

James

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James 2:1-4

- **My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? 2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. 3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, “You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor” —well, 4 doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?**

James 2:1-4

We live in a world that functions on partiality. From the corporate world, to the halls of political institutions, and even inside the church.

We are judged and evaluated on the things that are usually the least important to God.

James 2:1-4

- Of all of God's attributes, perhaps the least discussed is His impartiality.
- What we wear, how much money we have, what titles we have are all but irrelevant to God.
- 2 Chron 19:7 Fear the Lord and judge with integrity, for the Lord our God does not tolerate perverted justice, partiality, or the taking of bribes.

James 2:1-4

- **Deut 10:17** “For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed.”
- **1st Peter 1:17** And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do.
- **Ephesians 6:9** Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.

James 2:1-4

- **First we were tested in regard to how our faith responds to trials.**
- **Next, we were tested in regard to how our faith responds to temptation.**
- **Then, the test was around how we respond to the Word of God.**
- **Here the test is how we respond to the statuses of people. (rich, poor, smart or not, attractive or not)**

James 2:1-4

- **The issue here is sin – if we believe that one’s outward appearance, their bank account, or any such thing merits more attention from us, we have missed the point of salvation.**
- **It is not possible to favor one group without showing disfavor to another.**
- **Prov 28:21 To have respect of persons is not good.**

James 2:1-4

- **Basic question – what are the things we celebrate in some that elevates their status in our minds?**

- **Wealth**
- **Appearance**
- **Fame**
- **Power**
- **Ability**

**Humility
Generosity
Hospitality
Prayerfulness
Servanthood
And so on**

James 2:1-4

- **There is one kind of favoritism that is not only not wrong, but should be practiced**
- **Phil 2:3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.**
- **In any relationship, when one sees the needs of others as a higher priority than our own, we honor God.**

James 2:1-4

- **Consider Jesus' genealogy – an assortment of rich, poor, spiritual, and even some part-time scoundrels.**
- **In the Hebrews 11 'Hall of Faith' look at the variety of people there and remember that God is not respecter of persons. (Rahab is one example)**
- **Look at the disciples (can you say Judas?) and understand that God is impartial.**

James 2:5-9

- **5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? 6 But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? 7 Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? 8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.**

James 2:5-9

- **God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith – may I also add that He has also chosen some rich as well?**
- **Being poor is not a virtue any more than being rich is a sin – however, being poor does put one in a better position to see one's need.**
- **James is talking about the economically poor, but in general those who respond to God are those the world classifies as poor, or odd balls, or misfits.**

James 2:5-9

- **1st Corinthians 1:26** For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. **27** But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; **28** and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, **29** that no flesh should glory in His presence.

James 2:5-9

- **We sin when we dishonor the poor because they are poor.**
- **It is un-God-like to be impartial in how we treat people.**
- **Perhaps the worst social offense one can commit is to hold someone in contempt.**
- **I believe it would be accurate to say there are far more poor Christians in this world than rich ones.**

James 2:5-9

- James goes on to say that it is (usually) the rich who oppress you and slander the name of Christ.
- Think about our culture – who is it that seems to have the least need for God? (the rich or the poor?)
- If God blesses you financially, be careful that your own resources don't become your own downfall.
- Having unmet needs is not fun, but it is often healthy.

James 2:5-9

- **Verse #9 is clear - But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin.**
- **There is no warning here about mistreating the rich, the powerful, or the attractive – not because it's okay to mistreat them, but because we do not tend to do so.**
- **The warning is to treat all people well and do not be partial to one person or group over another.**

James 2:5-9

- Perhaps the bottom line is this – people are all image bearers of God and therefore are worthy of respect.
- Who are we to judge the value of anyone?
- Who are we to say how far (or near) one may be to the kingdom?
- What if we were to be the one that was shunned, disrespected, or deemed to be less than?

James 2:5-9

- In the book of Amos, God mentions 3-4 times in His rebuke of Israel that they had mistreated the poor.
- It matters to God how we treat the poor in our path.
- Jesus came from a poor town, worked an ordinary job, and then ended up not even having a place to lay His head.
- Would we treat Jesus well if he lived next door to us?

Interesting Questions

- **By global standards, do we have any poor among us?**
- **In a country where there seems to be a program or an agency for every need of our relatively poor, have we allowed the world to take the place of the church?**
- **Is it possible to be so helpful that we cause harm?**

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Astonishing Numbers: America's Poor Still Live Better Than Most Of The Rest Of Humanity

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There's a lot of debate (from certain quarters it's less debate than whining actually) about the increasing inequality in the United States. Sure, maybe it's true that the country continues to grow but what about the poor and their incomes?

And there might even be something worth worrying about in all of that too. But just as a short reality check, a few charts that show what it's really like to be poor in America: as opposed to being actually poor that is.

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