

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“Personal Favoritism”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 2:1-7

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-9.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 10.** We continue today in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #10. I have titled today’s message *“Personal Favoritism”* (2:1).
-) **SLIDE 11.** God has many attributes. We say He is all-knowing (omniscient). We say He is all-powerful (omnipotent). We say He is in all places (omnipresent). We say He is in total control of all things (sovereign).
-) **SLIDE 12.** I want to add one more attribute about God to this list. God is impartial.
-) **SLIDE 13.** DEUTEREONOMY 10:17. God is not only the God of gods and the Lord of lords, great and mighty and awesome, He also shows no partiality.
-) **SLIDE 14.** ACTS 10:34-35. Peter now understands that the gospel and salvation are for all people of all nations and not just the Jews. God shows no partiality.
-) **SLIDE 15.** ROM 2:9-11. When it comes time for judgment, God is impartial whether a person is a Jew or a Greek.
-) When it comes to judgment or blessing, God shows no partiality to a person regardless of what is on the outside—if they are black or white, rich or poor, male or female, tall or short, fat or skinny, red hair, gray hair, or blue hair, tattoos, American, Asian, or African, popular or unknown, 18 or 80, well-educated or illiterate. We are all different on the outside in some way. God is impartial to the outward appearance.

-) **SLIDE 16.** But humans do look at the outward appearance and can be partial to that outward appearance. Here is a text of Scripture that shows one of many differences between mankind and God. 1 SAMUEL 16:6-7.
-) In this text, the Lord is going to appoint a king to succeed Saul. God will not be choosing the biggest or the strongest or the most handsome man in Israel for the position of king. God's choice will be based upon this man's heart.
-) Since human beings do look at the outward appearance, human beings can show partiality. And Christians can show partiality. Christians can show favoritism. Christians can look at the outward and not the inward. And James is addressing that issue in our Scripture text today. He calls it favoritism.
-) **SLIDE 17.** Favoritism. What is favoritism? Webster.
-) In today's society when a boss needs to hire a person for a job, the boss may choose one qualified candidate or even a lesser qualified candidate over another simply because of favoritism.
-) They may make their choice based on the color of the person's skin, or how beautiful or handsome that person may be, or if that person has tattoos or not. The boss may show partiality in this hiring process based on something about the candidate's outward appearance. This happens all the time.
-) **SLIDE 18.** Let's look at 1 SAMUEL 16:6-7 again. Even in this Biblical example, Samuel would have chosen Eliab because of his outward appearance.
-) Favoritism is part of the human condition. But just because it is the human condition and many people do show favoritism, that does not make it right. Let's look at today's text and how James addresses favoritism. And we will keep this lesson of favoritism specifically to how it applies within the church.
-) **SLIDE 19.** JAMES 2:2-4. This text is very self-explanatory. The rich were being shown favoritism over the poor.

-) **SLIDE 20.** Pic. Jewish history. The synagogues at that time had benches around the outside wall and maybe a couple of benches in front. Most of the congregants either sat cross-legged on the floor or stood. There was a limited number of good seats.
-) **SLIDE 21.** MARK 12:38-40. We see the Scribes wanting the chief seats in the synagogue. In those days, social status and prestige meant everything.
-) So, we see this issue going both ways. Some people, like the scribes, wanted the chief seats because of their importance. And it appears that when James writes this letter, the church leaders wanted to make sure those with wealth had the best seats. The scribes demanded favoritism and the early church leaders showed favoritism. Either way, it was wrong.
-) **SLIDE 22.** JAMES 2:2-4. These two words are the focus of these seven verses. What is your motive for doing this? They are synonymous. Favoritism = evil motives and evil motives = favoritism. You can't have one without the other.
-) **SLIDE 23.** James is insisting that all people be treated equally in the church no matter their financial status. He may have picked this up from his big brother. MATTHEW 22:15-17.
-) **SLIDE 24.** James continues his argument in JAMES 2:5. Many people do not like the poor and therefore do not want to be around them. But we must give the poor the same opportunities as everyone else to hear the Word of God. Why? Because God shows no what? Partiality.
-) **SLIDE 25.** What is James' reason for rebuking these church leaders? JAMES 2:6-7.
-) Not all rich people are evil and not all poor people are good. But it was very common at that time for the rich to exploit the poor by using their political and judicial power. They would also feel like they could control the church with their wealth.

-) And they did control the church just by walking in the front door. It may have been subliminal and it may have been non-verbal, but it was still control. Had they dressed in normal attire, would it have had the same effect? No.
-) And James is saying don't cater to these people. These are the same people who oppress you and drag you into court. Don't be their best buddies and don't cater to them over the others just because they have wealth. Hey church leader, what is your motive for doing this? If you show favoritism, then your motive must be evil.
-) **SLIDE 26.** 1 TIMOTHY 5:21. What principles is Paul talking about here? How to treat those in the congregation who are older men, widows, orphans, elders, and those who continue to sin. Wow! That just about covers everyone now doesn't it?
-) Timothy, treat the entire congregation without partiality.
-) Can favoritism be shown in churches today? Absolutely. And it happens. I've seen it and maybe you have seen it too at one church or another too.
-) How often has the person or the family contributing the most money to the church want to have the final say in what the pastor preaches? Or have the final say in the church building maintenance and improvements?
-) I have known pastors both on a personal level and through the media sources who have allowed the money of certain people in their congregation dictate just about every aspect of their pastoral ministry. And that is favoritism. And the sad part is that it is easy to fall into that trap.
-) So, BGCC, allow me to assure you of one thing here this morning. In the 14+ years I have been here, I have no clue what any of you financially give to this church. And I don't ever want to know. Because if I did, it may or would persuade me to show what? Favoritism. Partiality to the big money givers.

-) And if I showed partiality to that person or family, that means I would have evil motives of some kind and to some degree.
-) The pastor cannot play favorites with the people especially to those who donate the most money to the church. And if and when he does, he now has evil motives.
-) Favoritism within the church. It's sinful. I better not be doing it and neither should anyone in the church congregation. Because favoritism always equals evil motives in some way.

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