

Within the Word

A Study of James 2

A Note from Kathy

Are you the one who is easily instructed? If you're like me you want to say "Absolutely!" But the truth is, we often walk along for years with things we know we probably need to change. As believers, we should be led in the way of truth. Pray before starting this chapter, and ask the Lord to open your eyes to any areas that need change.

Observation

1. Notice how James addresses those he is writing. What does he call them? What else can we glean about the men and women to whom he is writing?
2. He begins this chapter with the instruction, "do not show favoritism." Define favoritism.

3. Describe the two men from verse 2 and how they might be treated according to verse 3.

| <u>Appearance</u> | <u>Treatment</u> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Man #1 | |
| Man #2 | |

4. The poor in verse 5 are helpless and powerless. They are financially destitute. They are beggars, and they are the afflicted. They are the opposite of self-sufficient. Who chose them? What are they to inherit?
5. Even though the rich may be able to buy many friends, believers should not treat them with any special preference. How are the actions of the rich described (vs. 6-7)?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
6. A royal law is the law of a king. What royal law is mentioned, and where is it written (v. 8)?
7. Who is the king that initiated this law (Matthew 19:19)?

8. The law of God is not like the law of man. In our judicial system a person can break a law and be held accountable to different degrees of punishment. But God's law stands as a whole, if we break one law what does that make us?

9. God's law would be terrible news if we did not have a way of atonement - if we had not been provided a sacrifice for our sin. Verses 12-13 remind us that if we are a true follower of Christ, we are no longer under the Law of Moses, with its sacrifices, but we are under the law of grace. How are believers to speak and act?

10. In verses 14-18, we see the importance not only of faith, but the works that accompany that faith. Faith that is not accompanied by action is _____.

11. Our works do not save us, but a faith that saves us will change us. Read Ephesians 2:1-5. How are we saved?

What should this grace produce in our life?

Ephesians 2:1-5

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved.

12. According to James 2:19, is it enough to simply believe there is only one true God?

13. Who were the two examples James brought up as evidence in verses 19-25? List the facts mentioned in the text about each example.

Example #1

Example #2

14. When the _____ departs the body, the body is dead. In the same way faith without _____ is dead.

Application

1. You defined favoritism earlier in the study guide. What is at the root of favoritism? Do we see favoritism going on today among believers?
2. This chapter opens with James clearly addressing believers. He names the example that we are to follow in this same verse. Who is it? List some of the Christ-like, character qualities, that when lived out in our life, will keep us from showing favoritism?
3. Look up the Greek translation for the below words, and then write a definition for each in your own words. If you do not own a *Strong's Concordance*, go online to www.biblestudytools.com, and search James 2 in the King James Version. When the chapter appears, look down to the three icons that control volume, printer, and settings, just above the scripture. Click the small gear icon, and a window will pop up that allows you to format the text. Select the following: 1) one verse per line, and 2) Strong's numbers, then close. Many of the words will now be blue. Click to select the below words individually to learn the meaning of each in the Greek. James very specifically used each of these words as he calls us to stop showing favoritism. Do you have a greater understanding of the one we are to follow?
 - Lord
 - Jesus
 - Christ
 - Glory
4. According to James 2 and Romans 13:8-10, how are we to treat one another? Are there people around you with needs that you could meet? If you say, "I don't think so," then ask God to show them to you. Begin helping people in small ways, like simply opening a door for someone else, sharing a smile or a pleasant word. You will not be able to meet everyone's needs, because you are not God. But, oh, the joy you will feel, as you meet some of them.

Romans 13:8-10

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

5. Are there times when you struggle with favoritism? Do you sometimes find yourself showing special treatment? I am not referring to those who are in a position that should be honored; there is a difference between honoring someone and favoring one over another. What are some ways you could show others you love them, simply because they are of great value to God?
6. In the chapter, James desires for us to understand that faith without works is of no value. A person can have an intellectual assent (head knowledge, but no real commitment in the heart) to the truth about God. Verse 19 states, if you believe that there is one God that is right, but “even the demons believe that,” and they tremble at this truth. Active obedience demonstrates that our faith is genuine. What is the ultimate proof of any plant? What is the proof of your salvation?

Galatians 5:22-25

²²But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is now law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

7. Oh, the beauty in the words of verse 13, “Mercy triumphs over judgment!” Men and women throughout history have at least one thing in common: we are all sinners. God, in his mercy, sent his Son to die as our sacrifice. Jesus, in his amazing love and grace, willingly gave himself in our place. Mercy is the Greek word *Eleos*. In Ephesians 2:4-9 and Titus 3:5-6, *Eleos* is used to describe God, who is rich in mercy and who has provided salvation for all men. Mercy is an act of God, and peace is the resulting experience in the heart of man. Grace describes God’s attitude toward the law-breaker and the rebel. Mercy is His attitude toward those who are in distress. Take a few minutes to thank God for His great gift of salvation.

Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved ... ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

Titus 3:4-6

⁴But when the kindness and love of God our savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us.

1 Peter 3:18

¹⁸For Christ died for our sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

8. Judgment, by its very nature, divides people. Mercy draws people close, revealing a desire to help. God has lavished his mercy on us in Christ and continues to pour out his love every day. Read the verses below. What should be our response to God's love and mercy?

Matthew 5:7

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Matthew 6:15

¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 18:32-35

³²Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said. "I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" ³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.