

against the broader society. However, this does not mean there is nothing here for Christians to learn! What warnings in this passage do you need to take to heart?

Read 1 Timothy 6:6–10 and 6:17–19. How does this parallel what James says?

Ask God to help you have a biblical attitude toward riches: Take time to think about the ways you can use what you have to bless others.

Friday

Read Isaiah 58:1–11. How does this parallel what James 2 says?

It's interesting to me that Isaiah does not say "Spend your money on behalf of the poor"; he says "spend yourself". What's the difference?

What are you doing to "spend yourself on behalf of the poor"?

Ask God to help us become a church known for the kind of heart God seeks in this chapter!

Saturday

Today read James 2:1–13 again. Ask God to help you apply these verses this weekend as you see people at church! Please pray for our services, and for the annual meeting after church on Sunday. Pray that God will be glorified! Thanks!



Treating People Right

March 6 & 7, 2010 • René Schlaepfer
James 2:1–11

"My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have **faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ** if you favor some people over others?" *James 2:1 (NLT)* Literally, "the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus" as in *KJV*

Our role model: How did Christ live?

"Teacher . . . You are **impartial** and don't play **favorites**." *Matthew 22:16 (NLT)*

"This man is **friendly with sinners**. He even eats with them!" *Luke 15:2 (CEV)*

Jesus said: "Don't judge by **appearances** . . ." *John 7:24 (CEV)*

Our problem: Christians who don't live like Christ!

"For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor" — well, **doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?**" *James 2:2–4 (NLT)*

Why not show favoritism?

1. When I'm prejudiced, I miss a _____

"Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God **chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith?** Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him?" *James 2:5 (NLT)*

"But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear?" *James 2:6–7 (NLT)*

The Curious Case of Wealth

There are plenty of godly rich people in the Bible. But riches are a problem . . .

- If I think they'll _____
"Look here, you rich people . . . Your wealth is **rotting away**, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. Your gold and silver have become **worthless** . . ." *James 5:1a–3a (NLT)*
- If I try to _____
". . . You have **hoarded** wealth in the last days." *James 5:3 (NIV)*
- If I use them to _____
"For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have **cheated** of their pay . . . The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the Lord of Heaven's Armies . . ." *James 5:4 (NLT)*

2. When I'm prejudiced, I _____

"Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a **sin**. You are guilty of breaking the law." *James 2:8-9 (NLT) See also 2:10-11*

3. I will be judged _____

"So whatever you say or whatever you do, **remember that you will be judged** by the law that sets you free. There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you." *James 2:12-13 (NLT)*

Our solution: Look at everyone through the eyes of Jesus

"...from now on we regard no one from a **worldly** point of view..." *2 Corinthians 5:16a (NIV)*

- _____ them

"Accept one another, then, **just as Christ accepted you.**" *Romans 15:7*

- _____ them

"...in humility consider others **better** than yourselves." *Philippians 2:3b*

- _____ them

"...Encourage one another and **build each other up...**" *1 Thessalonians 5:11a*

The Bottom Line:

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: **While we were still sinners**, Christ died for us." *Romans 5:8 (NIV)*

I am most like Jesus when I love _____

Daily Meditations

Brief Bible readings based on this weekend's topic

Monday

Read James 2:1-4. What part of the message was particularly thought-provoking for you?

Maybe you don't see yourself as ever showing favoritism for certain people. Do the self-analysis on the following page, then answer the question: How am I sometimes guilty of favoritism?

Ask God to make you more like Christ, who was not a "respector of persons", according to the gospels. Bring to him your specific struggles with prejudice.

Favoritism Quiz

If I'm honest, I sometimes find myself thinking more highly of those who are...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wealthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Well educated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well dressed (however I define that!) | <input type="checkbox"/> Younger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Successful | <input type="checkbox"/> Older |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connected | <input type="checkbox"/> "Cool" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good-looking | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnically like — or unlike — me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well-known | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In certain professions | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funny | |

Now take the quiz again, only this time: "If I'm honest, I sometimes think **less** of people who are..."

Tuesday

Read James 2:5-13. It's so easy to justify our lifestyles by comparing ourselves to the worst people and insisting, "Well, I'm no murderer!" But what does James say about this line of thinking?

James is getting to the problem of subtle sin, sins that are less obvious than murder or adultery. In what areas of subtle sin do you struggle — perhaps areas like prejudice, lack of compassion, pride, etc.?

Ask God to help you see those subtle sins in yourself clearly, yet without heaping unproductive shame on yourself. Instead go to God, asking for forgiveness and power to overcome these areas of immaturity.

Wednesday


Read 1 Samuel 16:6-7. This describes the prophet Samuel's selection of the next king of Israel. What does God tell Samuel? How does this parallel what James says in chapter 2?

What are some of the various ways does our society judges people this way?

How does this pressure our young people, and even adults, to focus on achievements and values that are relatively unimportant to God and His work?

Today pray for young people you know: Pray that they will be able to treasure true maturity and wisdom and not the false, unfulfilling, external values our culture emphasizes.

Thursday

Read James 5:1-6. This is a challenging passage, especially in our culture! Note: Most commentators believe this is the one passage of James where he is not addressing Christians, but proclaiming a prophetic "woe" statement over 



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James 2:1 (NLT)