

Living Out Your Faith

A Study in the Book of James

LESSON THREE

No Respector of Persons

(James 2:1-13)

It is noteworthy for us to remember that James's readers are primarily, if not exclusively, Jewish Christians, who have been raised to regard others according to their pedigree, nationality and religion. They were (and are) God's chosen people, and they considered all non-Jews to be inferior and outside of God's hand of blessing. But in the New Covenant Christ made with us, all of that changed, and as we become a new creation in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, James strongly points out that God is no respecter of persons.

Prayerfully read through James, chapter two, verses 1 through 13.

1. Write out the instruction that James gives in **verse 1**.

2. James makes clear that "the Lord of glory" Whom we serve, shows no partiality, and we, as Christ's representatives on this earth should have no association with such attitudes. Look up the following verses and record them below.

Leviticus 19:15 -

Deuteronomy 10:17 -

Romans 2:11 -

Ephesians 6:9 -

3. In **verses 2-4** James gives us a practical example of behavior that we, as believers in Christ, should have no part in. This example is one of favoring a person because of their wealth or position over a person who is poor. We can read this and think how horrible a thing that would be, but do we find ourselves struggling with similar examples of prejudice? Can you think of some examples where a person's appearance or social status, or something else, influenced your behavior toward them? How does our treatment of a homeless person contrast with how we treat others? What about when we see someone with head-to-toe tattoos or piercings? These are all things that are sometimes hard for us to look at, but we can all be susceptible to prejudice. Share your thoughts.

4. James goes on to point out the difference between the attitudes of man and the heart of God in **James 2:5-7**. In **verse 5**, he contrasts man's attitude of the poor with God's heart toward them. What does he say about them?

5. The poor believer in Christ often does have a **richer faith** than the wealthy believer, simply because they need to rely on God's provision to meet their needs. Commentator **F.B. Meyer** states, **"The rich man may trust Him; but the poor man must... the poor man has no fortress in which to hide, except the two strong arms of God."** Because of this, we often find believers who have little in the way of material goods, but whose faith outshines most, and puts our own faith to shame. Do you have any examples of this that you've seen or experienced that you can share?

6. In **verse 6** James once again contrasts the difference between man's thoughts and God's. He begins the verse by stating that man, in a general sense, "dishonors" the poor, while God, as he has pointed out in the previous verse, has blessed the poor by giving them many opportunities to become rich in faith. Looking at the rest of **verse 6, along with verse 7**, what does James point out to his readers concerning the rich? Write down his words below.

7. James is most likely speaking of the wealthy as a whole, not those who are believers in Christ. His point is that man's tendency is often to honor what is not worthy of honor, and often what God, Himself, dishonors. It is important for us to remember that God does not show partiality **against** the rich, anymore than He does the poor, and it is certainly not a sin to be wealthy. But wealth in material things can often bring with it a disregard for the things of God. That is certainly not always the case, but it can be a great hindrance in many people's lives to coming into a true faith in Christ because they look to their wealth as the source of their security, rather than to God. Look up and write down Paul's words in **1 Timothy 6:10**.

8. The pride of life is one of the great deadly sins that has plagued man from the beginning of time. Be it pride in what we possess, what we've achieved, what we know (or think we know) or anything else that makes us think more highly of ourselves and keeps us "self-centered" rather than "God-centered." Our pride keeps us from humbling ourselves before the Lord and deceives us into believing that we don't need Him. God does not value what we so often do, and in fact, He often despises what we regard highly. Look up **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** and write down this passage below.

9. In **James 2:8** we see him point his readers to what he calls the **royal law**. This law is called **royal** because it is given to us by the King of kings. It is also royal because it is the second in importance to all of the commandments given to man. It is the highest and greatest in regard to mankind's relationship with mankind and how we are to treat one another. This law was first given to Moses in **Leviticus 19:18**. It was confirmed by Jesus as one of the greatest commandments. Read **Matthew 22:36-40**. What does Jesus say in conclusion about these commandments in **verse 40**?
10. What does **Galatians 5:14** say that confirms this?
11. How does **1 John 4:20 & 21** confirm the importance of this commandment?
12. Jesus was asked the question, "Who is my neighbor?" in **Luke 10:29**. He gives us an example in answer to that question in **Luke 10:30-37**. Read the account and share how this example speaks to your heart.
13. What does **Jesus say** in conclusion to his story in **Luke 10:37**?
14. James concludes his thoughts on this subject in **James 2:9**. Record what James says.

F.B. Meyer comments: “The law of love must be supreme with us; and we must love our fellows, whatever their position or property, as ourselves, for Christ’s sake. If we fail in this, we show that we have never entered into the heart of the Christian faith. A man may observe all the laws of health; but if he inhale one whiff of poison he may die; so we may be outwardly obedient to the entire Decalogue, but delinquency in love will invalidate everything.”

15. Write out James statements in **James 2:10 & 11.**

16. James was making the point that just because we don’t commit sins we might consider criminal, or more serious than others, the fact that we break God’s law in any area means we are sinners and transgressors. What did Paul teach us, as believers in Christ, about the law in the following verses?

Romans 3:20 -

Galatians 2:16 -

Galatians 3:24 & 25 -

17. Write out the instructions James gives in **James 2:12**

18. As Christians, we are no longer under the Levitical law, but we are, however, under the “law of liberty” or the “law of Christ.” What does Jesus tell us about this law (or commandment) in the following verses?

John 13:34 -

John 14:15 -

John 15:12 -

19. In what practical way does **Galatians 6:2** describe the law of Christ?

20. How do we do that, in practical terms? What examples can you give?

Warren Weirsbe gives us this insightful commentary, which drives the point home that James was making in **verses 10 & 11**: **“We only believe as much of the Bible as we practice. If we fail to obey the most important word — “love thy neighbor as thyself” — then we will not do any good with the lesser matters of the Word. It was a glaring fault in the Pharisees that they were careful about the minor matters and careless about the fundamentals (Mat 23:23). They broke the very Law they thought they were defending!”**

21. For those who believe that because we are saved by grace, we can continue to live in disregard of God’s law and His Word, what warning does Paul give us in **2 Corinthians 5:10**?

Warren Wiersbe states, “**Both Jesus (Joh 5:24) and Paul (Rom 8:1) assured us that Christian believers will never be judged for their sins; but our works will be judged and rewarded (Rom 14:10-13; 2Co 5:9-10)..... It is true that God remembers our sins against us no more (Jer 31:34; Heb 10:17); *but our sins affect our character and works*. We cannot sin lightly and serve faithfully. God forgives our sins when we confess them to Him, but He cannot change their consequences.**

22. How true! God paid the eternal price for our sins on the cross, and He cleanses us from the sins we daily commit, which break our fellowship with Him, when we confess and repent of them. But he does not remove the consequences that result from our sins. What examples can you give of this truth?

23. As we come to **verse 13**, the last verse of this lesson, what does James tell us in the **first half** of this verse?

24. Look up and write out **Hosea 6:6** below.

25. Explain in your own words what you think this means.

26. Jesus confirmed the words of Hosea 6:6 in Matthew 9:13. What did He say?

Matthew 9:13 -

27. Looking now at the **last part** of **James 2:13**, write down James words.

28. Look up and record the following Scriptures that speak on this theme.

Matthew 7:2 -

Luke 6:38 -

James 5:20 -

1 Peter 4:8 -

29. We have been given so much mercy, and grace upon grace. What does the very **last part** of **Matthew 10:8** tell us our response should be to all we've been given?

30. What does this personally mean to you? Explain it in your own words.

31. What was your greatest take-away from Lesson Three?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2025

LIVING  TRUTH