

A down to earth faith
James 2: 1-13 How to treat people right

James concern in this passage is the issue of favouritism.

1. THE PRINCIPLE.

“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favouritism.” v1.

James gives on one particular example of showing favouritism which was very relevant for his initial readers, and that is the example of...

(i) A_____.

“Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 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’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”
vs 2-4.

There are other ways that we could be tempted towards favouritism...

(ii) A_____. We live in a world where so much emphasis is placed on beauty, on fashion, and we can often judge people on how they look. See 1 Samuel 16:7.

(iii) A_____.

(iv) A_____.

(v) A_____.

(vi) A_____!

2. THE REASON.

(i) *Favouritism is incompatible with* _____.

“brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” v1.

The logic is plain. Christians are people who have a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ levels us. We are equal before God, brothers and sisters in Christ, fellow servants – that is a reality. When we display favouritism in any way, we cease to be people’s brothers and sisters, and instead we become v4 their “judges.”

(ii) *Favouritism is incompatible with* _____.

James uses a surprising word in v1, the word ‘glorious.’ He’s almost echoing Paul’s words in Philippians 2: “*Christ Jesus who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself...*” James is reminding us, like Paul, that Jesus had all the position, and prestige and power of heaven. Jesus is glorious. Yet he set it all aside, came to this world, and had no favourites. He wasn’t impressed with riches or social status.

(iii) *Favouritism is incompatible with* _____.

“listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him?” v5. God has chosen us to be His people. Think about things from God’s perspective – God had the ultimate inner circle, the ultimate exclusive group, He existed in the ultimate complete relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God had no need of a relationship outside of Himself. Yet in an act of sheer grace He

reached out beyond the Godhead to include those who had no hope of being included. His grace reaches out to bring you into His circle.

And James reminds us that God is a God who has a heart for the poor, the underprivileged, the disadvantaged and the oppressed.

How we treat other people reflects how we view God.

(iv). Favouritism is incompatible with _____.

“if you really keep the royal law found in the Scripture, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ you are doing right.” v8

To show favouritism is to be in total opposition to this law of loving your neighbour, because none of us enjoys being passed over simply because of someone’s favouritism for another person.

The danger is that we can view favouritism as a small thing, no big deal. James tells us that we should think again. *“But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it...” vs 9ff.* Showing favouritism is to break God’s standards.