
Growing Up

WEEK 1: SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

GROWING – GIFTED – GLOWING

JAMES 2:1-13 (NIV)

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. ² 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. 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?

JAMES 2:1-13 (NIV)

⁵ 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? ⁶ 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? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming 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.

JAMES 2:1-13 (NIV)

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, “You shall not commit adultery,” I also said, “You shall 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.

INTRODUCTION

- ***“Judge people based on the content of their character and not on the color of their skin”- Martin Luther King Jr.***
- We should never judge a book based on its cover. Yet, discrimination too often raises its ugly head in our society and even in our churches.
- God doesn't play favorites and neither should we. *The invitation to Christ is “whosoever will may come.”*

JAMES 2:1-4

- James addressed everyone in this chapter as “***believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.***”
 - Why? Because this single fact is what binds his readers together.
 - Their shared position as believers should compel them to follow the commands that James gives them in these verses.
- If we are going to be Christians, then our life needs to display the effects of that belief. Mature believers understand that their lifestyle and habits must live up to their title “Christian.”

JAMES 2:1-4

- James tells them to stop showing favoritism.
 - The believers were judging people based only on externals – physical appearance, status, wealth, power; as a result they were giving deferential treatment to these people.
- James gives them this command for several reasons:
 - Impartiality is an attribute of God
 - *Read Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11.*
 - *Impartiality was an attitude Jesus Practiced.*
 - *Read Matthew 22:16; Luke 20:21.*
 - *Scriptures warns against favoritism.*
 - *Read Deuteronomy 1:17; Psalm 82:2.*

JAMES 2:1-4

- James in v. 2 gave a hypothetical case study.
 - One man had gold rings and fine apparel: This man was rich based on how he is described. Yet, the rich man is not a Christian.
 - One man had on filthy clothes: This man was poor based on the description of his clothing. He too was not a Christian.
- In v. 3, James said they gave “special attention” *this word in the Greek means “to look with favor on.”*
 - Church members were impressed with him and he received special services and VIP seating.

JAMES 2:1-4

- In v. 3, James says, then the Church members told the poor man “*you stand there*” or “*sit here ay my footstool.*”
 - The poor man was not even treated with basic human dignity.
 - Jews had a practice of seating important people nearest the scrolls and everyone in the back.
- James stated that mature believers treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of status or profession. No one is unworthy to be seated.
 - *Read Luke 14:7-11. – Jesus warned against self exultation.*
 - *Read Matthew 25:30 – Jesus says that its not just about do playing favorites, but when we do so we have treated Jesus with little value.*

JAMES 2:1-4

- James in v. 4, condemned their behavior because Christ has made us all one. *Read Galatians 3:28.*
- *By doing so, they were guilty of acting like unjust judges with evil thoughts.*
 - *Read Leviticus 19:15 & Matthew 7:11*
- **Q: Why is it wrong to judge a person by his/her economic status?**
- By playing favorites based on wealth, we make the wrong assumption that they are more blessed by God than others.
 - God doesn't promise us earthy riches or rewards, as a matter of fact Christ calls for us to be ready to suffer for him and give it all up for eternal life.
 - Read Matthew 6:19-21 & 1st Timothy 6:17

JAMES 2:5-7

- Please note, that Jesus first followers were common people. Christianity has a special message for the poor. *“Blessed are you poor for such is the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 6:20)
 - While poor believers may be impoverished in the eyes of the world; they are rich in faith and will inherit the kingdom.
 - The rich are not excluded from the kingdom just as the poor are not chosen due to their financial status. – **Rich or poor, believers must obey God and love him.**
 - James message for mature believers is to have faith in Jesus and obey his word, which includes belittling anyone because we share a common inheritance.

JAMES 2:5-7

- In v.6 James used the word “insulted” which is the Greek is “etimasate” which means to “**dishonor.**”
 - James readers had dishonored the poor because they did not treat them as God treats them.
- ***To dishonor the poor is to dishonor those who God honors and so to invert the order of God – John Calvin***

JAMES 2:5-7

- James showed how evil these immature believers actions were by asking 3 questions:
 - ***Is it not he rich who are exploiting you?***
 - In James society the rich oppressed the poor. thus the believers were treating those who were treating them bad with great honor.
 - The rich exploiting the poor is not new.
 - Read Ezekiel 18:5-8 & Exodus 22:25

JAMES 2:5-7

- James showed how evil these immature believers actions were by asking 3 questions:
 - ***Is it not they who drag you into court***
 - Scripture tells believers to not take each other to court like the world does.
 - But instead we must learn how to handle our differences in a more Christian manner.
 - Read Matthew 5:23-26 & 1st Corinthians 6:1-8

JAMES 2:5-7

- James showed how evil these immature believers actions were by asking 3 questions:
 - ***Is not them that are slandering the Nobel name of him to who you belong.***
 - The rich were abusing the name of Christ either by speaking evil of Christ or insulting Christians.
 - In this time, being identified with Christ's name helped to indicate who one belonged to. Yet in the society being called a Christian was not an honor.
 - *Read 1st Peter 4:13-14.*

JAMES 2:8-13

- Favoritism: *“This literally mean receiving or lifting the face. Ancient subjects would prostrate themselves to seek a ruler’s favor. If he lifted their faces, they would be heard. The word came to mean showing favor on improper grounds, often social or political.”*
- James references the royal law in v. 8.
 - *Read Matthew 22:37-40*
- James says, that if you show favoritism based on the outside or face value of a person, then you are committing sin.
- **Q:What is the difference between showing honor and playing favorites?**

JAMES 2:8-13

- James says that playing favorites is no different than killing someone. Sin is sin
 - *Read Romans 6:23.*
- *As Christians we are saved by God's grace through faith alone. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*
- *God empowers us to become the loving merciful people God has called us to be.*
 - Mature believers allow the Holy Spirit to transform their character to resemble Christ's Character.
 - *Read Psalm 51.*
 - James, urges us to throw off favoritism and put on mercy towards all people. This happens as we obey God in the way we treat people.

JAMES 2:8-13

- As believers we are recipients of Christ' mercy. ***Thus we are then called to we are to speak and act with mercy towards others.***
- *Read John 13:35.*
- We are to act and speak as people who will be judged by the law of freedom.
 - If we treat people without mercy, you will be judged by that same standard.
 - But if you show mercy, God will turn that mercy back on you. You reap what you sow.