

What Is True Religion?

True religion is a serious and personal concern. It arises from a right knowledge of God and ourselves; a sense of the great things He has done for fallen man; a persuasion, or at least a well-grounded hope, of our own interest in His favor; and a principle of unbounded love to Him who first loved us.

True religion consists in an entire surrender of ourselves, and our all, to God; in setting Him continually before us, as the object of our desires, the scope and inspector of our actions, and our only refuge and hope in every trouble. It also consists in making the goodness of God to us – the motive and model of our behavior to our fellow-creatures: to love, pity, relieve, instruct, forbear, and forgive them, as occasions offer, because we ourselves both need and experience these things at the hand of our heavenly Father.

The two great points to which true religion tends, and which it urges the soul, where it has taken place, incessantly to press after, are: communion with God, and conformity to Him. And as neither of these can be fully attained in this life, it teaches us to pant after eternal glory; to withdraw our thoughts and affections from temporal things, and fix them on that eternal state, where our desires shall be abundantly satisfied; and that work begun by grace – shall be crowned with glory!

-John Newton