

>>>>>> James – Lesson 06 <<<<<<<

- 1) Continuing, James uses the topic we discussed last time, showing favoritism, to springboard into another situation concerning equality.
- 2) This time however, it is not equality of people or our actions toward them but equality of sins.
 - a) Equality in our eyes and the eyes of God.
- 3) Verses 12 and 13 are connected but we will read 8-11 first then spend some time looking specifically at those last two verses.

James 2:8-11 (NASB 2020)

⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the Law as violators. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole Law, yet stumbles in one *point*, has become guilty of all. ¹¹ For He who said, “DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,” also said, “DO NOT MURDER.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but do murder, you have become a violator of the Law.

- 4) First, James tells us if we are really not showing favoritism but are really just showing love to our brothers and sisters then that’s all good.
- 5) However, he then raises the bar.
 - a) Simply put, the last verses we discussed about favoritism were not optional – we **cannot** show partiality or prejudices, in our dealing with others – either one is a sin.
- 6) There is a subtility here that we may need to look at.
 - a) What is happening in vs. 8 and 9 is the person may convince himself that he is “Loving his neighbor as himself” BUT if in truth, he is simply showing partiality (motives enter in here) then he is sinning.
- 7) My personal take on this passage is that James is telling us two things here:
 - a) The **first** is that **we must** consider all sins equally serious.
 - i) A couple of other scriptures which speak this are:

Romans 6:23 (NASB 2020)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 3:4 (NASB 2020)

⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

- b) The **second** consideration is that any unrepented sin separates us from God
 - i) Perhaps another way to say that is when we sin, our guilt in **God’s eyes** whether we are telling a “little white lie” or “killing someone” **may be the same!**
 - ii) Note the word I used was guilt – i.e. guilt as opposed to innocence.
- 8) There is however an issue when we look at this regarding God’s punishments of various sins.
 - a) Uza was killed for touching the Arch.

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- b) Moses' punishment for disobeying God and smiting the rock was not being able to enter the promised land.
- c) Ananias and Sapphira were killed for their deception of the Holy Spirit.

Does it appear to you from this list of sins verses punishments that God does see some sins differently than others?

If we were allowed to, would we have chosen the same punishments for the given sin?

- d) Jesus confirms the fact that there are degrees of sin ...

John 19:10–11 (NASB 2020)

¹⁰ So Pilate said to Him, "Are you not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" ¹¹ Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over Me at all, if it had not been given to you from above; for this reason the one who handed Me over to you has *the* greater sin."

- e) The key here is however that though the sin of Pilate is considered less and that of the Pharisees greater, they are both still separated from God by their sins.
 - i) Both still guilty!
- 9) This issue can be resolved by considering all sin *equal* in God's eyes and in our eyes.
- 10) I know James' premises are very black vs. white – basically, sin is sin.
- 11) However, in view of the scriptures we just read, we need to answer the question:

In what way are all sins equal?

- a) It separates us from God.
- 12) I think we also need to answer the next question as well:

How important is it for us to see things as James does here – sin is sin – no big or little, no difference?

- 13) I personally feel that we should try to get our thinking in line with what James is saying for at least two major reasons.
- a) **First**, if we do not agree that all sins are equal and that they separate us from God, we may not feel the need to repent of what we consider the "lesser sin" thereby putting our salvation in jeopardy.
 - b) **Second**, if we work at leveling this playing field (sin A to sin B etc.) we will be more likely to look at things realistically and become less complacent about these "*lessor sins*" we encounter in our daily walk.

Can anyone think of a possible downside to considering all sin equal?

- 14) One that I can think of is letting our own sense of right and wrong drive us instead of God's.
- a) In other words, elevating our ideas of right and wrong or traditions to the level of sin and all that would imply.
- 15) There is at least one other important point in these past few verses.

- a) If, we were living under the “unfulfilled Law” and without Christ’s coming it would be crushing!
 - i) In essence there is no way to win – if we sin in any way – we are guilty of the whole law and therefore have no way out.
 - ii) This was the situation for the Jew who would not accept Christ as the Messiah!