

James

Junior High Bible Study Guide

Week 2, Day 3

Some Things Just Don't Mix

Before you begin...

- Do you have your notebook and pen?
- Do you have your Bible?
- Pray and ask God to help you understand His Word and to help you be a hearer of the Word AND a doer!





An attitude of favoritism is incompatible with being a Christian.

Our text in James this morning is about things that DON'T mix. "Incompatible" is the right word...but to help us think about what's ahead, we need to picture a few things that don't belong together. Things that are mismatched. Things that don't get along. Things that just don't mix.

Let me give you a few examples:

- Oil and water—the most famous incompatible pair.
- A sumo wrestler who wants to be a ballerina. These two should NEVER mix.
- A real tragedy is this ice cream flavor...toothpaste and orange juice...GROSS!
- And of course, the most offensive incompatible pair is wearing socks with sandals. Please don't.



There are many examples in nature of things that don't agree with each other. These things can't happen at the same time.

- It can't be both night and day.
- It can't be both hot and cold.
- It can't be both wet and dry.

Many things are so opposed in character that they can't exist together. They can't live in harmony. Both can't be happening at the same time.

Well, James 2 will remind us of this same reality. James highlights two things that don't mix. Two characteristics that don't go together.

Big Idea: If you're going to be serious about your commitment to Jesus Christ, then you need to know that showing favoritism is incompatible with being a Christian.



James 2:1-7

¹ My brothers, show no **partiality** as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in,

³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet,"

⁴ have you not then **made distinctions** among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?

⁷ Are they not the ones who blaspheme the **honorable name** by which you were called?

v.1 partiality:

Showing special treatment to someone for a superficial reason—favoritism. Think: being extra nice to someone because of their nice appearance, wealth, or popularity. It's also treating someone badly because they don't look a certain way.

v.4 made distinctions:

separating people into groups. Here it is based on appearance. This is an internal attitude that leads to sin.

v.7 the honorable

name: the name of King Jesus—they wanted to be known by the name of Jesus yet refused to act like Him.

Weekly Word Challenge

This week's verse is pretty short. A few more words are gone. See if you can fill in the blanks without looking.

Memory Verse: James 1:22

" _____ be _____ of the _____, and not _____ only, _____."

Now write the entire verse again in your notebook.

I Have No Idea...

Today's word is actually a phrase. What do you think **judges with evil thoughts** in verse 4 is all about?

Take a guess and then look it up in a JMAC Study Bible.
Write a sentence explaining it in your own words.



Observations from a Youth Pastor

Let's look at these verses in the order that James lays it out. There is a command in verse 1, and an example of favoritism in 2-4. That will keep us busy for today. Tomorrow, we will look at two reasons to obey in verses 5-13

First, the COMMAND not to show favoritism.

James just gave us the example of being a doer of the Word. We were reminded that we can't pick and choose what parts of God's Word to obey. And a lot of our obedience gets put on display in the way we deal with each other. God has a lot to say about His desire for us to love one another (John 13:35, 15:12; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 John 2:10).

On the heels of this instruction about being a doer of the Word, James gives them this command to not show partiality. The word for partiality is a pretty strange word. In English that word would be explained by saying that it has to do with the face, or someone's appearance.

James is talking about making judgments about people based on the way they look. We are warned to show no partiality. In other words, we can't show favoritism based on appearance. James is highlighting that there is more than one way to do that. You can show partiality in a bunch of different ways. It's something that happens all the time but needs to stop.

James, through this command, gets these believers thinking; if we have truly put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, how can we show partiality? How can we treat people differently based on the way they look?



Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

Look up 1 Samuel 16:7. What is the difference between the way man looks at other people, and the way God looks at man?

God doesn't judge us by our:

- Clothes
- Color
- General Appearance

God looks at the heart, rather than the outside, and those believers knew that they were to be like God in that respect. And so are you.

Second, an EXAMPLE of favoritism.

Read verses 2–3 again.

Imagine two visitors walk into XChange on a Sunday morning. One looks REALLY nice. Fresh kicks, Patagonia swag, and the newest Apple watch. The other...well, not so nice. Shoes with holes, and their clothes are actually dirty.

James's example tells us that the rich one is given the attention. He is brought up front to be given the nice seat. There weren't many chairs available in the synagogue, most people had to stand or sit on the floor. But this rich guy, he gets a chair. He is the one who is shown honor.

But what about the poor guy? Well, he is taken to a place less favorable. A place where no one would want to stand. Or worse, below a place where someone was sitting in a chair with a footstool. Imagine this message: "My feet deserve to sit here. You don't! My feet are more important than you." Yikes!

And verse 4 tells us that favoritism is making distinctions about people and becoming a judge with evil thoughts.

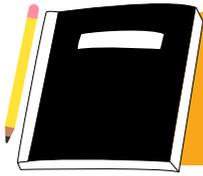
- The sin isn't the rich man coming in smelling nice and looking good.
- The sin isn't the poor man coming to church in the condition that he is in either.

The treatment of the visitors is based on superficial, selfish, and worldly motives.

Nothing was known of either guest. They didn't say one word. They didn't reveal anything about their character. They couldn't reveal anything about who they really were. They were judged PURELY and ENTIRELY on the way they looked.

The sin is in the way the distinctions between the two men were made, and special favor is shown to the one and terrible disrespect shown to the other.





Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

How do you think people show favoritism today?

Showing partiality is a tragic sin. We learned last week that we are lured and enticed by our own desires (James 1:14). Your evil thoughts tempt you to:

- Align with the wealthy
- Be friends with the popular
- Seek approval from the attractive

AND

- Ignore the poor
- Make fun of the un-cool
- Sweep the less important people under the rug

James commands these believers to stop this behavior. You're in the same boat with them. If you're serious about your faith, serious about your commitment to Christ, then showing favoritism is incompatible with your claim to be a Christian.

It just doesn't mix.

You can't be a Christian and judge people this way. This cannot be a pattern of your life.

It's difficult to turn that part of our sinful brain off, but we need to try.



Notebook Time (Don't forget to write your answers down!)

The example of Jesus can help you think about this issue of favoritism. What kind of people did Jesus hang out with?



What did you learn?

An attitude of favoritism is incompatible with being a Christian. God commands us to stop!



Diggin' Deeper

In James 2:1, Jesus is called the Lord of glory. Read Isaiah 40. Why is God so worthy of our glory and our worship? List as many reasons as you can.



Put It into Practice!

Aren't you grateful that God doesn't judge you based on your appearance? Isn't it amazing that the gospel is available to ALL, and not just the best of the best? What can you put into practice today to love others the way God loves them? Take a few minutes and write down your answers.



Pray

Today I want to encourage you to pray for those whom you have treated differently because of their appearance. Think of at least one person and spend a few minutes praying for them. Pray for their salvation. Pray for their commitment to Christ. Pray that God would help you love that person like He does.