

The Problem of Partiality

James 2:1-13

- “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” - ESV

- Do not try to combine your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with sinful forms of favoritism.

- Paraphrase

(Main Mandate)

- Stop Practicing partiality.
- Stop playing favorites.
- Stop engaging in snobbery.

- Προσωπολημψίαις - Greek
- Prosopolempsia

- “Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear *the cases* between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’”

- Deuteronomy 1:16&17

- How long will you judge unjustly
And show partiality to the wicked?

-Psalm 82:2

- To show partiality to the wicked is not good,
Nor to thrust aside the righteous in judgment.

- Proverbs 18:5



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- “It was commonly used of the partiality of a judge, raising the face of someone to his unjust advantage. It later came to be used of any form of improper preferential partiality, a biased judgement based on external circumstances, such as race, wealth, social rank, or popularity, while disregarding the individuals intrinsic merit.”

- Hiebert

- “We tend to put people in pigeonholes, in predetermined, stratified categories, ranking them by their looks, their clothes, their race or ethnicity, their social status, their personality, their intelligence, their wealth and power, by the kind of car they drive, and by the type of house and neighborhood they live in.”

- MacArthur

(Main Ingredient)

- Evaluating and treating people on the basis of externals.

(Gotta Get)

- Practicing partiality is incompatible with the faith.
- Living the faith requires an indiscriminate love for people.

- But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- Romans 5:8

- “To better appreciate James’s emphasis in this passage, it is necessary to understand that the vast majority of early converts to Christianity were Jewish and poor. If they were not already, many suddenly became poor when, because of their faith, they were ostracized from their families and society, so that a husband and father lost his job or a wife and mother was thrown out of the house without anything but the clothes on her back. There was intense hatred of fellow Jews who converted to Christianity ... it was the simple fact that the gospel offered so much to the poor and demanded so much from the rich that it was the poor who were swept into the Church.” - Barclay

- “In the society that James inhabited, the rich oppressed the poor. They dragged them to the law courts. No doubt this was for debt. At the bottom end of the social scale, people were so poor that they could hardly live, and money-lenders were plentiful and well practiced in extortion. If a creditor met a debtor on the street, he could seize him by the neck and literally drag him to the law courts. That is what the rich did to the poor.”

- Barclay

(Gotta Get)

- Practicing partiality is incompatible with the faith.
- Living the faith requires an indiscriminate love for people.
- Practicing favoritism has you living like the lost.

- But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

- I Timothy 1:5