

Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C Sunday School

Lesson 11 February 11, 2024

TREAT EVERYONE EQUALLY

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TREAT EVERYONE EQUALLY

- ▶ Bible Basis: James 2:1-13
- ▶ Bible Truth: Do not show favoritism.
- ▶ Memory Verse: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (James 2:5, KJV)
- ▶ Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will REVIEW James’ writings concerning partiality and ways to avoid it; EXPLORE the full meaning of the phrase “Love your neighbor as yourself; and INVESTIGATE ways we might discriminate against certain groups and find methods to instead demonstrate the love of God to those groups.

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Lesson Scripture: James 2:1-13, KJV

1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:



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Lesson Scripture: James 2:1-13, KJV

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?



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Lesson Scripture: James 2:1-13, KJV

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.



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Lesson Scripture: James 2:1-13, KJV

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.



LIGHT ON THE WORD

James was the half brother of Jesus Christ. He wrote a letter to believers whose behavior contradicted their faith in Jesus Christ.

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Teaching the Bible Lesson

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will learn to treat everyone equally.



INTRODUCTION

Examples in James

The epistle of James is a letter written by James to remind those who had become prosperous about their foundations in the faith. The prosperous believers were identified by James as having “faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (from James 2:1, NLT). James used some examples from daily life to remind them of the commitment of faith they had made to Jesus Christ. James used himself as an example by first identifying himself as “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (from 1:1). James chose two illustrations to demonstrate how partiality and ill treatment of the poor become stumbling blocks to believers and can contradict our faith in Jesus Christ.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will learn not to show favoritism, but to love one's neighbor as we would love oneself.

I. NO FAVORITISM AMONG PEOPLE

James 2:1-7

James, who has been identified as the half-brother of Jesus Christ, wrote a letter of practicality to the believers. In this section, James addressed the moral behavior of believers toward the rich and the poor. James had just informed his readers what pure religion was all about. It was about serving those who are less fortunate—the orphans and the widows (James 1:27). Now it was time for him to look at some situations where professing Christians might not actually live out the faith in practice, and he begins here with the rich and the poor.

I. NO FAVORITISM AMONG PEOPLE

James 2:1-7

Here James continued his admonitions from chapter 1 by instructing believers that they are to emulate the Lord Jesus Christ with regards to how they treat and view other people. Like Paul's admonition to the Romans to "be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2), James was trying to help believers understand that they were no longer to have the world's attitudes. As followers of Christ, they were not to show personal favoritism.

I. NO FAVORITISM AMONG PEOPLE

James 2:1-7

James then gave an example of how believers might be showing favoritism toward people without even realizing it. By pointing at them “having respect” (Gk. epiblepo, ep-eeBLEP-o) for the rich man over the poor man, James was drawing upon a common practice in the temples and courts of his society. In ancient Rome, the wearing of gold rings and fine robes denoted membership in an elite class that always received favored treatment in Roman courts. Under Roman law, the poor could not bring accusations against people of higher class, and the penalties were often much harsher for the poor. Since the synagogue had become the place that served both as the house of prayer and as the community court, some of this same kind of favoritism was creeping in there as well.

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I. NO FAVORITISM AMONG PEOPLE

James 2:1-7

James counseled the believers against adopting such ways. The practice of showing such favoritism was strictly forbidden in Jewish law (cf. Leviticus 19:13), and it was contrary to the ideals established by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a sense of bewilderment in James' voice as he asked believers how they could be guilty of despising the poor in the same fashion that the rich did. It was the rich who oppressed them. It was the rich who dragged them into court. James's hearers knew the wealthy classes were most guilty of oppressing Christians by dragging them before the court authorities for punishment (see Acts 4:1–3 and 13:50 as examples). By “despising” (Gk. *atimato*, at-im-AD-zo, meaning to treat with contempt) the poor believers, they were showing by their actions that they had not really heard the Word of God.

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I. NO FAVORITISM AMONG PEOPLE

James 2:1-7

They were behaving just like the unsaved world around them, and that was unacceptable. God had chosen the “poor” (Gk. ptochos, pto-KHOS, meaning helpless, powerless to accomplish an end) to inherit His Kingdom and to be rich in “faith” (Gk. pistis, PIS-tis, meaning a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah). James then reminded his hearers that the godless people they were emulating were the same ones who “blaspheme” (Gk. blasphemeo, blas-fay-MEH-o, meaning to speak reproachfully of, rail at, or revile) the name of the very Lord to whom they had given themselves.

I. NO FAVORITISM AMONG PEOPLE

James 2:1-7

James chose the phrase “worthy name” to refer to Christ because it was uncommon to use the name of God; other forms of expression were found. In choosing the phrase “worthy name” (Gk. kalos, kalOS, meaning beautiful by reason of purity of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy), James reminded his listeners that they now belonged to Christ and should embrace his example regarding how they lived and functioned in the world.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Rules of the Kingdom

James continued to show the believers their treatment of the poor also violated the law of love. “For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws” (verse 10, NLT).

II. NO FAVORITISM AMONG THE LAWS

James 2:8-13

Here, James reminded the believers of Jesus' proclamation that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the poor. God will judge the believers on their treatment of the poor, especially if that treatment contradicts their faith statement. The believers were not showing love; instead, their behavior toward the poor was judgmental and would end in the believers themselves being judged by Jesus Christ: "So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free" (verse 12, NLT).

II. NO FAVORITISM AMONG THE LAWS

James 2:8-13

When Christ was asked to identify the greatest commandment, He told His listeners that they needed to love. First, they were to love God with all their hearts, souls, and minds, and then they were to love their neighbors in the same ways that they loved themselves (see Matthew 22:37–40). James called this the “royal” law because it was universally held in Jewish society that God’s laws were higher than judicial laws; this law was a direct decree from God (see Leviticus 19:18) and was to be regarded as the highest, a law given by the King of kings Himself. The “neighbor” (Gk. plesion, play-SEE-on, meaning friend) to whom James was referring was anyone in need.

II. NO FAVORITISM AMONG THE LAWS

James 2:8-13

The Jewish society of James' day viewed a neighbor only as a fellow Jew. But James was seeking to guide his listeners into an understanding that their view of what made one a neighbor had to be expanded. Anyone bearing the name of Christ and belonging to His Kingdom was now to be included. Failure to follow the royal law would bring the "transgressor" (Gk. parabates, par-ab-AT ace, meaning one who breaks God's law) under God's penalty.

II. NO FAVORITISM AMONG THE LAWS

James 2:8-13

James emphasized that the smallest transgression of God's law makes one guilty of violating the whole law. A chain with a broken link is just a broken chain or a piece of clothing that has a tear in it is just a damaged piece of clothing. James was trying to help his listeners understand that they were not to pick and choose when it comes to obeying God's commands. By choosing the imagery of someone who would not commit adultery but would kill, James might have had in mind the zealots who were so pious that they would never commit adultery but who also had no compunction about assassinating those they deemed worthy of death. God is not honored when we follow some of His commands and not others because we find some more acceptable than others.

II. NO FAVORITISM AMONG THE LAWS

James 2:8-13

Finally, James cautioned his listeners to “speak” (Gk. laleo, lai-EH-o, meaning to use words in order to declare one’s mind and disclose one’s thoughts) and to “do” (Gk. poieo, poy-EH-o, meaning to carry out, to execute) as those who would be judged by the law of liberty, which was the standard that was set by the Lord Jesus Christ (see 1:25). James was again reminding believers that because they had taken Christ into themselves, the Spirit of Christ was at work transforming their nature into something that was pleasing and acceptable to a holy God. This transformation should show itself in their speech and actions.

II. NO FAVORITISM AMONG THE LAWS

James 2:8-13

Jewish teachers often defined God's character by two attributes: mercy and justice. Mercy meant to show kindness or goodwill toward others, while justice meant condemnation. Both belong to the providence of God. James stated the truth that God's mercy will be shown to those who themselves show mercy, and God's condemnation will fall on anyone who does not show mercy. Believers who show kindness and goodwill toward others, then, need never fear being on the receiving end of God's judgment because Jesus has declared that the merciful will receive God's mercy (see Matthew 5:7).

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will understand that the solution to all the world's problems is found in the word "love."

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BIBLE APPLICATION

Love will conquer society's question of marriage. Love will decrease the murder rate. Love will stifle greed. Love will conquer racism and sexism. Love will conquer addictions. Love will end believers' segregated worship hour. Love will encourage doers of the Word. Love's motto will be, "Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42).

STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: : We will learn to be an example of the love of God.

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STUDENT RESPONSES

An active example of God's love is to initiate inter faith worship with a church of another ethnicity. Regularly commit to regular fellowship with one another.

Encourage the study of God's Word together. Begin conversations on how the dynamics of the Bible sustain each group. Evangelize together to demonstrate that we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).



Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Father, we know that You created all people as brothers and sisters. We know that Your love welcomes all and that You show no favoritism. Lord, we ask that You would use us as Your instruments to love everyone regardless of their race or social status.

We pray that You would use us to welcome them into Your Kingdom.

In Jesus' name we pray.

AMEN

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