

Why is this topic and so many sentences dedicated...seemingly out of the blue in the midst of this text...to partiality? It came up because James was addressing a real problem in the church: believers were favoring wealthy, impressive people over the poor. He uses that example to show that favoritism conflicts with faith in Jesus, who is “**the Lord of glory**,” and with God’s own impartial character.

He also treats it as more than a social mistake: it reveals a heart issue, where people judge by outward status instead of by God’s standards. James’ point is that partiality is a serious sin because it goes against love of neighbor and the very gospel itself which was first delivered...to the poor in wealth and spirit:

James 2:1: “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.”

- **Grammatical Usage:** “**partiality**” or in the Greek, “prosōpolēmpsiais” meaning, “receiving the face.”
- **Literal Interpretation:** My dear friends, don’t let outward status rather than intrinsic worth influence how you live out our glorious, Christ-originated faith.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word.

I. THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

A. AS MANIFESTED IN JAMES’ DAY...

We know Jewish Christians challenged Gentile salvation, but in this epistle the problem was one of showing partiality between the rich and poor (**vv. 2-4**)

B. TODAY, WE CAN ALSO BE GUILTY OF PARTIALITY...

Historically ethnicity; today the rage expressed by the poor of the rich. Sadly, the sin of partiality (i.e., being biased, prejudiced, racist) is just as prevalent if not more so than it was in the days when James wrote his epistle.

II. WHY CHRISTIANS CAN’T SHOW PARTIALITY

A. JESUS CHRIST IS A “GLORIOUS” LORD! (2:1)

1. What does OUR partiality have to do with the LORD OF GLORY?
 - a. As Christians, we profess to be Christ’s disciples, or followers, whose goal is to imitate Him (**Luke 6:40**)
 - b. As such, our actions are likely to be considered by others as a reflection of what Christ teaches
 - c. If we show partiality as Christians, we leave the impression that Jesus Himself is partial (prejudiced, biased, racist)
2. Therefore, if we are not careful, the glory of the Lord can be tainted by OUR partiality!

B. WE BECOME JUDGES WITH EVIL THOUGHTS (v. 4)

1. God has always hated unjust judges
 2. Jesus Himself warned about:
 - a. The dangers of judging - **Matthew 7:1**
 - b. The need to make righteous judgment - **John 7:24**
 3. If we judge against the poor due to our prejudice against them, we will find ourselves fighting against God! - **Psalm 109:31**
- C. **WE DESPISE THOSE GOD HAS HONORED (v. 5)**
1. Both then and today God has chosen to honor the poor
 - a. The gospel was proclaimed to the poor - **Luke 7:22**
 - b. The majority of those who responded were from among the poor – **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**
 2. Both then and today God has chosen to honor ALL men - **Acts 10:34-35**
- D. **WE HONOR THOSE MOST CAPABLE AND LIKELY OF OPPRESSING US (v. 6-7)**
1. The rich were doing this to the Christians in James' day
 2. Who are the ones most likely to oppress Christians today if it ever came down to "push and shove"?
 - a. Those who have the resources to do so
 - b. And most likely that would be the "majority" and the "affluent"
- E. **WE BREAK "THE ROYAL LAW" (vv. 8-11)**
1. Which is "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**"
 2. This is one of the most fundamental laws that God has ever given!
 - a. As proclaimed by Christ - **Matthew 22:36-40**
 - b. As taught by Paul - **Romans 13:8-10**
 3. And, as emphasized by James, by breaking one law, we become guilty of ALL the Law!
- F. **WE WILL ONE DAY BE JUDGED BY "THE LAW OF LIBERTY" (vv. 12-13)**
1. This refers to the law of Christ, or the gospel
 - a. A law that has set us free from the bondage of sin through the mercy shown in Christ - cf. **John 8:31-36**
 - b. And a law that sets us free from man-made restrictions - cf. **Colossians 2:20-22**
 2. But if we:
 - a. Apply man-made restrictions upon others (like showing partiality)
 - b. Do not show mercy toward others ...then NO MERCY will be shown toward us! - cf. **Matthew 6:14-15**

From this Biblical insight we are more likely to heed the prayer and admonition of Paul:

⁵Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶That you may with one mind [and] one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Wherefore receive you one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God (Romans 15)

➤ **Conclusion:** Will I be as sensitive to others as the Lord is sensitive to me?