

INTRODUCTION

Turn in your Bible to the first chapter of the book of James – James chapter one. I invite you to stand in the reading of God's Word.

Read **James 1:21-27**.

Now people have a problem with the term "*religion*." You have heard it said, "*it is about a relationship with Christ and not a religion*."

I would agree. Paul feared that the church at Corinth would be led astray from "*the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*" (2 Cor 11:3).

Yet "*religion*" is simply that which we do in reverence and in obligation to God. James reminds us in **James 1:27** –

²⁷ **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.

The Greek term is θρησκεία and it speaks of **worship**, it speaks of **devotion**. It speaks of the person who is *pious, God-fearing*, in fact the Greek verb means "*to tremble*."¹

The reality is that we as Christians do worship and are devoted to our God and Father and as such we "*walk as children of Light...trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord*" (cf. Eph 5:8-10).

Because we are God-fearing we do that which is pleasing to Him, we do that which is His will, we do that which is He has commanded in His Word.

We were chosen before the foundation of the world for this purpose – that we would be "*holy and blameless before Him in love*" (Eph 1:3).

¹, vol. 3, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 155.
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It is all done out of a love for Him and so I want my life to be in conformity to His revealed will. *Right?*

Calvin reminds us in his commentary on Isaiah –

*“Now, the chief point of religion is, **to inquire into the will of God**, that we may regulate our life by the rule which he has laid down for us, and to depend on his mouth.”²*

That is the chief point of religion, *“to inquire into the will of God.”* In other words, it begs the question, *“What does God will for my life?”*

The wonderful truth is that God does have a will for us and He has revealed it for us in His Word. It is in Scripture that we come to know that His will is both *clear* and *very explicit*.

By the way God communicates in His Word, we come to the conclusion that He really wants us to know His will.

Imbedded in the discussion of God’s will for my life is what we find in the *NT* regarding the *orphan*.

As we learned in our last study, God has reserved His special attention for widows and orphans.

This is not a truth that we see in the 1st Testament both a truth that is highlighted again in the 2nd Testament – no place so clear than here in James where he instructs us to *“visit the orphans and widows in their distress.”*

God takes this matter seriously, as with other any matter regarding His revealed will, that He tells us of a special reaction from Him that involves His Holy wrath upon those who would abuse and exploit the widow or orphan.

² John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2010), Is 58:2.
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As God brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt to establish a covenant with His people, so does God bring to bear upon our hearing today, His very Word to be observed.

C O N T E N T

Today I want to give you three ways to apply His Word as it relates to the orphan. There are three ways to reflect upon *God's Heart for the Orphan* and put such reflection into practice.

1. LOOK TO YOUR FATHER
2. CONSIDER ADOPTION
3. VISIT THE ORPHAN

LOOK TO YOUR FATHER – John 14:18-20

While the Hebrew term for “*orphan*” appears 42x in the 1st Testament, the equivalent term in Greek is ὀρφανός and it appears only 2x in the 2nd Testament. Only 2x do we find ὀρφανός in the *NT*.

Most commonly, the Greek term is used to speak of those who are “*deprived of parents*” and thus “*without parents,*” and hence “*orphans.*”³

Yet there are occasions where it was used with a slightly different meaning. ὀρφανός was also used, in Koine Greek, to speak of those who were “*without associates who may be of sustaining help*” and thus a “*friendless person, helpless.*”⁴

This latter meaning is what is found in John’s gospel in chapter 14. In John chapter 14, we find the first of two times the term ὀρφανός is used in the *NT*. And here it is used in a figurative sense.

It is here that I want us to *Look to Our Heavenly Father* as we apply God’s Heart for the Orphan into our lives.

³ William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 725.

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 447.
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Context: In chapters 13 through 17, Jesus turns from *public* ministry to those who rejected Him to *private* ministry to those who received Him.

He gives a practical demonstration of His continuing love for the disciples (13:1–17), assures them of the hope of heaven (14:1–3), guarantees them power for ministry (14:12) and provision for their needs (14:13–14), and promised them the Holy Spirit (14:16–17; 15:26; 16:7), divine truth in the Word of God (14:26; 16:13), peace (14:27), and joy (15:11; 16:22).

Yet the common theme that runs throughout these *five* chapters is *Christ's love for His own*. As His earthly ministry drew to a close on the night before His crucifixion, Jesus sought to reassure them of that *enduring love* He had for them.⁵

Q: *How does Jesus communicate His love for them?*

A: The answer comes straight from **John 14:18-20** –

¹⁸ “I will not leave you as **orphans**; I will come to you.

¹⁹ “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you *will* see Me; because I live, you will live also.

²⁰ “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

Here in these words, we have a picture of *a dying father*.

Already Jesus has said in **John 13:33** –

³³ “**Little children**, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’

These are powerful words my beloved. This is the only time our Lord ever calls His disciples by this name, “*little children*.” It is one of *affection, tenderness, and compassion*.

In fact the Apostle John picks up this language in his epistle (cf. 1 Jn 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

⁵ See John MacArthur, *MacArthur NT Commentary - John 12-21* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2008), 61. *God's Heart for the Orphan, Pt. 2*

The English churchman and Bishop **J.C. Ryle** notes –

“It was evidently a term of affection and compassion, like the language of a father speaking to children whom he is about to leave alone as orphans in the world.”⁶

Note that the expression is not used till Judas has gone away (cf. Jn 13:21-30 – Jesus unmask the betrayer) – only genuine believers are ever addressed as Christ’s children.

It was **Spurgeon** who wrote, “now that Judas is gone, he unbosoms his heart, and speaks to the eleven under the tender term of ‘little children’.”⁷

He *discloses/reveals* his heart to them, a heart likened to a father who is about to face death.

In less than a few hours, Jesus would literally die before them, and He wanted to reassure them that He would not leave them as orphans.

In fact the term in Greek is rather strong, ἀφίημι. It can be used in the sense of “abandon” or “leave behind.”

“I will not abandon you my little children.”

They could count on His presence after that time. His leaving would only be for a “*little while*.” So He says in **John 14:18** –

¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**

“It is going to feel like I have gone, never to return again, but I will come.”

Try to place yourself in the disciples’ shoes: What was it like to have walked, to have lived, and to have seen Jesus all these 3 years?

⁶ J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, vol. 4 John 10:31 – John 21:25 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1990), 45.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Interpreter: Spurgeon’s Devotional Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2009), 597.

Allow me to answer this question: The disciples' have come to know in these last 3 years, *THE* example of true love that the world has ever known.

Jesus was himself was love, for he was God and “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8).

While on earth, Jesus demonstrated that love to them and was about to prove that love by dying on the cross.

As **Romans 5:8** declares –

⁸ But God demonstrates **His own love toward us**, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Such perfect love *changes, transforms, and reforms* those called of God. That is why Paul declares in the same manner in **2 Cor 5:14-15** –

¹⁴ For the love of Christ **controls us**, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;
¹⁵ and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

The love of Christ is what controls, drives, and motivates us my beloved. That is why we exclaim as did Paul in **Gal 2:20** –

²⁰ “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, **who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**”

This was something that the disciples' had not yet understood. It was a most troubling matter to them to know the *greatest* and *truest* example of Love was to depart from their midst.

Their best assumption would have been: “*So this is what it feels like to be abandoned. So this is what it feels like to be an orphan.*”

It is in this context that our Lord lovingly says to his disciples in **v. 18** –

¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**”

Here at the dinner table, Jesus takes on the role of the head of the family and the disciples take on the role of children, asking numerous questions.

Before they start asking questions, he reassures them of His enduring love for them. This is amazing when you come to think of these disciples.

If you recall, for the last 3 years, they have been jealous of one another. They have disputed over who should be the greatest. They would not even wash the others' feet.

And yet to the most unlovable children in the world, He promises them –

¹⁸ “ ... I will come to you.

Now I believe there was more promised here than His resurrection, though it is the primary reference that Jesus makes in this promise.

I believe it was a promise of the Comforter and one day, His physical presence when He returns.

There is both an *immediate realization* of this promise and one that will be for a bit longer. The immediate realization of this promise is that of His spiritual presence in every believer through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Because of His union with the Holy Spirit in the Godhead, Jesus would abide with them through His Spirit, who would be poured out at Pentecost (cf. John 16:16).

As such they would not be as children without a father.

“When the Spirit of God comes to reside in your life, I will be there as well.” Just as He promised in **Matthew 28:20** –

²⁰ ...and lo, I am with you **always**, even to the end of the age.”

In this entire scene with His disciples, Jesus reassures them that His death would not end their relationship with Him. Their union with Him was indissoluble – incapable of being annulled, undone, or broken.

Question: How many of our relationships exist & function in this light?

As Paul affirms in **Romans 8:38-39** –

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able
to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

My beloved as you reflect upon God’s Heart for the Orphan, look to Your Father, look to His love, look to His promise: *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

Listen to the words of an orphan as she considers the death of her father.

“My father died when I was 21 years old. That was an absolute shock that felt like a giant kick in the head. I was very aware that he would never get to know me as an adult and never get to see my children. Although, of course, we always move on after loss, I always felt short-changed to have lost him so young. (I was more than aware that many other people lost parents a lot younger than I was when he died, but that didn't alter my feeling short-changed.)”⁸

With a believer, with a child of God, there is no feeling of being “short-changed.”

Q: *Why is that?*

A: God is eternal. He is with you always. You will never lose Him.

In contrast to what the world sees. Jesus promised in **John 14:19** –

¹⁹ “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but **you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.**

⁸ See <http://lisahwarren.hubpages.com/hub/Life-without-parents--How-to-cope>. Accessed November 26, 2011.
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“You will see me not only in my Resurrection, but you will see through the indwelling Holy Spirit. You will be made spiritually alive, no longer dead, but alive to Me. You will walk with Me. You will sense the Holy Spirit. You will commune with Me. You will enjoy fellowship with Me.”

The world knows nothing of this devotion and faith in God, but you do.

As Peter writes in **1 Pet 1:8-9** –

⁸ ...though you have not seen Him, **you love Him**, and though you do not see Him now, but **believe in Him**, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Only then will you as **v. 20** says –

²⁰ “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

“In that day you will understand this union where *I am the Vine* and you are the branches (Jn 15:5), where *I am the Head* and you are the body (1 Cor 12:27; Eph 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19); where *I am the cornerstone* and you are the stones (Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:4-6); where *I am the groom* and you are My bride (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22-24; Rev 19:7).”

In that day you will know that you are *in Christ* as you look to the Father.

Question: *How is this possible? Why me? How did this come about? For what purpose?*

Transition: *As you reflect upon God’s Heart for the Orphan, not only are you to Look to Your Father, but you are to...*

CONSIDER ADOPTION – Ephesians 1:5

Listen carefully to what the Father has done in **Ephesians 1:5** –

⁵He **predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

He predestined us to something – *He determined our destiny beforehand* [Gr. προορίζω].

God has a way of determining everything in advance. He even planned Jerusalem's water supply long ago according **Isaiah 22:11** –

¹¹And you made a reservoir between the two walls For the waters of the old pool. But you did not depend on Him who made it, **Nor did you take into consideration Him who planned it long ago.**

Israel's confidence was in making a reservoir [i.e. man's doing] and not in THE God who "*planned it long ago*" [i.e. God's doing] – who determined it beforehand.

Anytime this word appears in the NT [6x – Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, in relation to sonship; cf. 1:11; Acts 4:28], it is used exclusively of God. What it emphasizes is God's sole initiative and authority in doing so.

Paul's discussion in Ephesians does not involve a reservoir [i.e. a thing] but a people. God not only predestined things, but predestined people as well.

Paul writes that He "*predestined us*" – *He determined our destiny beforehand.*

Q: *Before what?*

A: Before the foundation of the world.

"There He goes again being 'unfair.' What about my choice in the matter? What about controlling my own destiny?"

Remember, this is took place **before** the foundation of the world. This is before we ever existed.

Without the Father's election we would not choose God. To this day man is spiritually dead, spiritually bankrupt and poor.

Election is based on God's choice and predetermined sovereign will.
Someone might say: "*I don't like this doctrine.*"

Remember, this doctrine presents *an illustration of the infinite goodness of God*. *Why?* Because it was BEFORE we lived in sin & disobedience *having nothing whatsoever that would commend us to God*.

God intervened before the foundation of the world and chose us and predestined us "*to adoption as sons.*" And the reason **he chose** the saints out of the mass of humanity is because **he predetermined** our destiny.

Now look at the word "*adoption*" in **v. 5** – this term will revolutionize the way you think about your salvation and the way you think about God.

Martin-Loyd Jones said "*this is the most wonderful and glorious thing you have ever looked at in the whole of your life.*"

Look at God's Word in **v. 5** "*to what is one predestined to*" –

⁵He predestined us **to adoption as sons** ...

This was a **legal term** borrowed from Roman law. Back then a father had:

- Absolute power over the members of his family [i.e. he could even take the life of a member of his family and that act would not be considered murder]
- Absolute ownership of all they possessed.

Under Roman law **the procedure** of adoption had two steps⁹:

1) The son had to be released from the control of his natural father.

Q: *How?*

A: The natural father would sell his son as a slave three [3x] times to the adopter.

- The adopter would release the son two times and the son would automatically again come under the natural father's control.
- With the third sale, the adoptee was freed from his natural father.

2) Since the natural father no longer had any authority over him, the adopter became the new father with absolute control over him, and he retained this control until the adoptee died or the adopter freed him.

- The son was not responsible to his natural father but only to his newly acquired father.
- The purpose of this adoption was so that the adoptee could take the position of a natural son in order to continue the family line and maintain property ownership.
- This son became the *patria potestas* [Latin: "power of a father"] in the next generation.

It might surprise you but it was an act of honor to be adopted in the 1st century when Paul wrote this epistle.

To be able to say in a world of illegitimate children and in a world of orphaned children I was chosen by someone.

I wasn't just born into a family and you got what you got; I was chosen. Being adopted was a noble thing, not just in the Roman world, but in the Greek world too.

An adopted son was deliberately chosen by the adopting father to perpetuate that father's name and to inherit that father's estate.

⁹ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 196. *God's Heart for the Orphan, Pt. 2* 70-111

When a father in the Greek world didn't have a son he would go find the noblest available son and adopt him and give him all the rights and privileges. He was in no way inferior; in fact he was chosen because he may be superior. There were many fathers who had sons but their sons didn't meet their qualifications to pass on the estate so they went out and found one that did.

An adopted son may have well received the joy of his father's affection more than a naturally born son and he may well have reproduced his father's moral standards more perfectly than natural sons.

It is no small matter to know that God predestined you to be His natural son.

In His great love, God makes us more than citizens and servant, and even more than friends. He makes us children.

Once you were "*sons of disobedience*" and "*children of wrath*" (cf. Eph. 2:2-3).

You no longer have responsibility and/or obligation to your old father the devil (cf. "*your father the devil*" – Jn. 8:44) – "*the prince of the power of the air.*"

*Since God does not die nor will he ever free us, we will always be under His control.

Now there are ADVANTAGES to be adopted as sons:

First, you bear His name (cf. you "are of God's household" – Eph. 2:19). *Ever wanted to be a part of something so great and magnificent? You are!*

Before you belonged to a household that had a tyrant for a father and now you belong to a new father who is *unselfish, loving, and caring and wants the very best for you!*

Second, you are given the hope of glory with all its privileges. Paul tells us in **Romans 8:23** –

²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, **the redemption of our body.**

One day we will receive new bodies. They will be like Christ after His resurrection, and will be redesigned and adapted for heaven. This is the full realization of our inheritance.

Q: *Now through what agency did this come through?* Every adoption has an agency. What was ours?

A: Through *the agency of Jesus Christ*. Look at **v. 5** –

⁵He predestined us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself...

It was through *or* by means of the work of Christ that this was made possible for us to be adopted into the family of God.

Jesus brought us to fellowship with God the Father so that now *“we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”* (cf. Rom. 8:15) – *“to him”* that is the Father.

Q: *How can this be?*

A: Because it is *“according to the kind intention of His will”* (cf. v. 5).

Other versions read *“good pleasure”* KJV or the NLT reads – *“this is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.”*

It brought a smile ☺ upon the Father’s face to accomplish His will.

Two questions remain:

- *Why did God do all of that for us? Why did He want us to be His sons?*

This is the way Paul responds in **v. 6** –

⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace...

Above all else, *God elects and saves us for His own glory*. That’s why we praise Him all day long...all our days.

Isaiah tells us that even the *“beasts of the field will glorify”* God (Is. 43:20), and *“the heavens are telling of the glory of God”* (cf. Ps. 19:1).

Now as His children we join in *“the praise of the glory of His grace.”*

That is why in even doing the mundane things of life we are to do so “*to the glory of God*” (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31).

It is never about our “*glory*” it is about God’s GLORY!

And if we are consumed with His glory, we will want to bring to our great God and Father, greater obedience and faithfulness.

The life of a child of God is about righteous obedience to the Word for the glory of God. When you boil it down, a child of God is one who devotes himself/herself “*to inquire into the will of God.*”

Because that is what brings glory to the Father. That is what a child of God desires to bring to the Father: glory to Him by doing His will.

Transition: Having *looked* to Your Father, having *considered* adoption, I want us to apply James’ words to...

VISIT THE ORPHAN – James 1:26-27

James brings out the discussion to the forefront in **James 1:26-27** –

²⁶ If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless.

²⁷ 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.

James is after is *a belief that behaves*. He just happens to call it religion.

You may say that you are wholly devoted to God, but if you do not "*bridle*" your tongue, if your tongue is not controlled by God, your heart is not either.

Jesus told the self-righteous Pharisees in **Matt 12:34** –

³⁴ "... the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

*Whatever you call what you do in devotion to God, if it does not transform the heart, and thereby transform the tongue, you are totally worthless before God! "*This man's religion is worthless.*"

Instead James defines true religion in the following verse, **v. 27** –

²⁷ **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.

The terms "*pure*" and "*undefiled*" are synonymous with one another, the first emphasizes "*cleanliness*" and the other denotes "*freedom from contamination.*"

Put them together and you have the kind of religion that is *best in the sight* of our God and Father – the kind that reflects His own heart.

We read in the OT the following truths regarding His heart:

- **Psalm 68:5** – **A father of the fatherless** and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation.
- **Psalm 146:9** – The LORD protects the strangers; He **supports the fatherless** and the widow, But He thwarts the way of the wicked.
- **Deuteronomy 10:18** – **“He executes justice for the orphan** and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

It should not come as a surprise that God again tells us of His special attention to the orphan and widow and how He calls such attention as *“pure and undefiled”* religion.

Now generally the neediest people in the early church were orphans and widows. You have to remember that there were no life insurance or welfare programs to support them.

It was very difficult to find a job especially if you were an orphan or widow. You had no close kin, or at least none who would help. They were in desperate straits.

It is no wonder that God calls His children to *“visit”* them. The Greek term is *ἐπισκέπτομαι* and it meant more than *“to drop by for a chat.”*

It carried the idea of caring for others, exercising oversight on their behalf, and of helping them in whatever way is needed.

It was going over to their home with *“helpful intent.”* It may even mean that you *“look after”* the individual *“with the implication of continuous responsibility.”*¹⁰

¹⁰ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, vol. 1, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996), 462.
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The term comes from the same root as *episkopos*, which means “overseer.” That is why **Polycarp** writes in his letter to the Philippians (c. 117) –

6. The presbyters, for their part, must be compassionate, merciful to all, turning back those who have gone astray, **visiting** all the sick, **not neglecting** a widow, orphan, or poor person, but “always aiming at what is honorable in the sight of God and of men,” [cf. Prov. 3:4; cf. 2 Cor. 8:21.] avoiding all anger, partiality, unjust judgment, staying far away from all love of money, not quick to believe things spoken against anyone, nor harsh in judgment, knowing that we are all in debt with respect to sin.¹¹

Thus it speaks of the heart of a shepherd. This is what a person who cares does. And because such people who are without parents and husbands are unable to reciprocate in any way, caring for them reveals true sacrificial love.

It is that kind of love that we are to have for one another.

Allow me to read a bit from the Apostle John **1 John 2:10ff** –

¹⁰ The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

¹¹ But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;

¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

¹⁶ We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

¹¹ Michael William Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers : Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 213.
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Later the Apostle writes in **1 John 4:7-12** –

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

⁹ By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹² No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

CONCLUSION

My beloved, true Christianity is manifested from a pure and loving heart by the way you and I *walk*, by the way we *act*, by the way we *do* what God has set as an example for us to do – *to care* for the orphan.

My beloved, *how are we manifesting our love and care for orphans and widows?*

How are we visiting them in their distress, alleviating their needs, showing them the love of God in both word and in deed?

What is the condition of our heart these days my beloved? Do we have the heart of a guardian and provider when it comes to the orphan?

We cannot allow to separate our love for God and our love for others.

God in His love and grace has given us concrete ways to implement His heart for the orphan. He calls us to Look to Him as Father, we can call this the great doctrine of the Fatherhood of God who will never leave us or forsake, or abandon us. He calls us to consider our adoption into His family and what a humbling truth it is. And He calls us to visit the orphans for it is in line with His heart. It is what has exemplified for us. It is what He calls "*pure and undefiled religion.*"

Let's Pray.