

PRESSURE POINTS: Show that God is Your Favorite by not Showing Favoritism

Andy Deane · 9/15/2024 · James 2:1-13

Favoritism (partiality / discrimination) means that you base your treatment of (or attitude toward) someone—on something that should not be the basis of how you treat them. Inappropriate reasons for unequal treatment are: wealth, skin color, gender, beauty, fashion, job title, college attended, views, age, community lived in, tattoos... James will use the example of money, and New Testament authors will add ethnicity, nationality and religious background, but these principles speak against all of those reasons.

WHY GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO SHOW FAVORITISM:

James 2:1, *1 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.*

#1 That's not how we treat family

- Families should stick together, support each other, be patient and forgiving toward one another.
- The spiritual sibling bond in Christ, in the end, is more real than blood.

#2 God is too glorious for that

- Jesus is so perfect, and we are so different, that for us to make a separation at a human level is silly & sinful.
- Romans 3:10-11, *"There is no one righteous, not even one...there is no one who seeks God.*
- Genesis 1:27, *So God created mankind in his own image...*
- Acts 10:34, *Now I understand God doesn't show favoritism...*

James 2:2-4, *2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

#3 We don't have enough info

- Can you make an accurate judgment based on external? Are you able to see all that is going on internally?
- 1 Samuel 16:7, *...People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

#4 It reveals a judging heart

- James 4:12, *There is only one Lawgiver and Judge...But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?*
- Favoritism reveals our own internal evil thoughts and prejudices.

James 2:5-6a, *5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? 6a But you have dishonored the poor...*

#5 It shows we value the wrong stuff

- Valuing others with the eyes of the world is the opposite approach to God who chose many poor.
- It completely forgets that when Jesus put on humanity in that manger, He chose a poor lifestyle to live.

#6 It's dishonoring to our God

- Proverbs 14:31, *Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, he who is generous to the needy honors Him*
- A significant aspect of the work of Jesus was to break down these walls that divided humanity.
- Ephesians 2:14-16, *14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 ...His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

James 2:6b-7, 6b ...*Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?*

#7 It backfires & becomes our downfall

- We're tempted to value the rich and famous and so we elevate celebrities, athletes, and the rich, but at times, these are the same people who fund and promote wickedness and have anti-god worldviews.

James 2:8, 8 *If you really keep the royal law... "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.*

#8 It's not how we'd like to be treated

- If you were visiting church, how'd you like to be greeted?
- Romans 15:7, *welcome on another as Christ has welcomed you!*

James 2:9-11, 9 *But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.*

#9 It makes us a lawbreaker

- Maybe you're just happy not committing the bigger crimes of life, we're glad for that too...
- Note: God puts us in general category of lawbreaker when we commit any sin, even partiality.

James 2:12-13, 12 *Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

#10 It lacks mercy (and without mercy we perish)

- Remember you will be judged for judging others, but you invite God to be merciful to you by extending mercy.
- Every time you cross your favoritism line and choose to live biblically instead, you shout mercy!