

## James

### Lesson #7, Chapter 2:1-7

Ask the Lord for His grace as you sit and study His Word. We always need His help in coming to the Word.

1. How does James 1:26-27 fit with the subject theme of Chapter 2 verses 1-7?
2. The NASB tells us in James 2:1, "My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism." What James wants us to do might seem a bit difficult to mentally grasp so it's helpful to look at other translations. The ESV lends some understanding when it says, "My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." While the NIV translates verse 1 as, "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism." So, what is it that James is concerned about according to verse 1?
3. What is *personal favoritism* [Strong's #4382 (ESV, NKJV *partiality*)]?
4. How was that attitude of partiality or favoritism showing up in the early church according to verses 2-4?
5. Brainstorm for a minute about how partiality or favoritism might show up in our church. Now consider, how it might show up in you personally.
6. When we show partiality or favoritism like the kind mentioned in verses 2-4, how are we described in verse 4?

7. What is at the heart of God's objection to this kind of favoritism or partiality among believers? See Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 10:17; Proverbs 14:20-21; James 2:4; Jude 16.
  
8. How can we combat these attitudes? See Romans 12:16; 13:8-9; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Galatians 3:28; James 2:8.
  
9. All partiality isn't forbidden however. We are to show honor, which naturally means singling someone out for favor. What instances are we to do that? See Romans 12:10; Ephesians 6:2; 1 Timothy 5:1-3, 17-18; 1 Peter 2:17.
  
10. Neither is God saying all judging is bad. In what situations is it right and good to judge? See Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 5:19-25; Hebrews 5:14.
  
11. So again, if some kinds of judging and honoring aren't bad, then what's wrong with the kind of partiality being addressed here in James 2:1-4?
  
12. What do we learn about the poor from verse 5?
  
13. How should the information from verse 5 be a death knell to the distinctions taking place between the rich and the poor described in verses 2-4?

14. What honor and dignity the Lord gives to His children, even though they are disdained in the world's eyes! Look up the following verses about being poor as a believer. See Proverbs 22:22; Matthew 11:5; Mark 12:42-44; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 8:1-5.
  
15. What is the true spiritual state of many who are rich? See Proverbs 11:28; Matthew 13:22; 19:23-26; Luke 12:15-21; 1 Timothy 6:9-10; Revelation 3:17-18.
  
16. Whether rich or poor, noticed or unnoticed, favored or not, what must be our guide no matter who we are or what we have or don't have? See 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; 12:9-10; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 4:10-13.
  
17. It's easy to think of this section in more abstract terms, that these kinds of attitudes are embodied in *others* rather than ourselves. So, let's bring the mirror of the Word in a little closer to examine our own heart attitudes. What kinds of favoritism or partiality attitudes do you find yourself battling at times?
  
18. Have you ever been one of the "poor" in the eyes of another and been passed over or ignored? What truths from God's Word did you need to tell yourself so you wouldn't sin in response?
  
19. Have you ever been one of the "rich" in the eyes of another and been fawned over or exalted to the point of being uncomfortable? What truths from God's Word did you need to tell yourself so you wouldn't sin in response?

20. Most of us are rich in the world's goods compared with many in the rest of the world. What truths from God's Word do we need to impress upon our hearts, so we don't sin against our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in more humble circumstances? What attitudes do we need to cultivate so we won't fall into the trap of wrong thinking James addresses in this passage?
21. What do we learn about God Himself and His desire for His children from James 2:1-7? See also Acts 10:34-35.

"The doctrine of God's grace, if we really believe it, forces us to relate to people on the basis of God's plan and not on the basis of human merit or social status. A "class church" is not a church that magnifies the grace of God. When He died, Jesus broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22). But in His birth and life, Jesus broke down the walls between rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. It is wrong for us to build those walls again; we cannot rebuild them if we believe in the grace of God." Warren Wiersbe

"We should do well to measure all men by God's standard,—to measure them not by the amount of their income, but by the condition of their souls. When the Lord God looks down from heaven and sees the children of men, He takes no account of many things which are highly esteemed by the world. He looks not at men's money, or lands, or titles. He looks only at the state of their souls, and reckons them accordingly. Oh, that you would strive to do likewise! Oh, that you would value grace above titles, or intellect, or gold! Often, far too often, the only question asked about a man is, "How much is he worth?" It would be well for us all to remember that every man is pitiably poor until he is rich in faith, and rich toward God. (James 2:5.)" J. C. Ryle

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 352.

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Practical Religion: Being Plain Papers on the Daily Duties, Experience, Dangers, and Privileges of Professing Christians* (London: Charles Murray, 1900), 317–318.