

**June 28, 2020**  
***The Bridge Bible Fellowship***  
**Pastor Paul S. Brown**  
**James 2:1-13**

**“Stop the Sin of Partiality – Part 1”**

- I. Prescript (1:1)
- II. Be Joyful in Trials (1:2–15)
- III. Stop Being Misled (1:16-18)
- IV. Respond Properly to the Word of God (1:19-27)
- V. Stop the Sin of Partiality (2:1-13)**

**A. Reproof (2:1-4)**

**a. Exhortation (1)**

**b. Illustration (2-3)**

**c. Application (4)**

**So What?**

# Stop the Sin of Partiality – Part 1

James 2:1-13

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- v. Stop the Sin of Partiality (2:1-13)

<sup>1</sup> My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of* personal favoritism. <sup>2</sup> For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, <sup>3</sup> and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," <sup>4</sup> have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? <sup>8</sup> If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. <sup>9</sup> But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors.

<sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by *the* law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

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  - A. Reproof (1-4)
    - 1. Exhortation (1)

<sup>1</sup> My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of* personal favoritism.



# Personal Favoritism (Partiality)

“To receive the face”

Leviticus 19:15 (NASB95) – ‘You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

Psalms 82:2 (NASB95) – How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah.

## Personal Favoritism (Partiality)

“This word always denotes favoritism, or partiality; a biased judgment based on external circumstances, such as race, wealth, social rank, or popularity, while disregarding the individual’s intrinsic merit.”

(James Hiebert)

Glorious Lord Jesus Christ

Deity

Condescension (Phil. 2)

Coming in glory

Never Partial

(Deut. 10:17-18; Mt. 22:16; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9;  
Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17)

Believers should never be partial

Dt. 1:17; 16:19; Prov. 24:23-26; 1 Tim. 5:21

John 7:24 "Do not judge according to appearance,  
but judge with righteous judgment."

Paraphrase: "Don't ever attempt to combine snobbery  
with faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."

What James is NOT saying:

You can't notice real differences between people

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You can't notice real differences between people

You are always to treat everyone exactly the same

You can't honor specific people at specific times;  
especially those who have a position of authority over  
you or are deserving of honor

What James IS saying:

You can't practice the SIN of partiality (2:9)



What James IS saying:

You can't practice the SIN of partiality (2:9)

Two extremes:

Treating someone favorably

Treating someone with contempt

# Countless Ways Partiality is Practiced

“personal favoritisms” (plural)

“Acts of personal favoritism”

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  - A. Reproof (1-4)
    - 1. Exhortation (1)
    - 2. **Illustration** (2-3)

<sup>2</sup> For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,

- “If” = hypothetical
- “assembly” = synagogue

<sup>3</sup> and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,"

- "Pay special attention"

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    - 3. **Application** (4)

<sup>4</sup> have you not made distinctions among yourselves,  
and become judges with evil motives?

- “Distinctions” = to divide; to decide; to mark as different
  - 1:6 = “doubting” (leads to being double-minded)

<sup>4</sup> have you not made distinctions among yourselves,  
and become judges with evil motives?

- “Judges with evil motives” = wicked, depraved **thoughts** or **dialogues** inside of your head that lead to evil decisions.



The point is not simply rich vs. poor  
and who gets a better seat at church.

The issue is **PARTIALITY**

## Discussion & Application:

1. What is **partiality** or **personal favoritism**? How would you define it? How is it practiced “positively” toward some people and “negatively” toward other people? What are some examples of it in the Bible? What are some examples of it in our current culture? What are some examples of it in modern churches?
2. What is the problem with making judgments about people based on external appearances? What Old Testament passages tell us that God doesn’t do this? What New Testament passages show us that Jesus didn’t do this?
3. What is James **NOT** saying? What are some ways we could recognize differences in people and/or give preference to people without it being the sin of partiality?
4. The exhortation in James 2:1 assumes that the “**brethren**” **ARE practicing partiality**. Why is this inconsistent with having faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? Is it possible to truly hold on to faith in Jesus and practice partiality at the same time? In Galatians 2, what did Paul do when he saw Peter trying to do this?
5. Many religious people around the world believe that God blesses people entirely on **merit**. If you do what you are supposed to do there are material blessings (wealth, success). If you don’t, there are no material blessings. What kind of attitude will “**successful**” people develop toward “**unsuccessful**” people if they believe that? What kind of attitude will “**unsuccessful**” people develop toward “**successful**” people if they believe that? What is wrong with this belief system?
6. Note the description of our “**glorious**” Lord Jesus Christ (v. 1) and the rich man dressed in “**fine**” (bright, shining) clothes. Why do you think James includes these descriptions? Why are people so prone to worship (serve) material riches? Why do people idolize people who are rich & famous? What does this say about their “faith”? Why is this a problem (see Mt. 6:19-24)?
7. The word “**assembly**” (synagogue – 2:2) refers to the building where they gathered. It would have a few seats of honor, then benches around the outer edge, and footstools beneath the benches. Some commentators believe James 2:2-3 is describing the church leaders gathering to render a verdict between two professing Christians (see 1 Cor. 6). Others see it as the church gathering together for worship. Either way, what is the basis of judgment shown here by the leaders in the church (elders or ushers)? What biblical principles does this violate?
8. What is the ultimate problem with the sin of partiality in verse 4? What possible evil motives might people in a church have for treating rich people better than poor people? What do they hope to get? List as many as come to mind. How do people rationalize away the fact that this is sin in the sight of God?
9. Ask the Lord to reveal to you the ways you have practiced the sin of partiality. Repent of this sin, confess it, and ask the Lord to forgive you and empower you to judge and treat people righteously. Think of specific ways that you could treat everyone in the church as beloved members of the family of God.
10. If you haven’t already done so, **memorize James 2:1-4** and quote it in the morning, at noon, and at night every day this week. Don’t forget to review the first chapter too. Ask the LORD to take what you have studied, memorized, and meditated upon, and make you more like Jesus.