

The Lifting of Love

PASTOR MIKE YODER • JAMES 2:1-13

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.

James 2:1

Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in.

James 2:2

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,”

James 2:3

have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

James 2:4

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: 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?

James 2:5

But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?

James 2:6

Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of Him to whom you belong?

James 2:7

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right.

James 2:8

But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

James 2:9

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

James 2:10

For He who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

James 2:11

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,

James 2:12

because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

James 2:13

The Context — *The Essence of True Religion:* God calls us to help the vulnerable and marginalized.

A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.

Martin Luther

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables.”

“Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them”

Acts 6:3

“and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.”

Acts 6:4

The Gospel of God's justifying grace governs not only how we are converted to Christ but also how we live afterward.

John Piper

The Command — *Favoritism*
***Forbidden:* Preferential treatment
has no place in the church. (2:1)**

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Colossians 3:11

The point of Colossians 3:11 is not that cultural, ethnic, and racial differences have no significance; they do. The point is that they are no barrier to profound, personal, intimate fellowship.

John Piper

The Example — *Two Kinds of Attenders*: We are tempted to treat some better than others. (2:2-4)

Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all.

Proverbs 22:2

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

1 Peter 2:12

James says that by neglecting the poor we are negating the grace that lies at the heart of God. We ought to see everyone through the eyes of Christ. We ought to look at brothers and sisters around us, regardless of wealth or socioeconomic status, as those who, like us, are united to Christ, for Christ lives in them.

David Platt

**The Logic — *Destiny & Character*:
Those to whom we show favoritism
are often our detractors. (2:5–7)**

The Gospel lifts up the value of everyone before God. They are made in His image. The Gospel levels everyone before God. They are in need of His grace.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5:3

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.
Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.*

2 Corinthians 5:16

James is powerfully asserting that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw everyone as they really are. Gold fingers and flowing garments meant nothing to Him. Neither did the shabby attire of the poor. He noted the heart, not the wardrobe.

R. Kent Hughes

**The Verdict — *The Law's Standard:*
Favoritism is sin and worthy
of God's judgment. (2:8–11)**

In obedience to their King, Jesus, Christians are to build among themselves a genuine counterculture in which the values of the Kingdom of God, rather than the values of this world, are lived out.

Douglas Moo

James' practical, moral approach to faith cuts through all the religious words and rhetoric. James is saying that real faith is not indicated only by avoiding the big no-nos like murder and adultery, but by how we treat people, especially the needy.

R. Kent Hughes

The Warning — *Mercy vs.*
***Judgment:* How you treat others will**
boomerang back to you. (2:12,13)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Matthew 5:7

When you have experienced that kind of mercy, you clearly know how to show mercy to others. God's mercy *in* you overflows *from* you. This is not saying we need to be merciful to others in order to earn mercy before God. You can't earn mercy; it's mercy because it can't be earned. You can tell who has received mercy from God by the way they show mercy to others.

David Platt

**Believers are marked by their
genuine honor for everyone,
especially those who belong to Christ.**