Community In Acts

November 17, 2025

James 1:26-27 "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. 27 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 has been a contentious book for centuries. Chapter 2's seemingly contradictory words, "faith without works is dead" is partly to blame for putting it on this contentious path. However, the last two verses of chapter one gives context. The macro context is suffering via trials. The micro context is James arguing for a pragmatic outflow of faith to benefit those around the religious person including said religious person. The needs of the dispersed group of believers were clearly in abundance. James calls his readers, who consider themselves religious, to show their religion via their actions. Those actions would include, but not limited to: controlling their tongue, taking care of orphans and widows and remaining pure in a polluted world. If you don't do these basic things, your religion is worthless and in the next chapter James states, 'your faith is dead.' The question is, worthless and dead to whom? I would argue to all. The person who professes faith, but does not allow that faith to govern/affect his life misses out on experiencing the power/purity and promises of God. Those around such a person will continue to suffer in the midst of their trials with not help in sight. At the base level, our faith ought to manifest itself in tangible ways that will affect our walk and our neighbors.

Grandkids

This week Sandy and I have the privilege of watching Matthew and Brittany's children for the next week. Lydia 7, Luke 5, Levi 3 and Michelle 1 are the small people we get to share our lives with. Let me just say, we are now two days into this little venture and I am surprised at the energy level that God has packed into these little bodies. I am also surprised at how much energy He has allowed to seep out of my body. I don't remember the noise level being that high with our children. With four kids constantly scurrying around I don't see how it is possible to get any other tasks done other than attend to their ever-present needs. On the flip side, we have never been smothered more with kisses and hugs than in the last two days. What a blessing it is to love on grandkids and to serve in this manner.

Seminary Board

We had a very productive meeting with the other seminary and it looks like we will proceed in some type of a joint venture. There are still many details to be worked out but the future seems brighter with the two entities working together.

Prayer Requests:

1. Please pray that we can finish Emerald Coast construction well.
2. Please pray for our students who have expressed interest in attending our program next Fall.
3. Please pray for wisdom as we develop the joint venture concept.
4. Please pray for Juan and Susie as they move their family out to the ranch.