

ENCORE: James 2:1-13 “No Partiality in Christ”

- 1) James presents believers (my brethren, v.1) with another spiritual test to help them determine the authenticity of their faith in Jesus Christ (v. 1-13). Restate this test of genuine conversion and personalize your answer by beginning with these words: Others will see the sincerity of my faith in Jesus Christ by ...
- 2) James begins his teaching against partiality with a prohibition: “Don’t show favoritism.” The Greek construction of this sentence indicates that the practice of showing favoritism by these Jewish believers was already taking place and a report had been sent back to James in Jerusalem. What do you think this teaches about the spread of the testimony of a particular body of believers (Ro.16:19)?
- 3) The church of Jesus Christ should be a counter-culture instead of a sub-culture of a particular society. Unfortunately, a casual reading of church history reveals the church has often found itself to be nothing more than a conservative copy of a corrupt society.
 - a. It has been said that the most segregated time of the week in this culture is the Sunday morning worship hour. Do you agree or disagree?
 - b. When a body of believers shows preferential treatment or favoritism to people who appear affluent, what characteristic of the world do you think it is emulating or copying?
 - c. Which of the following differences are the hardest to overcome in the church and why: financial, racial, cultural, generational, gender, theological, social, or other?
 - d. How would you feel if you visited a particular church and observed the members of the church giving a wealthy visitor a warmer welcome than they did to you?
 - e. In the past month, what specific steps have you taken to welcome those who have visited your church services?
 - d. List at least five things every Christian can do to make first time visitors feel accepted.
- 4) Jesus Christ was not a respecter of persons (Matt 22:16) and believers are to follow His example (1 Pet. 2:21). However, believers often fail to follow in His steps because they use false standards to make judgments about others. When believers make false judgments of others, they become unjust judges or judges with evil thoughts (v. 4). What are three false standards people use to judge others?
 - a. **James 2:1-13**
 - b. **1 Samuel 16:7**
 - c. **John 1:45-46**
- 5) What are some of the reasons believers should not show favoritism?
 - a. James 2:4
 - b. James 2:5
 - c. James 2:6
 - d. James 2:9
- 6) Perhaps the Jewish Christians’ preferential treatment of the rich was motivated by the fear of losing their jobs or even their lives (v. 6; 5:1-6). It is likely they were justifying their favoritism toward the rich by saying they were loving their neighbors (v. 8). If this was their motive, says James, they were doing well (v. 8). But if their actions caused them to violate another area of God’s Word, it was sin (v. 9). Sometimes believers fail to consider more than one Biblical principle before they engage in a certain action because they want to justify themselves. When they do this,

they may sin against God and other Christians, bringing reproach on the name of Christ. What two principals does James want us to remember?

a. James 2:10

b. James 2:11

7) What is meant by the law of liberty (v. 12; cf. Ja. 1:25)?

8) How specifically can you avoid showing partiality this week in your home? In the workplace? In the neighborhood? At church?

9) Numerous passages in Scripture call on believers to show compassion to the poor. What are two or three concrete ways you can obey this command this week?

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LA: *Philippians 3:1-21* Knowing & Growing

Monday (v.1-3) No confidence in the flesh: This chapter of Philippians begins with a stern warning. What do you think Paul means when he says “have no confidence in the flesh”? The flesh is our “human nature” better put it is our sinful human nature. Why do you think it is important not to put confidence in our own human abilities, will or desires? (see Romans 7:18; 8:6, Galatians 5:19-21 & Jeremiah 17:9).

Tuesday (v.4-8) Paul’s pedigree: Paul’s human pedigree was quite impressive, especially to other Jews. How did Paul “count” these accomplishments? The words translated “gain”, “loss” & “count” in verses 7& 8 are accounting terms. Paul was saying he had moved his supposed gains into the loss category on the ledger of his life. What do you think he meant by that? Why couldn’t Paul simply “add” Christ to his own accomplishments? In 1 Corinthians 3:10-11 Paul tells us that Christ is the only foundation for a life that is pleasing to God. If Christ is not the foundation of your life what must you do? (see Jeremiah 1:10)

Wednesday (v.7-11) The Righteousness of Christ: Paul is calling us to re-examine the profit & loss statement of our lives. What kind of things do you usually count as profit; a nice home, good job, pleasant family, good health or an easy life? Paul says his profit column has the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings and being conformed to His death. Those are not things people normally seek after. What reason does Paul give for seeking after such unusual “gain”?

Thursday (v.12-14) Pressing on and reaching forward: It is encouraging to read these words from the Apostle Paul; even he had not attained perfection in Christ. Notice, though, that he was totally focused on that very goal. Paul pressed on, Paul reached forward, Paul didn’t look back, Paul pressed toward the goal, Paul kept Jesus Christ squarely in his sights. Read Paul’s testimony at the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Would you like to be able to say those words at the end of your life? For that to be possible, what kind of things need to become a reality in your life?

Friday (v.15-19) Following Paul’s example: Paul sets before us two examples; the first is himself (and those who so walk) whom we are to follow. The second are those who are enemies of the cross of Christ, whom we are to avoid (Romans 16:17). Paul is one of the greatest examples of a godly servant in the entire Bible. While Christ-likeness (not Paul-likeness) is the goal for every Christian we are still exhorted to emulate the godly characteristics we see in other believers. It can be much easier to apply certain biblical principals when we see them “fleshed out” in another believer (Hebrews 13:7). Are there any people in your life that you can learn from? Watch them and follow their godly example.

Saturday: (v.20-21) Our citizenship is in heaven: Do you ever tire of living in this world? Does the glorious, eternal hope we have in Christ excite you? The KJV translates the word “lowly” as “vile”. Have you ever thought of your body as vile? This passage is simply glorious because it not only teaches that we will have new bodies free from sickness, pain, disease, and death but our new bodies will also be free from sin! We will one day be in new bodies “conformed to His glorious body” what an awesome hope we have in Christ!