

Exposing Bias Embracing Action

Text: James 2:1-17 (NLT)

1 My dear brothers and sisters,[a] how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?

2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting[b] dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes.

3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, “You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor” — well,

4 doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?

5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn’t God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren’t they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him?

6 But you dishonor the poor! Isn’t it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court?

7 Aren’t they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name[c] you bear?

8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”[d]

9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.

10 For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws.

11 For the same God who said, “You must not commit adultery,” also said, “You must not murder.”[e] So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law.

12 So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free.

13 There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.

14 What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?

15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing,

16 and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" —but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

17 So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

Faith beyond bias.

The community of faith is called to be a fair and impartial to all. Why?

- **God does not play favorites and neither should we.**

1 Peter 1:17 - New Living Translation

17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents."

Romans 10:12-13 - New Living Translation

12 Jew and Gentile[a] are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him.

13 For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." [b]

Job 34:19 - New Living Translation

19 He doesn't care how great a person may be, and he pays no more attention to the rich than to the poor. He made them all.

Definition of favoritism:

Favoritism - In the Greek, means "lifting the face." In biblical times, people would show favoritism by lifting the face of someone they preferred, while lowering the face of someone they didn't like. This word also has a negative

connotation of partiality or discrimination based on **external factors such as wealth, social status, or appearance.**

Why we should strive be a fair and impartial community

- **We are made in the image of God.**

James 2: 5-8 - New Living Translation

5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him?

6 But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court?

7 Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name[c] you bear?

- **We are called to obey the royal law - Love Your Neighbor**

James 2:8-9 - New Living Translation

8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself."^[d]

9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.

James 3:7-9 - New Living Translation

7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, **8** but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. **9** Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God.

Embracing Action

- **Faith goes beyond words of sympathy and well wishes.**

James 2:14-17 New Living Translation

14 What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?

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Early Church Case Study - Acts 6:1-7 (NLT)

6 But as the believers^[a] rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

2 So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, "We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. **3** And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. **4** Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word."

5 Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). **6** These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

7 So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

What does the first century church teach us?

- Sensitivity/Awareness (Acts 6:1)
- Speaking up (Acts 6:1)
- Showing up (Acts 6:2)
- Stepping up (Acts 6:3-5)