

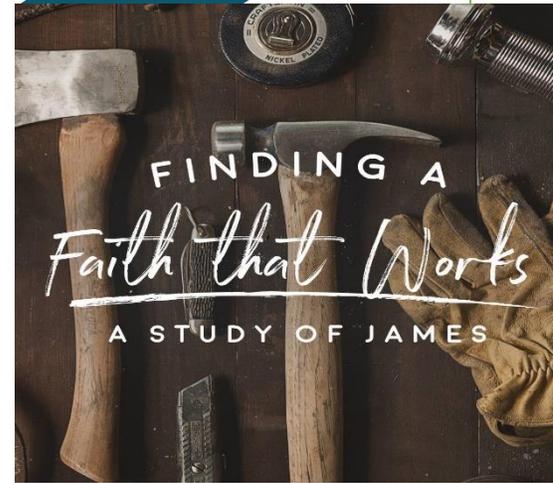
# JAMES: FINDING A FAITH THAT WORKS

## Lesson 4 - Faith Doesn't Discriminate - 2:1-13

### INTRODUCTION - PRACTICAL → SPECIFIC

- James 1 gives us a broad look at the things the author is going to address (trials and obedience). As we begin James 2, we are going to start seeing some specific applications and circumstances.
- James 2:1 address the brethren again. Then he puts our position into perspective. He says our faith is of our "...Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory..." He is purposefully drawing out attention to the king of our faith, Jesus Christ.
- We do not gain positions in our faith. We do not earn levels of importance in the Gospel. The Gospel places all men on equal ground. The word *glory* in verse one means splendor, renown, and honor. It is important to note right away that our faith is about the glory of God and no one else.

*A proper view of God aligns in our hearts a proper view of ourselves and a proper view of others. When we struggle with how we view others, we are undoubtedly struggling with how we view God.*



### 1. THE INSTRUCTION - THE "WHAT?" OF THE PASSAGE. - VS. 1-4

Vs. 2-3 – Here, we find an example of judging and discriminating against others. He presents a circumstance in which we treat others differently and with partiality based on how they look. Of course, the gold ring and fine clothing address the fact that we often assign influence and importance based on physical things. Judgment against the poor is obviously taught as wrong in these verses.

Vs. 4 – The thoughts that we have against others based on their appearance, their likeness to us, or their differences are called evil thoughts.

The example here is affluence, but you could apply status, race, opinion, political position, cultural differences, nationality, and a never-ending list of descriptions by which humans have separated themselves.

**The instruction here is clear, "Do not withhold or give glory, love, affection, grace, kindness or service to people based on their appearance or personality."**

### 2. THE MOTIVATION - THE "WHY?" OF THE PASSAGE? VS. 5-8

Vs 5 - Discriminating against others dishonors God and makes it clear that we do not understand the Gospel.

Notice the question posed here: **"Didn't God choose the 'poor' of this world to be rich in the faith and to become heirs of the kingdom he has promised to those who love Him?"**

If God did not bring the Gospel into our lives based on nationality, personality, looks, wealth, intelligence, or performance, why are these such big issues to us?

- Actions and words that show partiality in our lifestyle work against the Gospel.
- People are not to be used to help our ego or promote our cause.

Vs. 6-7 - Partiality reveals an issue of our hearts.

Vs. 8 - We have been commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. Often, I am most merciful to myself. I often excuse my own actions or lessen the severity of my mistakes all while magnifying the problems and issues of others.

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### 3. THE SOLUTION - THE "HOW?" AND WARNING OF THE PASSAGE - VS. 9-13

Vs. 9-10 - We quote this verse often regarding the guilt of mankind and the need for Gospel (both are true). However, the verse is written to Christians toying with favoritism.

Vs. 11 - God does not buy into our labeling of the severity of sins. To God, sin is sin. Here, God uses the sins of adultery and murder when instructing us about discrimination and prejudice. **He is teaching us that it is sin, and sin is big deal!**

Vs. 13 - The person who lives their life without mercy toward others will be judged without mercy themselves. "Mercy rejoiceth (triumphs) against judgment."

Vs. 12 - **Here is the better way to live: Speak and act like someone who has been shown infinite grace and mercy by a perfectly holy God!**

We must cease from our constant mental noting of the faults of others. We must stop comparing ourselves to all of those around us. We must stop comparing those around us to each other. We must see people in the light of the Gospel!

We deserve incredible judgment over our lives from God's law demanding justice for our sins. Through Christ, we have been extended this "law of liberty" through grace. The ground truly is level before the cross; let us kneel before it and glorify our King rather than trying to make ourselves or others the royalty.

Genuine faith leads to progress in this life, not perfection. Let us extend the grace and mercy that we desire to others. We can help others and allow ourselves to be helped without nagging, biting, bickering, fussing, and showing partiality.

Christians should lead the way confirming the fact that before God, all men are created equal.

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### FAMILY DISCUSSION / PERSONAL STUDY

The Book of James teaches us that true faith reveals itself by works. What we do in our Christian life is fueled by what we believe.

Take time together as a family in God's Word. Think throughout the day to reinforce the main truth of the week. Remember significant ways God has worked in your lives.

#### TAKE TIME

- Read James 2:1-4, 8-10 and 1 Peter 1:13-25 together. What things are identified as not important in our spiritual lives?

#### THINK

- Think about people that you can extend grace, mercy, and love toward this week. Think of someone outside your normal circle of life who you can be active in extending care and love toward.

#### REMEMBER

- Remember times when you were discriminated against. What feelings did it bring in your life? How did you want to respond? Did it make you think of the love of God?
- We should want our words and actions to never point people away from our Savior.