

A. Regarding people, why do we have favorites?

B. If you look at the church in general and you wish to see greater fruitfulness, James may be the book for you to study.

God calls you to flee the sin of partiality.	I. <u>THE EVIL MOTIVE OF PARTIALITY</u> II. <u>REASONS TO FLEE PARTIALITY</u>
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I. THE EVIL MOTIVE OF PARTIALITY → **v1**

A. The Greek word translated as “**personal favoritism**” is “an idiom, literally ‘to accept a face’): to make unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another— ‘to show favoritism, to be partial...”<sup>1</sup>

1. Before we look at the sin James pointed to, Scripture promotes some degrees of favoritism.
  - a. A husband and wife are only to have intimate “**personal favoritism**” toward each other.
  - b. Parents are not required to provide for all the children in one’s city or town; however, Paul wrote to Timothy, “**if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever**” (**1 Tim 5:8**).
  - c. **Gal 6:10** says, “**while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**”
2. Some business contracts require a company to treat certain customers with special privileges.

B. The problem James cited was when people in a church show favoritism within the household of faith. Look at the example he cited. → **vv2-3**

1. The Greek adjective for clothes is more literally “**bright**” rather than “**fine.**”
2. Imagine two people come into our church, one looks rich. How would favoritism look today?
  - a. In this church, we don’t have a great deal of preference for seating.
  - b. Favoritism or partiality would be different.

C. James gave his analysis of such favoritism in the house of God. → **v4**

1. Perhaps one of us might show favoritism to a rich person because we are interested in how he or she could offer financial support to the church.
2. When we see a poor Christian, we shouldn’t see them as a potential burden of any sort.
3. In the case of either the rich or the poor, if we make such unfair distinctions even before getting to know the person, James said that we are guilty of evil motives.
  - Such motives are based only upon a worldly standard rather than upon the Word of God.
4. How should we look at either the rich or poor who enter our doors to worship?
  - a. When we meet a wealthy Christian, we should see them as a son or daughter of God to whom we should endeavor to minister.
  - b. We should see the poor Christian as a blood-bought son or daughter of God who we should endeavor to minister to as well.

<sup>1</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 767). United Bible Societies.

## II. REASONS TO FLEE PARTIALITY

- A. The first reason for not having favoritism for the rich over poor Christians is because of the matters of eternal riches given to all who believe. → **vv5-6**
1. Because of the gospel, the poor have been made rich in faith.
    - a. To a Christian, the riches of the faith should matter more than what one possesses.
    - b. Through faith in Christ, even the poor will be given a great inheritance in heaven and then in the new heavens and new earth.
      - 1) In glory, there will be a reversal of roles for some
      - 2) Jesus gave an example of this in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.  
→ **Lu 16:19f**
      - 3) It is more important to be an “**heir of the kingdom**” (**v5**) than an heir of the riches of this world.
  2. In **v5**, James said there was a predominance of God choosing the poor of this world to have riches in Christ. He said, “...**did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.**”
    - a. In the NT and in church history, there are examples of the rich who came to Christ. Still, there is a case that most of those called by Christ were not rich or of noble heritage.
    - b. In Judea and Jerusalem, most of the saint were poor. To survive, they depended upon the the contributions of saints from other regions (**Acts 11:29-30** and **1 Cor 16:1-4**).
    - b. Paul gave an explanation why salvation wasn’t given to many mighty and noble  
→ **1 Cor 1:26-31**
- B. Another reason James gave was because of the abuses of the rich. → **middle of v6-v7**
1. Especially in Louisiana, so many people— rich and poor— are eager to drag others into court.  
— This is because lawyers often agree to only take payment if they win the lawsuit.
  2. In **v6**, the rich were the ones dragging Christians to court. This is likely because the poor couldn’t afford to pay lawyers.
- C. Lastly, James explained how personal favoritism was a transgression of the moral law. → **vv8-9**
1. We are not saved by law-keeping; however, it should grieve a true Christian to be considered as transgressor of the law.
    - a. When we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father— the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - b. Jesus is the only mediator between God and mankind.
    - c. As Christians, we can rest in the fact that Jesus died for our sins; however, salvation in Christ should produce a measure of obedience along with fruit of the Holy Spirit.
    - d. We were not saved to live any way that we desire, Jesus died for our sins so that we would no longer live for ourselves but for Him who died and arose again on our behalf.  
**(2 Cor 5:15).**
  2. Consider how it is that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Review, further application, and conclusion:

