

TEXT: JAMES 2:1–13

OPENING

Read James 2:1–13 quietly on your own. Now have someone read it aloud to the whole group. What stands out? Do we think the sin of favoritism is prevalent today? Do we tend to give special treatment to those of high standing (wealthy, popular, attractive, well dressed, athletic, talented, etc.) while neglecting those of lesser status (poor, ordinary, unkept, unattractive, less popular, etc.)?

QUESTIONS

1) James only references Jesus by name a few times in this letter. Why do you think he mentions “our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1, NIV) when referring to the subject of favoritism? How can a glorious view of Jesus help combat our tendency toward favoritism and hinder our mercy?

2) Read 2:5 carefully. Why do you think God favors the poor? How does physical poverty reflect the kind of spiritual poverty Jesus called us to in Matthew 5:3? Why might the poor find it easier to “love him” (James 2:5) than the rich?

3) Are we tempted to think it more strategic to reach those who are wealthy than it is to reach the poor? Do we think, “If we could only reach that high-profile leader or sports star with the gospel, imagine the impact”? Where does this thinking stem from?

4) The royal law (2:8), the one King Jesus lived and taught, is about loving all our neighbors as ourselves. James’ hearers appeared to be loving only some of their neighbors (the rich and wealthy). Which neighbors might you be withholding love and mercy from?

5) Verse 13 is similar to Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:7 regarding mercy. Only those who show mercy will receive it. Why? How does showing mercy (toward all) demonstrate that we have received mercy?

SCRIPTURE

Write which passage of scripture you are reading.

OBSERVATION

What is this text saying? What is the context? How does it fit with the verses before and after it? Are there any commands or instructions?

APPLICATION

How can you apply this verse to your life? What does this mean today? What is God saying to you?

PRAYER

Respond to the passage in prayer. Ask God to help you apply this truth to your life and spend some time listening to what He may be telling you.
