

The Inconsistency of Partiality

All Campuses | James 2:1-13

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help with group discussion. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. Soli Deo Gloria.

ICE BREAKER:

Share a time (humorous or serious) you were misjudged or misunderstood. What was your reaction?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:

What is the significance of James describing 'the sin of partiality' immediately after his final instructions at the end of chapter 1? Compare the motivation of the three quotes from those being partial (v. 3) with the motivation from Scripture in the three quotes James includes in verse 8 and 11.

CONNECTING TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL:

Jesus said that the second greatest commandment was to 'love your neighbor as yourself,' (Mark 12:31 [compare Lev 19:18]). How does showing partiality neglect this commandment? How does it neglect the first commandment to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,' (Matt. 22:37 [compare Deut 6:5])?

How does the Lord's Prayer (and Jesus' comments right after) help us understand the mercy of forgiveness (Matt 6:9-15)? How does Jesus embody mercy?

LIVING OUT THE TRUTH:

Why do you think partiality is considered a minor sin? When being partial 'with evil thoughts' (v. 4), what does it say about us? About our view of others – those we favor and those we dishonor? What does it say about our view of God, the 'Lord of Glory,' and His promises (see v. 5)?

Read Galatians 3:28 as a group; include v 26-29 for context. How does v. 28 help your understanding of what partiality means for Christians? What is the difference between a basic distinction and the sin of partiality with evil motives? Does our unity in Christ eliminate every distinction, every gifting, about us? Why or why not?

Pray with and for one another: To be 'unstained' by the sin of partiality; To rejoice in the 'royal law;' To rest confidently in the 'law of liberty' and the mercy we have received from God, through Jesus.

PARENTING MOMENT & FAMILY FOCUS:

Read James 2:1-13 together. Talk together about what it means to show mercy to someone (mercy: being kind to someone, especially when they've made a mistake or are in trouble, and choosing not to punish them when they could). Talk about how to treat everyone (not just some people) with the same kindness the Lord shows toward us, and what that looks like in everyday life.

FURTHER STUDY:

Consider Jesus. (1) His teaching on mercy and judgment in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matt 18:21-35; (2) His interaction with the woman at the well in John 4:1-42. How does His treatment of the Samaritan woman further your understanding of partiality?



True Religion

THE BOOK OF JAMES

This page gets us into the text for the next sermon. The more familiarity we have with God's Word, the better we can see God and all that He has for us.

In the days leading up to next week, set aside a few minutes to read the text and reflect on these questions. A prayer to start: 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law' - Psalm 119:18

1. List the people James mentions (both specifically by name and generally by description). Add others who are not people but still mentioned in this passage.

2. What two events from Abraham's life does James include (v. 21 and v. 23)? Which was first? What was the result of each?

3. From this text, some claim that James and Paul contradict each other about the nature of faith and works, particularly about 'justification.' What do you think at this point?

4. What in this text confuses you?

5. What in this text compels you?

6. Spend some time in prayer to God, asking Him for understanding and wisdom to apply your faith so that it works for the good of others.