

**Daily Bible Study**

**“Discrimination & Snobbery”**

**James 2:1-4**

**May 15–19, 2023**

**MONDAY** –As we return to our verse by verse study of James this week we take as our text, **James 2:1-4:** “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” The title of our study, **“Discrimination & Snobbery”** is a theme which James addresses as he starts into **chapter 2**. In review, James’s readers were looking for strength to face persecution and he was directing them to the source of strength available to all believers; namely, the Word of God. He told them to live out and obey The Word and gave examples of how this can be done through taming our tongues, caring for those in need and keeping ourselves separated and unspotted from the world (**James 1:26-27**). Now he gives us some details pertaining to how we demonstrate that we have genuine faith in the matter of our care for those in need. What should we do to show genuine care? Or, what should we not do? One thing is we can’t ignore those in need while we pay special attention to the rich, famous, or those we deem important. We must guard ourselves against what we are calling **Discrimination & Snobbery**. This was prevalent in both James day as well as ours and we need God’s help to overcome such favoritism.

*(Meditate) Is this area of favoritism something I need to work on in my life?*

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*(Apply) In what specific way have I shown discrimination or favoritism recently?*

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*(Pray): Father, teach me this week from Your Word. Help me to not be partial or treat people differently based on what I think about them or how I feel.*

**TUESDAY** – **James 2:1:** “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.” James ended **Chapter 1** using a word that he only uses once in

his letter and that is the word “religion”. He now begins to detail for us how true religion is demonstrated. He starts out though with the phrase, *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ* and therefore sets the scene for the entire chapters teaching. Being a Christian is not about conforming to an external “religious” pattern but as we have seen “true religion” is the way in which a genuine heart-relationship with God finds its outward expression. This relationship is established through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. James writes to us not about religion but about faith. The specific topic before him which he now addresses is about treating people *with partiality* or as the NIV translates it, “favoritism”. To act in such a way does not merely fail a desired “religious” pattern but it is actually a way in which we deny our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by our behavior. We will examine this more tomorrow.

*(Meditate) Am I more concerned with how religious I appear to others or my walk with Jesus?*

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*(Apply) What specific area can I work on to help strengthen my faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?*

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*(Pray): Father God, save me from becoming religious and not walking close to you. May I practice true religion before your face and always strive to grow in my relationship with you.*

**WEDNESDAY** – **James 2:1:** “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.” Before we get to the next three verses which give us an illustration concerning this sin of partiality or favoritism let’s take one more day on **verse 1**. James commands us as his brothers to refrain from partiality and he points us to our perfect example, *our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory*. The word “*partiality*” means pandering to others because they are rich or influential or popular. The Greek noun is *prosōpolēmpsia*. It comes from the expression *prosōpon lambanein*. *Prosōpon* is the face, and *lambanein* here means to lift up. To lift up someone’s countenance was to regard that person with favor and this was originally not a bad word at all. It was to *accept a person with favor*. But the word acquired a bad sense as it soon began to mean not so much to favor a person as to show favoritism to a person or persons, to allow yourself to be excessively influenced by a person’s social status, prestige, power or wealth. Interesting is the fact that even Jesus’ enemies, the Jewish leadership, completely acquitted Jesus of this. Even they had to admit that there was no favoritism with him (**Luke 20:21, Mark 12:14, Matthew 22:16**). Not only does Scripture give evidence of Jesus showing no partiality but it also expresses The Father God doing so as well. After his vision of the sheet with the clean and unclean animals upon it, the lesson that Peter learned was that *with God there is no partiality* (**Acts 10:34**). Paul stated that both Gentiles and Jews stand under the same judgment in the sight of God, *for with God there is no favoritism*

(Romans 2:11). This is a truth which Paul speaks to often (Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 3:25). A great characteristic of God is His complete impartiality. From the beginning God made clear His character through the Law which stated, “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly” (Leviticus 19:15) NIV. Here in our text, in calling us to impartiality James points us to the character of our great God.

(Meditate) Am I impartial in my judgments or do I exhibit partiality how I think, act and feel?

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(Apply) In what specific way or area in my life or to whom do I show partiality?

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(Pray): Father, help me be like You, fair and impartial to all men without showing favoritism.

**THURSDAY – James 2:2-4:** “For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” James now goes on to illustrate his point by creating a hypothetical situation. He describes it as follows: His readers have come together for their church service and today they have two visitors. The first is obviously a very rich man. James points out his jewelry and fine clothes. The other man is nothing like this as he is dressed in filthy clothes. Imagine this scene in our church some Sunday morning. The people of the church are so enamored and taken by the rich visitor with the Mercedes and Armani suit that they go out of their way to make him feel welcome. They are already thinking of how much money he is going to give to the church if he joins as a member. So, they make sure he has the best seat in the house! On the other hand, they are almost embarrassed that the filthy clothes man should have even shown up that they just point him to a corner out of the way where hopefully he’ll just leave without coming close enough for any of us to have to touch or smell him. There is nothing wrong with a man being rich or with God’s people wanting to make him welcome in church. The sin of partiality is in the fact that these two are treated differently. By acting like this, the people of the church have become in James’ words, “judges with evil thoughts”. It is also not being partial when we ask a teenager to stand or to sit on the floor so an elderly person can have a comfortable seat. More tomorrow.

(Meditate) Do I make any particular judgment in my mind when a visitor comes to church?

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(Apply) What specific thing can I do to help me treat everyone I meet with impartiality?

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(Pray): Father, remind me that You are the Sovereign God who controls all situations and calls me to be like You in how I treat others. Save me from becoming a judge with evil thoughts.

**FRIDAY– James 2:3-4:** “...and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,” have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” To wrap up the point James is making to us; I would again call your attention to some facts from Sacred Scripture which point us to the character of God Himself. In our text, James paints the picture of two men, different by their wealth. **Proverbs 22:2** reminds us, “The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD is the maker of them all.” God has made both the rich man and the poor man. There is NO SUCH THING as “a self-made millionaire”. (Also, because I couldn’t resist, and this is free, there is NO SUCH THING as luck”). God rules from the Heavens beloved and He cares for and defends the needy, **Psalm 140:12**, “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and justice for the poor.” The Lord also gives to or pays back the man who like Himself, has a heart for those in need. **Proverbs 22:9**, “He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor”. **Proverbs 19:17**, “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given”. And finally, **Proverbs 21:13** reminds us that God is not pleased with those who turn away from those in need but are quick to turn to The Lord for Him to bless and help them. “Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard”. Back to our text, James reminds us that we can’t be just and impartial when our hearts are filled with *evil thoughts*. A judge whose thoughts are evil can never be impartial. Justice has been depicted as a blindfolded lady who holds scales in her hand. The blindfold prevents her from seeing anyone so that she is able to serve impartially the cause of justice. Within the context of the Christian faith, practicing **Discrimination & Snobbery** is the exact opposite of loving one’s neighbor as oneself. Many church sanctuaries have the pews padded so the worshipers can sit in comfort, but the poor are absent. The gospel must be proclaimed in word and deed to the rich and poor without partiality.

(Meditate) Do I look down on people because of how much they have and own or don’t have?

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(Apply) What change can I make in my life that will exemplify true religion that is not partial?

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(Pray): God, Help me be faithful to love all men and preach the gospel to all without partiality.