

Show me your faith

James 2:18

3. By Treating People Properly

James 2:1-13

¹ My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Favoritism is forbidden

▲ Favoritism is improper and inappropriate

^{2:1} My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. ² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

- ▼ Note the straightforward instruction
- ▼ Note the sickening illustration
- ▼ Note the spiritual inappropriateness

▲ Favoritism is ignorant and insulting

^{James 2:5} Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

- ▼ Favoritism is ignorant of God's standards
- ▼ Favoritism is insulting to God's saints

▲ Favoritism is immoral and illegal

^{2:8} If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

- ▼ Favoritism breaks the Jewish love law Leviticus 19:18; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8
- ▼ Favoritism breaks the Jesus love law Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31

Love is loftier

▲ We must prioritize Christian love

^{2:8} If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

- ▼ Love without favoritism is the royal law
- ▼ Love without favoritism is the right law

▲ We must practice Christian love

^{2:12} Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,

- ▼ Love with communication and conversation
- ▼ Love with consistent Christian conduct
- ▼ Love with caution – a critique is coming

Mercy is mandatory

▲ Mercy is profitable

^{2:13} because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- ▼ This is a prediction from James
- ▼ There is a promise from Jesus

▲ Mercy is powerful

^{2:13} Mercy triumphs over judgment!

- ▼ Mercy is powerful in earthly relationships
- ▼ Mercy is packed with eternal rewards

Action Assignments

- Remember that "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Work to know people well enough to get a good sense of their hearts so that you can begin to see and value what God sees and values in them.
- Expand your circle of spiritual family to include people who are different from you in a variety of ways. Treasure and rejoice in the common denominators that link the family of God together. Recognize that others have spiritual riches to share with you, and you have spiritual riches to share with them, and start sharing and growing.
- Be filled with the Spirit and stay full of the Holy Spirit so that you can possess supernatural spiritual capacity to "love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22).
- See every person outside the body of Christ as a precious life for whom Jesus died and whom God wants to save. Refuse ever to allow pride or preferences or prejudices or fear or insecurity to keep you from being an agent of God's grace and a messenger of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11).