



INTRODUCTION

Discrimination it is one of the great social tensions of our times. Such unkind conduct may not be too surprising in a world where selfishness and the protection of one's own interests are the guiding principles. However, a higher standard is expected from those who profess the faith in Christ. Our Christian creed must be followed by Christian conduct.

THE _____ TO REMOVE FAVORITISM (2:1)

Favoritism is giving unfair _____ treatment to one person or group at the _____ of another. This is something we have all been guilty of at one time or another. It is human nature to show favoritism but that does not make it right. Christians must not accept or reject persons on the basis of partiality, being impressed by position, wealth, looks, race, or any other superficial distinction.

Application: Too many believers draw a quick conclusion about people based on merely external first impressions. Faith in Christ and partiality are incompatible. Faith and favoritism are complete opposites.

THE _____ OF FAVORITISM (2:2-4)

A hypothetical case study of two men who enter a place of worship as guests is given. While hypothetically stated, the illustration suggests a situation that the readers would immediately recognize and strike their conscience.

A. The _____ man

Application: Often people attach their self-worth to their net-worth. They define themselves by their things and spend their lives trying to accumulate more. Our inclination is to gather all the material things we can in order to feel secure and confident; however, this may prevent us from finding security and confidence in our relationship with Christ.

B. The _____ man

Application: May we never forget that every man is someone for whom Jesus died. Never judge a jewel because it comes in a plain box. Every man's soul is invaluable and of inestimable worth. Jesus reminded His audience that a man's soul is worth more than the whole world (Matt. 16:26).

THE _____ AGAINST FAVORITISM (2:5-11)

James gives three arguments against favoritism, two through rhetorical questions, and a third through dogmatic declaration.

A. The _____ argument (2:5)

B. The _____ argument (2:6-7)

C. The _____ argument (2:8-10)

Application: The sin of favoritism is not to be taken lightly nor excused on the basis of some ultimate good that might result. Given the fundamental importance of this "royal law", to break this one law is like breaking all of them; and, vice versa, if you break any of the others, you've broken this one.

THE _____ TO AVOID FAVORITISM (2:8-13)

So how do we defeat discrimination? How does faith overcome favoritism? James gives us some practical application.

A. Let _____ be your law (2:8)

B. Let _____ be your standard (2:12)

C. Let _____ be your motive (2:13)

CONCLUSION

One of the traits of real faith is that it treats others without partiality. This passage allows no wiggle room for ambiguity – favoritism is sin. It is sin because it is based on prejudice, judging others by false standards. Prejudice and favoritism flourish when we stop looking at people the way God looks at them. This also means that we have stopped seeing ourselves as God sees us. We need to ask God to help us identify our prejudices and recognize situations in which we tend to show favoritism. Then we need to actively resist these tendencies, asking others to keep us accountable. Let love be your law, Scripture be your standard, and mercy be your motive. Real faith removes partiality.



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