

m MASTERCLASS | JAMES

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 6

READ

JAMES 2:1-4

FOCUS

¹MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, BELIEVERS IN OUR GLORIOUS LORD JESUS CHRIST MUST NOT SHOW FAVORITISM. ²SUPPOSE A MAN COMES INTO YOUR MEETING WEARING A GOLD RING AND FINE CLOTHES, AND A POOR MAN IN FILTHY OLD CLOTHES ALSO COMES IN. ³IF 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?"

REFLECTION from PASTOR DENISE RISTENPART

When have you ever shown favoritism? You know we all have! For me, I work so hard to not do it. Let's take a look at the definition of favoritism; favoritism is the unfair practice of treating some people better than others. So, to show favoritism is to make judgments about people on the basis of their outward appearance or some other influencing factor. Let's look at some reasons why showing favoritism is prohibited in Scripture.

Favoritism is inconsistent with God's character.

Impartiality is an attribute of God. He is absolutely and totally impartial in dealing with people. Let's look at some Scripture to see what God's Word says:

"For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God, showing no partiality and taking no bribe" **Deuteronomy 10:17**

"For there is no favoritism with God" **Romans 2:11**

"There is no favoritism with him" **Ephesian 6:9**

When we show favoritism, we are behaving in a way that is inconsistent with God's character--in a way that is in fact contradictory to the Bible and how we are meant to be.

Favoritism is contrary to God's values.

James talks about a situation in which believers gave preferential treatment to the rich. What would motivate this kind of behavior? Is it not because these believers valued the rich more than they valued the poor? They would rather have rich friends than poor friends, and their treatment of the rich and of the poor reflected their values. James reminds us that their values were not God's values - "Didn't God choose the poor in this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? Yet you have dishonored the poor" James 2:5-6. They were acting in a way that was contrary to God's values.

We tend to put everyone in some kind of category; we rank them as higher or lower than other people. It can be based on their looks, what they wear, what kind of car they drive, the kind of house they live in, and sometimes outward characteristics of personality. All of these things are a non-issue with God. They are of no significance at all. They mean absolutely nothing to God.

Favoritism is sin

James makes clear that favoritism is not simply disrespectful of people it is sin against God. "If ... you show favoritism, you commit sin" James 2:9. It is sin because it is contrary to the character and command of God. Because favoritism is sin, there is no place for it in the hearts of God's people.

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Wow! So what do we do with all of this? We pray. We pray that God will show us the true heart of everyone we cross paths with.

For me personally, I am always having to do a self-check with my 3 girls (as many of you know I have 3 daughters). I can go through seasons of favoring one over the other (which never ends well). Recently, I bought my middle daughter a nice pair of shoes and did nothing for my other two girls. Jenn has a very bad back and can't work so I tend to spoil her a bit--she comes over often to help me at the house which, to me, justifies me doing special things for her. Well, Jenn showed up at our house with the shoes on and my other two girls lost it. They made sure I understood just how unfair I was and how I don't love them as much as her. I had a big mess on my hands. It reminded me how important it is to treat them all equally...even though they are "grown up." I am a very lucky mom to have been blessed with my girls. I have to constantly pray to see them all equally and ask God to show me their hearts.

QUESTIONS

- WHEN HAVE YOU FOUND YOURSELF FAVORING ONE OVER ANOTHER?
- DID YOU CATCH YOURSELF AND STOP?
- WHAT CAN YOU DO TO NOT SHOW FAVORITISM?