

TODAY'S VERSES:

James 2:1
James 1:27
James 2:1-13
2 Corinthians 8
Psalm 103

THIS WEEK, I CAN APPLY THIS LESSON
TO MY LIFE IN THESE WAYS:

MY NOTES:

[illegible]

The word "JAMES" is rendered in a large, bold, hand-drawn font. The letters are thick and textured, resembling charcoal or heavy pencil strokes. The background is a light beige color with faint, vertical, textured lines.

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART NINE: JAMES 2:1-13
FAVORITISM

JAMES

A FAITH THAT WORKS

PART NINE: JAMES 2:1-13

FAVORITISM

James has told us the Bible is a mirror for our lives. If we are not living for Christ, we have either forgotten what He has said about us or we have never believed it in the first place. Faith starts in our hearts and lives, but never stays there, it always works itself out of us in ways that bring glory to God. James says we are to be both those who live lives of integrity and lives of compassion.

One of the few places in Scripture that our modern society actually agrees is when the Bible says, "don't show favoritism." James is writing to a particular church about something that is happening, but it is something that always seems to happen: we prefer one type of people over another. Favoritism fails to truly love our neighbor. This is the difference between pure religion and a false moralistic religion.

The what: Don't Show Partiality. James says a truth that we deny is showing favoritism based on people's outward appearances. We are not to be those who treat other people different based on their skin color, weight, clothing, or attractiveness...when we do it is discrimination – PERIOD!

The why (don't show favoritism): We dishonor God. In dishonoring God we reveal we don't truly understand the Gospel. In the book *Gospel in Life* Tim Keller writes, "A merely religious person, who believes God will favor him because of his morality and respectability, will ordinarily have contempt for the outcast...I am only where I am by the sheer and unmerited mercy of God...that is the language of the Christian's heart." Understanding the Gospel is what will enable us to see ALL people as equals without favoritism.

The Better Way: We Are Saved By God's Grace. We are not saved because of our greatness. To demand that someone meet our criteria of GREATNESS is anti-gospel. It is outside of how God saves. James is helping us to see what true faith looks like. Understanding the glory of God reminds us that faith without mercy towards others isn't genuine faith.

Remember where we were when Christ found us. **Remember** He rescued us. **Remember** He ransomed us. In Our **remembrance** of God's forgiving grace and mercy we extend it to others. We are only saved by God's goodness to us.

Read James 2:1-13.

- Since last week, how have you thought differently about your tongue, hands, and heart, and what flows from each?
- In what ways has the Bible been a mirror to you in your life?
- How sinful do you think you really are?
- How have you been on the wrong side of someone playing favoritism?
- Have you ever been picked last for a team?
- Growing up, did your family ever play favorites? If so, how did it feel?
- What outward appearances do you tend to look for, connect with more easily, etc?
- Why does favoritism fail to truly love our neighbor?
- Why is it dishonoring to God?
- When it comes to loving your neighbor, who are the neighbors that are hardest for you to love?
- How is living out the Gospel's radical inclusiveness difficult or uncomfortable for you?
- How does our culture's social hierarchy differ from God's hierarchy?
- What is "The Better Way?"
- How are we to live lives of integrity, compassion and of justice?
- How have you seen your faith lived without mercy?
- Do you want to be more like Christ?
- Pray for the **better way** to be more of a present reality in your life this week.