

# FAITH THAT DOESN'T PLAY FAVORITES

AUTHENTIC FAITH: GROWING WITH JAMES THE APOSTLE · JAMES 2:1-13 · JANUARY 19, 2025 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

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*"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism."  
(James 2:1)*

## Faith That is Consistent with Jesus' Way (James 2:1)

Faith "in" Jesus that looks like the Faith "of" Jesus

Holding onto the faith of Jesus

Letting go of what is inconsistent with the faith of Jesus

## Faith That is Consistent with God's View of People (James 2:1-7)

False faith accepts the perspective/judgment of the world:

- Favoring the rich by inviting them to draw near in proximity
- Harming the poor by pushing them to stand or sit beneath the feet

Jesus-like faith accepts the perspective/judgment of God:

- Remembers the poor are heirs of God's kingdom
- Names exploitation by the wealthy for what it is

## Faith That is Consistent with God's Guidance (James 2:8-13)

Faith lives the law of the kingdom: "love your neighbor as yourself"

Faith lives honestly about our weaknesses

Faith lives fully free in God's guidance

Faith lives fully covered in God's mercy

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When have you experienced someone playing favorites, whether earlier in your life or in your present circumstances? What happened? How did you respond?
2. This week we continue our preaching series, "Authentic Faith: Growing with James the Apostle," by exploring James 2:1-13. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through this study and then read that text aloud.
3. Verse 1 invites us not only to live with faith "in" Jesus Christ but to live following the faith "of" Jesus; that is, living our faith in a way consistent with Jesus' way. What do you think that means?

4. In verses 2-4 James uses a practical example of how favoritism can play out in relation to those with material poverty and those with material wealth. How would you describe and summarize what James is saying to the Christian community here?
5. What might be another example from our own day about how followers of Jesus might be tempted to show favoritism?
6. In verse 5, James describes the Jesus way of viewing the poor. Where else in Scripture might we find this view supported?
7. How does James contrast this Jesus way of viewing the poor to the tendency to show favoritism to the wealthy in verses 6-7?
8. James references the "royal law" of Leviticus 19:18, which Jesus also quotes (see Matthew 22:37-40 and Mark 12:29-31). What is James saying in verses 8-11 about the kind of people we should be in relation to God's guidance for faith-life?
9. There is a high calling for the life of faith but also high mercy for the life of faith. What stands out to you most about verses 12-13 in light of the previous verses?
10. What is one thing God speaking to you personally through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone this week.

## DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize James 2:1 or 2:8 or the last part of 2:13.
- Read more about the Azusa Street Revival here in "From Azusa Street to the ends of the earth" by Gary B. McGee: [www.christianitytoday.com/2006/04/from-azusa-street-to-ends-of-earth/](http://www.christianitytoday.com/2006/04/from-azusa-street-to-ends-of-earth/).
- One spiritual practice that can help us reflect well on our daily life of faith is called the examen prayer, found in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. This daily practice invites us into five movements of prayer. Perhaps you could utilize the examen prayer at the end of each day this coming week:
  1. Become aware of God's presence.
  2. Review the day with gratitude.
  3. Pay attention to your emotions.
  4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.
  5. Look toward tomorrow.