

Feb 19, 2023



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

Society shines bright lights on the rich and famous. Yet fame doesn't make a person any more important than your next-door neighbor

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Heavenly Father, help me to show love and kindness to all, regardless of their station in life

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality
(James 2:1 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Mar 24, 2022)

Series: From Darkness to light

UNIT 3: God's Call

NEXT WEEK

Results of the Call
(1 Peter 2:1-10)

Responsibility of Those Called James 2:1-12

Lesson Background and Introduction

Discrimination in the Church - Prejudice and preferential treatment are always wrong. Treating a person in a certain way based on their external circumstances can be very dishonoring and hurtful. This is contrary to God's character; He cares for all His children regardless of their social status. James wrote during a time when people continuously judged each other based on class, ethnicity, nationality, apparel, or religious background. High-minded people looked down upon and mistreated those of the lower economic class - slaves, beggars, barbarians, and even women. When Jesus walked the earth, He corrected this prejudicial thinking. He demonstrated through His actions and teaching that God sees all of humanity as valuable, deserving of His love. It is always wrong to discriminate against people because of the size of their pocketbook, the color of their skin, the size of their nose, or any other such distinction.

Partial Treatment - James gave an example of two men who came into a church meeting, one in elegant clothing but the other poor and filthy. How would the congregation respond? Would the wealthy man get the best seat in the house and the other man be placed in the back of the church, closely watched? This is not God's heart. Indeed, the Scriptures indicate that a poor man is more likely to seek God because of his need, whereas a rich person may depend upon possessions and see no need for divine assistance (1 Tim. 6:6-10). God's children are not to show favoritism. James points out that if we treat people differently based on something external, we are violating God's law. Some may try to say, "Well, that's not as bad as adultery, stealing, or some other sin." But James wanted to make it crystal clear—favoritism is a sin. Other sins do not "trump" it. Pastor Charles Swindoll sums it up well: "If there is one place where class distinctions should break down, it is in the place of worship where color, political persuasion, type of Christian experience, money, status, rank, name, apparel, smell, size, and age mean nothing."

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

Today's text is justly famous for the specific sin that it identifies and condemns. Discrimination grows out of our fallen human nature, a nature that is drawn to wealth and status, or at least proximity to it. Everyone is subject to its allure, and we all can think of instances when the temptation has been present for us. James's teachings are, therefore, for us as well as for his initial readers. May we take this lesson as an encouragement to examine the patterns of our lives and to root out prejudice, replacing it with love.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

The Injustice of Favoritism (James 2:1-4)

Injustice of favoritism in faith (1)

Injustice in faith by having a motive of pride (Matt 23:1-7)

Injustice in faith by associating with only friends and family (Luke 14:12-14)

Injustice in faith through envy (John 4:1)

Injustice in faith by using God's Word incorrectly to discriminate (Acts 10:28)

Injustice in faith through peer pressures (Gal 2:11-13)

Injustice in faith through boasting and thinking more highly of oneself than others (Luke 18:11-14)

Injustice in practice (2-3)

Injustice in practice because of status (Deut 1:17)

Injustice in practice because of wealth (Lev 19:15)

Injustice in practice through perverting justice (Deut 16:19)

Injustice in practice by not keeping God's Word (1 Tim 5:21)

Injustice in practice through secretly showing partiality (Job 13:10)

Injustice in practice shouldn't be done because there is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11)

Injustice in relationships (4)

Injustice in relationships by allowing worldly standards to stand in the way of fellowship (John 4:27)

Injustice in relationships should not happen because all Christians are one in Jesus (Gal 3:27-28)

Injustice in relationships should not happen because all Christians are members of one body (1 Cor 12:12)

Injustice in relationships should not happen because God has no distinction between Christians (Rom 10:12)

The Inconsistency of Favoritism (James 2:5-7)

God's view (5)

God shows no favoritism between the rich and the poor because they are all the work of His hands (Job 34:19)

God is not unjust (Heb 6:10)

God shows no favoritism and accepts no bribes (Deut 10:17)

There is no injustice with God (2 Chron 19:7)

God is Master over all (Eph 6:9)

God judges impartially (1 Peter 1:17)

World's view (6-7)

The world views people based on their own standard and does not see the new creation in a person (2 Cor 5:16-17)

The world does not accept all men from every nation (Acts 10:34-35)

The world judges by outward appearances that does not result in right judgments (John 7:24)

The world's view depends on surface things (2 Cor 10:7)

The world's view seeks answers through human ideas (Acts 17:16-21)

The Iniquity of Favoritism (James 2:8-12)

Iniquity in not loving (8-9)

Iniquity in not loving others (1 John 4:20-21)

Iniquity in hating our brothers and sisters (1 John 2:9-10)

Iniquity in following Satan's attributes and not loving our brothers (1 John 3:10)

Iniquity in anger with others (Matt 5:21-22)

Iniquity in disobedience to God's Word (10-11)

Disobedience through being deceived by empty words (Eph 5:6)

Disobedience through minds being corrupted (Titus 1:15-16)

Disobedience because of rejecting the gospel (Heb 4:6)

Disobedience because of not accepting God's advice (Prov 1:29-31)

Disobedience through forsaking God's word (Jer 9:13-14)

Disobedience through violating God's covenant Word (Deut 17:2-5)

Iniquity in not showing mercy (12)

Not showing mercy because of shutting ears to the cries of others (Prov 21:13)

Not showing mercy because of ungratefulness (Matt 18:28-19:1)

Not showing mercy through not helping others (Matt 25:41-46)

Not showing mercy because of wickedness (Prov 21:10)

Not showing mercy because of disobedience (Jer 21:3-7)