark upon a remarkable quest of discovery; but where does or will it all lead? We discover that we are also spiritual beings.

The spiritual journey leads us to the realization of our Creator. God the Father the Great “I AM.” The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is what we as adherent believers believe! (We realize that not everyone believes the same.) As we begin to relate to the Lord properly, He will free us more and more from the things that misrepresent Him. As we grow spiritually our spiritual eyes are opened and we become more conscious of why we do what we do. Our conscience becomes much more sensitive to the things that are contrary to His Will and His Way. Our desire should be to live to please Him as we grow spiritually.

Growing in the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ is an ongoing continuing life process. The Canonical Gospels which we know as the WORD contains a wealth of the history and origins of mankind. This is why it is so important to spend time in HIS WORD. Here we can ascertain the invaluable, priceless and precious TRUTH!

Through a plethora of life lessons, we grow. We all have areas in which we are lacking. It is within our deficiencies we can discover

a need for something greater than ourselves for survival. How do we cope with life, living and the anxieties that come along with it. As we become aware the discovery of a supernatural existence greater than ourselves and the ongoing need for spiritual growth and balance becomes apparent. It is a continual learning process.

God did not create us to be or become robots. Each of us is uniquely different with varying temperaments. He has given us the free will to choose. The world also offers many choices as well. It's important to know the difference and then choose wisely. There are both good and bad consequences for our choices. Sin is what separates us from God. God is the Creator and Maker of mankind and ultimately knows what is best for us. It is our choice to draw closer to Him or look to the world and society for direction. The ways of God and the ways of the world often conflict here lays the inner conflict.

God sent us His only begotten Son; JESUS CHRIST to redeem us from the curse of sin. Sin separates us from GOD. Jesus came as an innocent babe wrapped in sinless flesh. He overcame sin in the flesh. He went through all the stages of life, yet He never sinned. He was crucified, died and was buried and then He arose with ALL POWER.

He came to point us back into the right direction that once again unites us to our Creator. The Narrow Path is the Way that leads to Him. Jesus was the Door back to the Father. Jesus is the only

perfect example. Living for the Lord is meant to be a way of living daily. No one knows when but the Lord is going to return for HIS CHURCH.

Why is there so much confusion about religion? What is religion?

Religion consists of a diversity of cultural views, beliefs and various systems worldwide. Religion in itself is not bad but for many it means different things. It takes on many forms depending on the particular culture. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism are considered the four major religions. There are thousands of religions throughout the world. Within those religions are varied and diverse practices and an assortment of ritual. What, whom, why and how we choose to worship is where the problem lies. What we believe varies.

Again, keep in mind; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life was crucified and then buried, yet He arose victoriously from the grave with ALL POWER over death, sin and the grave even after He was brutally crucified! No one else can claim this. We must become aware of the mixture of misconceptions in order to know what true godly religion really is, according to the Word of God.

The word *religion* is sometimes used interchangeably with *faith* or *belief system*, but religion differs from private belief in that it has a

public aspect. Some religions have organized behaviors, clergy, a definition of what constitutes adherence or membership, congregations of laity, regular meetings or services for the purposes of veneration of a deity or for prayer, holy places (either natural or architectural), and/or scriptures.

The practice of a religion may also include sermons, commemoration of the activities of a god or gods, sacrifices, festivals, feasts, trance, initiations, funerary services, matrimonial services, meditation, music, art, dance, public service, or other aspects of human culture. However, there are examples of religions for which some or many of these aspects of structure, belief, or practices are absent.

Technically by the world's standard, you can elect to worship just about anything. For some, religion is a commitment to an organized institutionalized system of beliefs and doctrines. For others, it is likened to a community center or belonging to a country club with varying levels of membership. The beliefs are trendy, vary, and often adapts and changes as the world changes.

Christianity goes beyond just being a religion. It is also the main focus within the context of this narrative. Religion is an essential important fundamental aspect of Christianity.

Let's look at The WORD of GOD'S definition for true religion. *“If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that GOD our FATHER accepts as PURE and FAULTLESS is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to KEEP oneself from being polluted by the world.”* James 1. These verses are quite self-explanatory.

Christianity is a way of living; it is meant to be a daily lifestyle. Being a Christian simply means to follow Jesus Christ and His teachings. Jesus is the promised Messiah. We who are called believers, through FAITH believe the Bible to be the intrinsic infallible Word of God. Christianity is monotheistic. We believe in one GOD. The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit are ONE.

We are supposed to apply and implement the principles of God's Word to our daily lives. It is the barometer by which we determine right and wrong. Yes! God's Word was divinely inspired by dedicated followers of God.

As mentioned earlier the aspects of pure religion are explained in the Book of James. For many religions is about conforming to the beliefs of the masses without personally taking the time to know what is actually in the Bible. They will initially teach you the ways and expectations of their denomination. Sometimes unknowingly often encourage embracing the traditions, doctrines and beliefs of a denomination over the Word of God! For some you cannot participate or have certain privileges until you become a member.

GOD’S WORD IS ALIVE! It can sometimes be so simple we miss the intended message. The closer we draw to GOD, the more we can increasingly understand the simplicity and powerfulness of HIS Word. His Holy Spirit further opens our spiritual eyes and illuminates His Word so we can better comprehend the intended message. His Holy Spirit is the eternal inner Teacher and spiritual interpreter that resides within us as believers. To lead us to ALL TRUTH.

Listen closely to what Jesus said; *“I have much more to say to you, more than you can hear now bear. But when He the Spirit of TRUTH, comes He will guide you to ALL TRUTH. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what he hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is mine and making it made known to you. ALL that*

belongs to the FATHER is mine. That is why I said the SPIRIT will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” John 16.

During Jesus’ last days on earth, He talked quite candidly with His disciples. He warned them that they would be misunderstood, mistreated and persecuted. He also told them they would not be accepted by the world. But most importantly He assured them that they would not be alone. He has given us His Comforter, His Holy Spirit to be with us always. This is why it is so important to know HIS WORD for yourself. We can call on the LORD anytime and anywhere.

Think about this for a moment; when JESUS CHRIST left the earth and ascended to Heaven there was not an actual physical Christian Church as far as a building. Jesus Christ nor His Apostles/Disciples built a manmade building for HIS CHURCH. The disciples and His followers met in homes; preached, taught and proclaimed THE GOSPEL inside, outside, on the shore, from mountains, in the streets, and some of everywhere. They lived the Gospel.

God has given us much freedom. However, know that freedom without order leads to chaos and instability. God's Word establishes the order.

The early disciples knew then as we should know now that they themselves were the actual CHURCH. GOD has only one CHURCH, and it consists of HIS people of all cultures, colors and ages from all over the world.

Chapter 1 – Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences. After you have written your answers, check your answers using the Answer Key found at the end of the book.

1. *According to the text, what is the primary desire that should emerge as individuals grow spiritually?*
2. *What is the main consequence of "sin" as described in the text, concerning humanity's relationship with God?*
3. *Besides Christianity, name two other major religions mentioned in the text.*
4. *What specific actions does James 1 identify as characteristics of "pure and faultless" religion?*
5. *How does the text suggest individuals can better understand the "simplicity and powerfulness" of God's Word?*
6. *What assurance did Jesus give His disciples about not being alone, even when facing misunderstanding and persecution?*
7. *In what ways did Jesus' disciples and followers "live the Gospel" according to the text, in the early days of Christianity?*
8. *What does the author suggest can sometimes unknowingly encourage embracing traditions over the Word of God in some religious denominations?*
9. *According to the text, what does God the Father ultimately know is best for mankind?*
10. *What is meant by the phrase "The Narrow Path" in the context of the text?*

[illegible]

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Proverbs Daily Devotional – Goldmine of Spiritual Wisdom

The Enchanting Legends of Shiloh Mansion – The Young King

The Enchanting Legends of Shiloh Mansion – The Big Catch

I Confess That I Am Judgmental

A House of Prayer

How Do I Love Thee: Food For Thought Before You Say I Do

Holy Matrimony – Now That We’re Married

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