

Sunday Bible Study Lesson: James 2:1-13
May 31st, 2020

Read **James 2:1-13**. What does James state in **verse 1**? _____

In other words, prejudice and faith in Christ are incompatible. In **verses 2-3**, James illustrates his point. What were the first century Christians guilty of doing?

It is easy to read these verses and think about how wrong those actions were. How different are you?

- If the house next door is for sale, and a family of a different ethnicity takes a tour; do you secretly hope they don't buy?
- If two people walk into your business--one in dirty overalls, and one in business casual--which one do you help more willingly?

Have thoughts such as these ever entered your mind?

- What's with all those tattoos and piercings?
- She seems uneducated and rough around the edges!
- He needs a shave and a haircut!
- She's not "my kind."

The truth is, we prefer people to look like us, act like us, and think like us. If we are not careful, we can show favoritism toward those who meet our standards and prejudice toward those who do not.

In verse 4, how does James describe the believers who have made distinctions between the rich and the poor who attend their meetings? _____

It is important to note that James is not saying that there is anything wrong with being rich or being poor. The focus is on the believers who were treating the rich differently from the way they were treating the poor.

In what way did the believers become "judges?" _____

What do you think their "evil motives" were? _____

Next, James gives reasons why partiality and prejudice have no place in the life of the believer or in the life of the church. From **verse 5**, complete this sentence: God has chosen those who are poor by the world's standards to _____

Why is it hard for the believers to see the poor as rich heirs? _____

Read 1 Samuel 16:7 to remind yourself of what God told the prophet Samuel as he was sizing up Jesse's son for the position of King of Israel. What did God say the difference is between the way we see others and the way he sees them?

What 2 questions does James ask in **verses 6-7**?

1. _____
2. _____

It is the rich and powerful who have been persecuting the Christians and have been slandering the name of Christ. Showing favoritism toward the rich, and mistreating the poor made no sense at all.

In **verse 8**, James quotes **Leviticus 19:18b**, and he calls it the royal law. According to James, what should motivate us to treat others well? _____

Read Jesus' reference to the royal law in **Matthew 22:37-40**. What do we call the "royal law" today? _____

In **James 1:9**, what are the consequences of showing partiality? _____

In **verses 10**, what does James say about a person who stumbles in one point of the law? _____

Read **verse 11** and think of the links of a chain. If one link is broken, the chain loses its effectiveness and strength. So it is with sin. It would be ridiculous for a person who steals a car to try to prove himself innocent by saying, "Well, I didn't rob a bank!" James is saying that the whole divine law of God shows his will for his people. We cannot choose the parts we want to obey. The design of this verse is to impress upon us a sense of the enormity of sin.

In **verse 12**, James reminds us that believers will be judged by the law of liberty. Look back at **James 1:25**. Remember that we discussed the law of liberty as being the law of love. If we are loving our neighbors (**James 2:8**), we are judged by the law of liberty.

What does **verse 13** say about how the believer who shows no mercy will be judged?

Praise God that his mercy triumphs over judgment for all who speak and act with love toward others!

Read Matthew 18:21-35. Why do you think Jesus told this parable in response to Peter's question in **verse 21**?

How does the parable relate to **James 2:13**?

Application for my life:

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I want to love you and to love others. I do not want to treat people differently based on any false measures or impressions that I form from outward appearance or actions. Remind me that showing love pleases you, and that showing partiality is a sin. Help me to see people through your eyes, and to love them as you do. Please help me to guard my thoughts; and when I am on the brink of being judgmental and not merciful, may your Holy Spirit alert me so that I may avoid sinfulness. May I be so full of your love and mercy that those attributes will spill over into the lives of others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Actions:

- Demonstrate God's love by my actions: Make a deliberate effort to say a kind word, to smile at someone, to build someone up, and to go out of my way to care.
- Check my attitude: When I am on the verge of treating someone with partiality, check the attitude of my heart and my thoughts. Confess, and ask God for his help.
- If I see someone mistreating another person, using a racial slur, telling a joke that ridicules others; speak up.
- Other-
