

Bribes and Offerings

Jeff Dunn

Day 1: True Religion

Reading: James 1:22-27

Devotional: James reminds us that true religion is not just about outward appearances or rituals, but about how we live our faith in practical ways. Today's passage challenges us to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world. Reflect on how you can balance acts of service with personal holiness. Are you more focused on one aspect than the other? Ask God to help you cultivate a faith that is both pure and active in love.

Day 2: The Heart of Worship

Reading: Amos 5:21-24

Devotional: God speaks through Amos, expressing His displeasure with empty religious observances. He desires justice and righteousness more than superficial offerings. Consider your own worship practices. Are they genuine expressions of love for God and others, or have they become mere routines? Pray for God to renew your heart, aligning your actions with His desires for justice and compassion in the world.

Day 3: Cleansing and Renewal

Reading: Psalm 51:1-12

Devotional: David's heartfelt prayer for forgiveness and renewal resonates with our own need for God's cleansing grace. Like David, we all have areas in our lives that need God's transforming touch. Spend time in honest self-reflection, acknowledging any areas of impurity or lack of compassion. Then, echoing David's words, ask God to create in you a pure heart and renew a steadfast spirit within you.

Day 4: True Riches

Reading: Revelation 3:14-22

Devotional: The message to the Laodicean church serves as a wake-up call to those who may be spiritually complacent. It's easy to become self-satisfied with our material comforts or religious activities while neglecting our true spiritual condition. Ask God to open your eyes to see yourself as He sees you. Where might you be "lukewarm" in your faith? Invite Jesus to come in and "dine" with you, deepening your relationship with Him.

Day 5: Living Sacrifices

Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: Paul urges us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This involves both inward transformation and outward service. Reflect on how you can present your whole self - body, mind, and spirit - to God today. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern God's will and to empower you to live it out. Consider one practical way you can demonstrate your love for God and others today, whether through an act of service or by resisting worldly influences.