

Bible Studies for Life: September 11

Faith on Display in Your Relationships • James 2:1-13

By Laura Lee Leathers



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God is impartial. It's one of His attributes. In Romans 2:11, the Apostle Paul writes, "For God shows no partiality." The Apostle Peter said, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Remember the story of the prophet Samuel. He was sent on a mission to anoint a king of Israel to replace Saul. When he met the sons of Jesse, he looked at their physical features. Then, in 1 Samuel 16:7, the Lord reminds Samuel, "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

God is concerned about our soul and obedience to Him.

Don't play favorites based on outward appearances (James 2:1-4)

ESV). James begins by addressing the readers as “Beloved” or “Brothers” (1:2; 2:1, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 5:12, 19; My Beloved Brethren 1:16, 19; 2:5). Why is this important? Because James is stating that it’s a family issue – within the church.

Next, a command: “Show no partiality.” Look at 2 Chronicles 19:7. Jehoshaphat told the judges he appointed that they were to judge for the LORD. God would give them the ability, and then Amos said, “Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the LORD our God or partiality or taking bribes” (also see 1 Peter 1:16-17; Proverbs 24:23).

How are you and I to show impartiality? “Hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” The glory of God dwells in the Believer (1 Cor. 6:19-20) and the church collectively (Eph. 2:21-22). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are to see everyone through the eyes of Christ.

In verses two and three, James gives an example and points out the partiality shown between a wealthy man with a gold ring and fine clothing to that of a poor man in shabby clothing. In verse four, he asks, “Have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”

Don’t play favorites by discounting those God desires to use (James 2:5-7). Think about the religious leaders and how they judged Jesus. He was from the wrong city, not a graduate of their Jewish schools, wasn’t approved by those in power, and had no wealth.

What they couldn’t see is what James wrote: “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?” (ESV).

The reference to the “poor in the world” could be the poor widow who gave her mite, the church supplying food for the needy widows (Acts 6), and the collection Paul took up for the poor in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 21).

The “rich in faith” are those about whom Jesus spoke in the Beatitudes. He talks about “the poor in spirit.” We are all spiritually bankrupt before God. He judges everyone based upon their heart and their faith in Christ.

Don't play favorites, because we are called to love others (James 2:8-13). Notice the mention of the Royal Law: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18, Luke 10:25-37).

Why? “For one thing, it is given by the King. God the Father gave it in the law, and God the Son reaffirmed it to His disciples (John 13:34). God the Spirit fills our hearts with God's love and expects us to share it with others (Rom. 5:5). And the second reason: It rules all the other laws (Rom. 5:5). But the main reason is that obeying it makes you a king.

“Hatred makes a person a slave, but love sets us free from selfishness and enables us to reign like kings. Love enables us to obey the Word of God and treat people as God commands us to do. We obey His law, not out of fear, but out of love” (Wiersbe, *Be Mature, Growing Up in Christ*).

“Christian love means treating others the way God has treated me” (Warren Wiersbe).

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