

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 3

Partiality

Partiality

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word

Objective To instruct the children on the biblical command to show love and honor to all, no matter what they look like.

Key Verses

James 2:1-13—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - James 2:10

“For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”

Hook

Review last week’s memory verse, James 1:22.

Separate the students based on their eye color. Tell the students that anyone who has blue eyes needs to stand in the back of the room. They are not allowed to have a chair, ask questions, or have a Bible. The students with brown (or whatever other color) eyes can sit in the chairs, ask as many questions as they want, can use whatever Bibles they want, etc.

Ask the students if it is fair to divide people up based on the way that they look. Ask if it is okay to show someone favoritism based on what they look like.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

James 2:1-13 deals with two primary issues. First it speaks to us about favoritism, and second it shows us that all sin separates us from God and that we cannot obey only part of God's Word. The opening verses tell a story about two men coming into the church. One is dressed in fine clothes and wears expensive jewelry. The other is dressed in rags. The man in nice clothes is walked to the front of the church and given a seat of honor. The other man is made to stand in the back or sit on the floor. The point is well-made that God loves all people, no matter how rich or poor they are. James goes on to tell us that if we show favoritism to some, then we have fallen into sin. Even if we have kept the great commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves, if we show partiality then we have still broken the law.

James then tells us how dangerous it is to think about the good things that we have done, without contemplating the ways that we have dishonored God as well. He tells us, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it." The context of the passage tells us that James is still speaking about the sin of partiality. We must not be generous and kind to one person while ignoring the needs of another. We must fulfill God's word to all people equally. After all, Galatians 3:23 tells us, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." God loves all people equally, and we should do the same.

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK

One of the most important and basic truths that the Bible teaches is that God is the Creator of all people. God made everyone, and He made everyone different. He made some people with straight hair and others with curly hair. He made some people with blue eyes and some with brown eyes. He made some people with light-colored skin and some with dark-colored skin. God made everyone, He made them well, He didn't make any mistakes, and He LOVES His creations. God loves people with curly hair just as much as people with straight hair, no more, no less. He loves people with different colored hair or skin exactly the same amount, no more, no less. He died on a cross for all people, so that all people could be saved and become His children. He doesn't ignore people or mistreat people based on what they look like.

LOOK (Continued)

James 2 tells us that we should treat people the same way that God does. We should NOT judge people based upon what they look like. We shouldn't show favoritism to people with a certain eye color. We shouldn't be nice to people just because they are rich or poor. We shouldn't treat people differently if they don't look the same as us. God calls this sin "partiality" when we treat people preferentially based on what they look like or how much money they make. What this means is that we need to fulfill the great commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," the same way with everyone. If we are showing partiality, then we cannot be obeying that commandment at all.

James tells us that we need to be very careful about how we act, and to make sure that we are trying our very best to honor every part of God's Word. He tells us that we obey all of God's law, but break only tiny piece of it, then we have in fact broken all of God's law. We can't pick and choose which parts of the Bible we want to listen to. If we believe that the Bible was given to us from God, and that His Word is good and true, then we must not ignore the parts of it that we think are difficult or that we might not want to do.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life.

TOOK

As a class, memorize James 2:10.

Challenge the students: Are there people in your life that you show partiality to? Are their kids in your class that you leave out of games because of the way that they look? Are you hearing and obeying the Word of God? Are you trying your best to do everything that God is asking you to do?

Pray: Praise the Lord for not showing partiality in saving us. Ask Him to help each of us not to show partiality and to keep all of God's law.

Parent Question: What does it mean to "show partiality"?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on James 2:1-13 by David Guzik

A. Partiality and discrimination in the family of God.

1. (1) The principle established.

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

a. Do not hold the faith: The glorious faith we have, the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, should never be associated with partiality (discrimination). The Lord of glory Himself shows no partiality (Deuteronomy 10:17 and Acts 10:34) so neither should those who put their trust in Him.

i. James used strong words to refer to Jesus Christ: The Lord of glory. Moffatt comments: “The Christian religion [is here called] more explicitly belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the divine Glory – a striking term for Christ as the full manifestation of the divine presence and majesty. The Jews called this the shekinah.”

ii. This is especially significant because James is widely (and properly) regarded as one of the first letters of the New Testament written (perhaps somewhere between ad 44 and 48). This means that the earliest Christians considered Jesus to be God, and said so in strong, unmistakable words.

b. With partiality: We do well to remember that James wrote to a very partial age, filled with prejudice and hatred based on class, ethnicity, nationality, and religious background. In the ancient world people were routinely and permanently categorized because they were Jew or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor, Greek or barbarian, or whatever.

i. A significant aspect of the work of Jesus was to break down these walls that divided humanity, and to bring forth one new race of mankind in Him (Ephesians 2:14-15).

ii. The unity and openness of the early church was shocking to the ancient world. But this unity didn't come automatically. As this command from James shows, the apostles had to teach the early church to never hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . with partiality.

2. (2-4) An example of the kind of partiality that has no place among Christians.

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?

a. If there should come into your assembly: In the ancient Greek, the word assembly is literally synagogue, the name of the meeting place for Jews. The fact that James calls a Christian meeting place a synagogue shows that he wrote before Gentiles were widely received into the church. At the time James wrote, most all Christians came from a Jewish heritage. This is the only place in the New Testament where an assembly of Christians is clearly called a synagogue.

i. "Till the final rift between Judaism and Christianity both Christian and non-Christian Jews used, at least often, the same word for their sacred meeting-place." (Adamson)

ii. "As Christians have no church-buildings at this period, their place of meeting was usually some large room in the house of a wealthy member or a hall hired for the purpose (Acts 19:9), where outsiders were free to attend the ordinary services . . . They were to be welcomed, but welcomed without any servility or snobbery." (Moffatt)

b. A man with gold rings: This showed the man was rich. "In Roman society the wealthy wore rings on their left hand in great profusion. A sign of wealth, rings were worn with great ostentation. There were even shops in Rome where rings could be rented for special occasions." (Hiebert)

i. There should also come in a poor man: "The word signifies one very poor, even to beggarliness." (Poole)

c. Have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? To favor the rich man over the poor man in the way James described shows a deep carnality among Christians. Their evil thoughts are evident by their partial actions.

i. To show partiality shows that we care more for the outward appearance than we do upon the heart. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). God looks at the heart, and so should we.

ii. To show partiality shows that we misunderstand who is important and blessed in the sight of God. When we assume that the rich man is more important to God or more blessed by God, we put too much value in material riches.

iii. To show partiality shows a selfish streak in us. Usually we favor the rich man over the poor man because we believe we can get more from the rich man. He can do favors for us that the poor man can't.

3. (5-7) Man's partiality rarely agrees with God's heart.

Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

a. Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom: Though it is easy for man to be partial to the rich, God isn't partial to them. In fact, since riches are an obstacle to the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:24), there is a sense in which God specially blesses the poor of this world.

i. They are chosen . . . to be rich in faith because the poor of this world simply have more opportunities to trust God. Therefore they may be far more rich in faith than the rich man. "The rich man may trust Him; but the poor man must. . . the poor man has no fortress in which to hide, except the two strong arms of God." (Meyer)

ii. "This seems to refer to Matthew 11:5: And the poor have the Gospel preached to them. These believed on the Lord Jesus, and found his salvation; while the rich despised, neglected, and persecuted him." (Clarke)

b. Has not God chosen: The poor are chosen in the sense that the poor more readily respond to God in faith, having fewer obstacles to the kingdom.

i. "Church history demonstrates that comparatively more poor people than rich have responded to the gospel." (Hiebert)

ii. When we choose people by what we can see on the surface, we miss the mind of God. Remember that Judas appeared to be much better leadership material than Peter.

iii. What is more, we can say that God has chosen the poor in the sense that when He added humanity to His deity and came to earth, He came into poverty. "There is nothing that men dread more than poverty. They will break every commandment in the Decalogue rather than be poor. But it is God's chosen lot. He had one opportunity only of living our life, and He chose to be born of parents too poor to present more than two doves at his presentation in the temple." (Meyer)

iv. Of course, God has not only chosen the poor. Yet we may say that He has chosen the poor first, in the sense Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 1:26: For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. "Not that God hath chosen all the poor in the world, but his choice is chiefly of them." (Poole)

v. Calvin wrote regarding God's choice of the poor: "Not indeed alone, but he wished to begin with them, that he might beat down the pride of the rich."

vi. We should remind ourselves that God also never calls for partiality against the rich. If one must judge in a dispute between a rich man and a poor man, they should let the law and the facts of the case decide the judgment instead of the economic class of those in the dispute.

c. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? James reminded his readers that the rich often sin against them (oppress you . . . drag you). This is often because the love of money is the root of every kind of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). For this reason alone, the rich are not worthy of the partiality often shown to them.

i. History shows that the rich can indeed oppress the poor. "Trample upon you with the feet of pride and cruelty; yea, devour you, as the greater fish do the lesser. . . . This is a sin against race, grace, and place." (Trapp)

ii. Do they not blaspheme: "If the rich here spoken of were Christians, then they may be said to blaspheme Christ's name, when by their wicked carriage they caused it to be blasphemed by others . . . but if rich unbelievers be here meant, the rich men of those times being generally great enemies to Christianity." (Poole)

4. (8-9) Partiality is condemned by the Scriptures.

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

a. If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture: James anticipated that some of his readers might defend their partiality to the rich as simply loving the rich man as their neighbor in obedience to the law.

b. If you show partiality, you commit sin: The problem isn't that one is nice to the rich. The problem is that one does show partiality to the rich, and is not nice to the poor man! So you can't excuse your partiality by saying, "I'm just fulfilling the command to love my neighbor as myself."

c. The royal law: Our God is a great King, and His law is a royal law. Our King Jesus put special emphasis on this command (Matthew 22:36-40) from the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18). James is reminding us that the poor man is just as much our neighbor as the rich man is.

i. "This commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, is a royal law, not only because it is ordained of God, and proceeds from his kingly authority over men, but because it is so useful, suitable, and necessary to the present state of man . . . we give the epithet royal to whatever is excellent, noble, grand, or useful." (Clarke)

5. (10-13) The serious matter of obeying all of God's commands.

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

a. Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all: James here guards us against a selective obedience, the sort that will pick and choose which commands of God should be obeyed and which can be safely disregarded.

i. We can't say, "I like God's command against murder, so I'll keep that one. But I don't like His command against adultery, so I will disregard it." God cares about the whole law.

ii. The whole law must be kept if one will be justified by the law. "In the tract Shabbath, fol. 70, where they dispute concerning the thirty-nine works commanded by Moses, Rabbi Yochanan says: But if a man do the whole, with the omission of one, he is guilty of the whole, with the one." (Clarke) Adamson quotes one ancient Rabbi who taught: "If a man perform all the commandments, save one, he is guilty of all and each; to break one precept is to defy God who commanded the whole."

iii. "He breaks the whole law, though not the whole of the law: as he that wounds a man's arm wounds the whole man, though not the whole of the man." (Poole)

b. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty: We are under the law of liberty. It has liberty, yet it is still a law that must be obeyed and that we will be judged by at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

i. "It is also called a law of liberty, because it is freely and willingly kept of the regenerate, to whom it is no burden or bondage." (Trapp)

c. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy: As those who will be judged by the law of liberty, we should always show mercy to others by refraining from partiality. The mercy we show will be extended to us again on the day of judgment, and that mercy triumphs over judgment.

i. James is relating another principle of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount: For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you (Matthew 7:2).

ii. "The law of liberty is the law which defines our relationship to God and man as love-mastered. To speak and do under that impulse, is to be free indeed. If that law be disobeyed, if no mercy be shown, then judgment based upon that law will show no mercy." (Morgan)

iii. "The law of freedom is not laxity but a strict ethical rule of God, and we shall be judged by our adherence to its supreme principle of brotherly love or mercy, i.e. compassion for the sins and sufferings of our fellows." (Moffatt)

iv. Mercy triumphs over judgment: Moffatt translates this, "The merciful life will triumph in the face of judgment." "That is, the merciful man glorieth, as one that hath received mercy, and shall not come into condemnation; for God's mercy rejoiceth against such a man's sins, as against an adversary which he hath subdued and trampled on." (Trapp)