

Monday Religion

Religious people are interested in God's desire. They ask themselves: "What does God expect of me?"

Wait! "Religious people"?

We tend to categorize people. The categories are not exclusive; a person might fit into many categories. There are athletic people, rich people, hungry people, smart people, religious people, and so on.

What is a religious person?

It is common to think of a religious person as one who *does* religious acts: attending religious meetings,

engaging in religious ceremonies, praying, charitable giving, fasting, singing religious songs, reading scripture, etc.

For ancient Israel, God's chosen people, there were many religious ceremonies and requirements: circumcision, the Sabbath Day, tithing, sacrifices, food restrictions, fasting, and special days of remembrance, and so on: *Religion*. However, God desired the heart of the worshipper, not just ritual. He desired right living and concern for one's fellow man more than mere ceremony. Solomon said as much:

Religion is about holiness and love... every single day.

To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD rather than sacrifice.
--Proverbs 21:3

Nothing has changed for the worshipper of God today. To God, religion is as much about Monday through Saturday as it is about Sunday. God expects his people to be holy and He expects his people to love others. Religion is about holiness and love...every single day.

- What is your attitude toward God on Monday?
- Would you consider yourself to be pure and holy on Friday and Saturday night?
- How do you treat people on Tuesday?
- Is your 'religion' something you 'do' only on Sunday, only in a religious place, only in a religious service?

What does God really desire?

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 1:27 (NIV)