

James 2:1-9 – April 24, 2022

Why We Discriminate

J.D. Farag

Good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. I want to welcome our online viewers as well and get right to it, looking forward to what the Lord has for us today. We finished two weeks ago Chapter 1 in James. We're going verse-by-verse through the Bible and through this book, and today our text will be Chapter 2:1-9. I will ask those of you who are here if you're able to stand, if not where you're seated is fine. You can follow along as I read.

James is writing by the Holy Spirit and says, verse 1, **“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man [Verse 2] comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If 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?**

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him? But you [Verse 6] have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of Him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found the Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.” Which he will expound on beginning in verse 10, Lord willing, next week.

But why don't we pray and we will ask God to bless our time together in His Word. Father in Heaven thank You so much. We're so grateful to you, Lord, for Your Word and this portion we have here before us today in Your Word. We need to hear this. We may not want to hear this, but it's in our Bibles for a reason. All Scripture is God-breathed and sometimes it's there for our encouragement, instruction and exhortation.

But sometimes it's rebuke and correction and perhaps such is the case with this text before us today. So Lord, we're going to posture ourselves before You, humble ourselves before You so that you can minister to us and if need be that conviction, not condemnation, conviction of the Holy Spirit concerning this matter. So Lord, we ask You for this in Jesus' name, amen and amen. You can be seated. Thank you.

So I want to talk with you today about why it is that we are so quick to discriminate against people and more importantly, what it is that we can do about it as doers of God's Word, which is really the context in which James is writing this. And here again in the text that's before us, James -- I hope you like me are coming to really appreciate this about him. I mean straight up, pulls no punches, head on, tells us like it is. He doesn't soften it up, make it more, you know, palatable. No, I mean he just [Pounding fist] I mean it's like this.

You know when you do that, you're sinning! How about that? Oh, wow, James. No, it needs to be that strong because this is a serious issue! And it was happening. They were doing this. They were discriminating, showing favoritism, partiality. And we're going to talk about this. I

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mean it's really quite an example that he uses here concerning two guys coming into the church. Well, in the text we're provided with no less than three reasons as to why it is that we do this, and we do this, okay?

We have to be honest, right? Not only do we do this, this is like our default. We do this. We show favoritism to people. We're partial. We discriminate against people. And thankfully, and I love this about James in particular, but God's Word as a whole, we're also given what it is that we can do about it. It's the How of the Holy Spirit that enables us to do the What of the Holy Word. And the third reason is going to provide us with that. So let's jump in. You ready? You sure? (chuckling)

Here's the first reason, it's in verses 1-4. We judge by outward appearance. You know they've actually done studies on this? They'll have a guy go in dressed, I mean, wow, suit and tie! I mean looking like a million dollars. As one said, all green and wrinkly. But anyway, no, I mean just dressed up, got the suit on, looking the part. Oh, can I help you sir? Same guy, same day, same person. Goes in with jeans and a T-shirt, same guy, jeans and a T-shirt. Can I get some help around here? Nobody gives him the time of day.

Why? Because, well, look at the guy. True story. I've shared this before and I think is appropriate here. This is on the mainland, Cadillac dealership, in walks a young man, T-shirt, jeans with holes, before they were fashionable. Don't get me started on that. I just think to myself, wow, and you paid for those holes? [Laughter] Back when I was young - you know when you do that - we paid for the whole thing. When you got holes in them, you threw them away; you go out and buy them! Anyway, enough of that.

So in walks this young man to this Cadillac dealership. He's there on the showroom, he's got a T-shirt and jeans with holes in it and nobody gives him the time of day. In fact, they're looking at him like what's he here for, a job application? He can't afford to buy the car that's there on the showroom. Well, finally one of the younger, newer salesman approaches him and says, Can I help you? He says, Yes, please. And he pulls out of his pocket a list of custom-ordered Cadillac limousines that his dad sent him in to buy. Oh, I would have liked to have had the commission on that sale.

Outward appearance. I remember back in my business days when I wore a suit every day, it was so interesting to see how people treat you based on the way you dress, based on your outward appearance. How about based on the car that you drive? Okay, I shouldn't have gone there, but - It's okay to have a nice car. It's okay to have things. Just don't let those things have you. So here, James draws upon this example which some believe was actually based on what was happening at that time concerning their partiality and discrimination and showing favoritism.

And it's a very interesting example and as a pastor, I really appreciate this because if into this church walked someone, I mean bling with the ring and all, let's be honest, are we not going to look at them differently than the guy that comes in who looks like he's homeless because he probably is? Oh, hey, sir, have a seat right here. Can you move please, over here? You

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know what? Can you just move to the back? Actually, you know what? Come over here and sit down by my dirty feet. Why are you here anyway? Make room for this man.

This obviously is a man of importance and a man of means. That's what they were doing. Why were they doing it? Because of the outward appearance. Because we're looking at the outward appearance, and we're making assessments and judgments based solely on how that person looks.

This is a textbook case of looking at the outward, not the inward, and making judgments on that basis with no regard for the person's heart. You know the account, it's in 1 Samuel, the 16th Chapter. Let me give you the back story before we read verses 6-7. So, Saul has had the kingdom torn from him in his disobedience and rebellion. And God commands Samuel to anoint a king of Israel to succeed Saul and he tells him to go to the house of Jesse to anoint the king of Israel. Now Jesse has eight sons. And so Samuel is on his way, in obedience to the Lord, to anoint the next king of Israel to succeed Saul, from whom the kingdom would be taken. So he arrives on the scene and Dad's waiting and here's his sons, minus one, seven of them.

As was the custom in that day, it's still the same today, it's the oldest first. In fact, the father is named after the son, the firstborn son. In the Middle East it's more of an honor to call me by my first son's name than to call me even by the title, Pastor. Abu Elias, the father of Elias, my firstborn son. That's an honor and that's how they, in that culture, viewed the firstborn son.

So of course, there's the lineup, seven of the eight sons of Jesse and here is Eliab, first one. Samuel is like, oh, he's the one! **“So it was [Verse 6, Samuel 16] when they came, that he [Speaking of Samuel] looked at Eliab [The firstborn] and said, ‘Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!’ But [oh, oh] the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. [And here's why] For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”**

Another thing - I just thought of this - very interesting. They've actually also done studies concerning people's height, height. By the way, for those of you watching online, I am not -- I better be careful here -- OK how about this? I'm 6 feet tall and shrinking. [Laughter]

No, everybody says you're much taller than I thought. That's because this pulpit - I want to cut about a foot off of the bottom of this thing. We tried, the guys have done their best in the back with the camera angles. I mean... anyway, but they've done studies on people's height and do you know that people who are taller are treated better? Thank you for responding that way because – Because I'm 6 feet tall, so treat me better. [Laughter] Don't you find it interesting that God would check Samuel on this?

Because you've got to know, in fact, it's in the text, the detail is provided that he stood taller than all of the rest. I would imagine he worked out at the gym. I'm just suggesting that he was buffed and big and built and bulky and tall and probably handsome. Stood there; So much so that Samuel thought oh, yeah, this is – Hello? And the Lord's like Samuel, what are

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you doing? Well, I mean obviously this is the heir apparent right here, yeah? I mean look at him. No, don't look at him. You're looking at how tall he is, how handsome he is, how built and buff he is and you're making an assessment based on his outward appearance. Here's the problem, Samuel.

I'm looking at his heart and I've rejected him for that reason. So here's Samuel now, as it goes on it's one of the most fascinating accounts in all of Scripture. I know I say that about all accounts and all the Scripture, but it so fascinating because David's not even in the lineup. Imagine how flabbergasted they are. I mean, Samuel's not alone. Eliab; how do you think he felt? I mean, he's like, yeah, do we need to bother with this formality? Obviously, we know it's me. My brothers, I don't even know why you guys are here, but whatever... [Laughter] Come on Samuel, let's go ahead, anoint me. It's not you.

By the way, fast forward to when David goes to the battlefield, sent by his father, Jesse, to check on his brothers, three of which were there on the battlefield when this uncircumcised Philistine was blaspheming the name of his God for 40 days and 40 nights. And the entirety of the Israelite Army is paralyzed in fear and David goes bringing subsidence and to check-in and bring news back on how it's going. He shows up on the battlefield. Who's the first person he encounters? His older brother, Eliab. What does his older brother, Eliab, tell him? What are you doing here? This is for men. Go back home and tend to your little sheep. Who do you think you are? This is where the real men are. And David's like, excuse me, bro. Sorry. [Laughter]

I don't know. When I read Scripture, I put myself there because this really happened. I would've loved to have been there to see the reaction on his face. And here's Eliab; he's bitter obviously towards his baby brother. You've got to know this went against everything. No way, the youngest and not the oldest? And so there was animosity and a hatred and a bitterness and resentment towards David on the part of his older brothers, especially Eliab because of this.

So here's David going, Did you hear what that guy just said? Yeah, he's been saying that for 40 days and 40 nights. All day, every day, all night, every night. And you're okay with that? Let me at him! This is not okay! And then they take him to Saul whom David would succeed as king of Israel, and David has to convince Saul to let him go and slay that uncircumcised Philistine, which he does.

That's the guy you're going to anoint, Samuel because he has a heart after My own heart. Oh, I know, he's just a kid, outwardly. But he's a man of God inwardly. Oh, you are looking at his youth and you're looking at his outward appearance, but I see his heart. He has a heart – do you know what it means to be a man or a woman after God's own heart? That means you have a heart for the things of God and your heart is after those things, pursuing those things, wanting those things, doing those things. You have a heart for God, a heart after God's own heart. And God saw the heart of this young man, David. That's the king, that's who you're going to anoint.

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And he's not even in the lineup and the urgency in the detail in the narrative is stunning, if I can say it like that. Can you imagine Samuel? I mean he's just, you know, [Blowing up] completely blown away. He's gone through all seven of these boys and he says to Jesse, I know I heard the Lord right on this. I know I was supposed to come here and anoint one of your sons as the next king of Israel. and none of these boys, nothing personal guys, are the king. Do you have another son or do you have more sons?

Because it ain't one of them. Here's dad: Yeah, but... I do, but... (speaking in a dismissive tone) Just like that, he said it just like that in the original. It's just like that. [Laughter] I'm sorry. Again, I'm putting myself there. I can only imagine how astonished Dad is. He's like you know I do, but I didn't even think that he would be, you know, a candidate. I mean... Well, where is he? Well, he's out, [oh, interesting] tending the sheep. A shepherd's heart. Humm... And here's the detail and its so interesting in the narrative. Go get him! Now! In fact, do not sit down, nobody sits, nobody does anything. Nobody eats, nobody drinks water, nobody does anything. You get him right here, right now! And they do.

In walks David. Imagine the look on his face? Again, I'm there. I'm looking – David is going – (Looking around clueless) What? What did I do now? All defensive and everything. Can you imagine the stink eye Eliab gave him? Better not be you. It is. [Laughter] So the narrative, again, the detail is he's ruddy, handsome, smelly. Well, that's not in the text, but sheep stink. I'm sorry; they just do. And he comes in, he's got sheep smell all over him. Oh de pee-ew. It's all over him. And Samuel's like, it's him. I'm sure David's like, me? You talking to me? Me? No way! Way.

Why? Because God sees your heart. Man looks at the outward appearance. Oh, would to God we would be oh so careful when it comes to making judgments based on the outward appearance, how a person looks, how a person dresses, what a person drives. You have no idea what's in the heart of that person. Proverbs 24:23 Says, **“These things also belong to the wise: It is not good to show partiality in judgment.”**

Acts 10:34; I like the first part of this verse because I like Peter. It says, **“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: [And then right there you're like uh-oh - no, this is good though,] ‘In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality.’”** And by the way, aren't you glad? I think about the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians about how God chooses the foolish to confound the wise. And he's hitting them again head on, to his credit by the Holy Spirit and he's like, not many of you were of noble birth.

You know, you come from good breeding stock, your lineage, your genealogy, your family tree, and you know you've got this reputation. No, you're a loser, man. But God chooses and uses the weak to shame the strong. You know in the Gospels, Jesus is always attracted to the least and the last. You find Him in the Gospels; He's always attracted to those people. It's the other people, it's the opposite. The harshest words that ever came out of the Savior's mouth, there reserved for the religious leaders, the nobility, the wealthy. hmm.

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Aren't you glad that God doesn't show any favoritism or partiality or discriminate? Because if He did, well, by, I would not be up, right? What's the second reason? Well, it is in verses 5-7 and this one is – we're going to get lean and mean on this one, I think we seek favor from the rich. So what James says here is very interesting and this for a number of reasons, not least of which is that we have it backwards, and here's why.

The rich from whom we curry favor are the very ones who are exploiting us, blaspheming the name of Jesus and bringing legal action against us. And if this weren't bad enough, as we just mentioned, God has actually chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world, the foolish, the weak, the least, the last, the poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in their faith. So here's this - this is very searching and convicting, and rightfully so, but is this not why we show favoritism? Because they have means with which to repay us for the favor.

So we curry favor from those who can in like kind do something in return because they have the means. We just got talking about this - Well, I should say James just got done writing about this, about how it is that true religion, pure, undefiled religion - I mean, you you fancy yourself as being religious. You're not! I'll tell you what true, undefiled, pure religion is. It's caring for people like orphans and widows who could do nothing for you in return. How about that? That's what I notice. That's what's acceptable to Me.

If you want to talk religion, that's the religion I'll accept. It's when you do something for someone that cannot repay you. And here comes... I'm so thankful that nobody pulled up in a Bentley today with a suit and sat right here in the front. This would have really messed me up. So let's just – (chuckling) welcome to my world. Let's just say that that happened. I'm glad it didn't, but let's just say it did. Come on, you guys. I mean, you didn't get a chance before because there was already people talking to him but after the service - sir - you're going to have a line.

Oh, what's your name? Welcome! Come on, don't look at me like that! Because that's how you're going to look at him like that. Why? Because this guy - hey, that's someone that you want to know. It's good to know people like that; know people in high places. Oh, really? You want to go down that road? They're going to be the ones to sue you and take you into court. And they're also going to be the same ones that are going to take the name of Jesus in vain. We talked about this in the Prophecy Update.

I do want to share this because it's an important principle and it's the truth. But I know that you're like me in this regard. When somebody takes the name of Jesus in vain, does that not get you? And why is it that they do that? Because Jesus is God. Have you ever - I have actually asked people this question, I used to be very militant when I was younger because I had more energy. But as you get older, it's not that you're more spiritual, it's that you don't have the energy.

But I would ask people, excuse me, I'm just really curious, why is it that you don't take the name of Mohammed in vain? When was the last time you heard somebody say, Oh, Buddha! No, come on, let's be in equal opportunity blasphemer here, dude. Why is it that you take

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the name of Jesus in vain? Because Jesus, the name of Jesus is the only name given among men whereby we must be saved. That's why.

And isn't it interesting, and again, we talked about this in the update that you'll never hear about a false Buddha, a false Mohammed, only a false Christ. Why? Because the counterfeit authenticates and validates the genuine. This is why you'll never see a counterfeit 70-dollar bill. There's no such thing as a genuine 70-dollar bill. So why are there false Christ? Because Christ is a genuine and Satan is the master counterfeiter. Well, these are the very people that are blaspheming the name of Jesus and they are also exploiting the weak and the vulnerable, the least and the last.

Deuteronomy Chapter 10:17 **“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.”** Ooh! Oh, wait a minute, I'm starting to get it now. So that's how it works? You better believe it. You better believe it. Why would God deem it necessary to have a verse like this rise to the level of being included in the page of holy writ, to tell us that God is not partial? Okay, I get that, but He doesn't take bribes? Well, is that a thing? Yes it is. Oh, sir, I'll take care of your building fund.

It reminds me of a story. I hope I haven't shared this in a while. If I have, forgive me. You have to forgive me. So there's this pastor that is approach by this guy whose brother just died. And he says, I would like for you to do the memorial service and you know, but you have to say that my brother was a saint. And if you do that, I will take care - I will pay off your building. The pastor's like really? Because these guys were very wealthy, very corrupt And now he's being asked to say at the memorial service of this very corrupt man that he was a saint and he agrees. Uh-oh, what's the pastor going to do?

Well, here comes the day for the memorial service and the pastor gets up, brother is sitting right there waiting. Okay, you better say my brother was a saint. He was the wickedest most corrupt, evil, lying, cheating, I mean - but you're going to say he was a saint. So here's what the pastor says. You know, this guy was corrupt. Yeah. I've done a few memorial services in my day. I've never had to say that or will I ever say that about anyone, right?

Thank God. But oh, yeah, he was corrupt, all of his business dealings were so corrupt, under the table. I mean he was a con man and he was so dishonest and so corrupt and so wicked and so evil. And the brother is going [Grim face] [Laughter] and then he says this: But compared to his brother, this man was a saint! [Laughter] It has absolutely nothing to do with the text. But I couldn't resist. But that's how it works, by the way, in all seriousness, that's how it works in that world. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

So we'll curry favor with someone like that because we're going to call in a marker and they're going to return the favor. I'm sorry about this, but I just have this picture in my mind. It's horrible, I know, but this is a very long time ago, that movie, The Godfather. And, you know, he's sitting there, I forget his name, he's sitting there, You come to me on the day of my daughter's wedding. He's calling in a favor because he did something for him, now he's

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got to do something in return. That's a pretty good impression actually, wasn't it? I didn't even have to put Kleenex in my mouth, right? [Laughter] Well, this is Proverbs.

This is Proverbs 19, two verses, starting with verse 4. **“Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend.”** Well, that's how it works? You better believe that's how it works. How about verse 6, Proverbs 19. **“Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts.”** Oh, we even name drop. Yeah, we're like this, good friends. I know so-and-so. Wow! You do? Whoa! You know that's another one where -- God's doing a work in my life over the years on the whole name dropping thing. I know people in high places, like really high. Yeah. Oh, you know so-and-so? Cool! Guess who I know? Oh, that's your father? Wow, impressive!

Let me tell you about my Father. He's the creator of the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is. How about that? [Chuckling] [Applause] Okay, I feel better. Now, let's move on to the third one, and we'll try to bring it in for a landing. It's in verses 8-9, and again, this one comes packaged with the how to deal with this.

The how of the Holy Spirit to do the what of the Holy Word. Now, here's the third reason why we're discriminatory and discriminate and show favoritism and partiality. It's because we love self more than others. Come on, think about this. And please – I remember – this is many years ago on the mainland, a long, long time ago in the land far, far away. People would say, you know, I have a hard time loving people because I just don't love myself. Are you kidding me right now? You don't? Yes, you do!

You are head over heels in love with yourself. You don't think you love yourself? No. You love yourself! Who's the person you think about the most? You! This is - I know it will date me - but remember when they actually, used to develop pictures, the photos? You young people, there was a day when they would actually print - it's coming back now, by the way. Have you noticed this? Just hang on to everything that you have. It'll come back. Hopefully before the Lord comes back, but it will come back.

But you would go and you'd wait, you know, 1-our photo. You couldn't wait to see how the pictures turned out. Pictures are done. Oh! You know, even while you're paying, you're looking through them. Who are you looking for? You. [Laughter] Come on! And even now, okay, we'll bring it into modern day terms, you know, with our devices. We take a picture - take another one - No, why? I look great in that one. Yeah, but I don't. [Laughter]

Really? Oh, no, we love ourselves too much. We are our favorite topic. Two people are in a conversation and you're talking about yourself, Your favorite subject, the unholy trinity: Me, myself and I. Oh, it will show up when you - if you note how many times you say words like I, I, I aye yi yi yi yi! You know that song we sing? It's all about you, Jesus. Liar. [Laughter] really? Who are you kidding? It's all about you, dude.

I'm really getting convicted, so we're going to try to move on here. So why would James, inspired by the Spirit bring up this whole love your neighbor as yourself, the great commandment that sums up the law? Why, why would he bring that into the discussion? I'll

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tell you why. Because they were using that as an excuse to show favoritism to the rich. Oh, I am just loving my rich neighbor as myself. Oh, really? You're going to – And is that not, by the way, something we've been hearing a lot of lately? Love your neighbor. Hmm.

Well, they were using that - I should say, better said, misusing that to justify what they were doing. And they were doing what they were doing out of self-love. They have more love for self. Let me see if I – I always have a hard time with this illustration, but in Matthew 18:15-17, if I'm not mistaken, I'm relying on a faulty memory here. Jesus really gives an outline for how to deal with an issue within a church. It's called and referred to as church discipline.

So first you go to that person one-on-one. And if you cannot resolve it and win them over, then you bring two or more witnesses with you. And if they still cannot or will not receive it and win them back, then you bring it to the church leadership. And then if they still won't receive it, then you need to treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector, somebody that's employed by the IRS. If you're employed by the IRS, we love you, especially this time of year, in Jesus name. But you're to treat them like that, as an unbeliever, and get rid of them and have nothing to do with them. Well, that's – Where's the love? No, that is love.

In the Corinthian church, they were so proud of themselves. They were, man, we're such a loving church. We accept everyone. Ah, excuse me, but that's not love. Oh, you think that you're loving? No, that's self-love. So you got a guy in your church – you'll forgive forgive me - having sex with his stepmom. And you're under the banner of well, we're just loving and accepting of everyone, No, that's self-love. You will not confront them because you love yourself too much. If you loved them as you love yourself, you would confront them and deal with them, but you must not love them. Paul says that's not love. This is what love is.

And by the way, that's the famous Love Chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. Do you realize its couched in terms of what love is not? And this is what love is. You think that this is love? That's not love. This is love. In fact, this is how love works and what love looks like. You take that guy and you get him out of the church and you give him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. Oh, this is not a loving church! You kick him out of the church. You get him out of the church. You give him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. If you love him, you'll do it because maybe he'll come to his senses and repent, and then you restore him. And that's exactly what happened. That's love.

In the second letter – in fact, these Corinthians - I'm not too hard on them because we're all like them, have the propensity to do the same exact thing. They go to the other extreme. They go from, hey, we're loving and accepting – the guy is given over to Satan, kicked out of the church, destruction of his flesh, comes to his senses, repents, wants to be restored.

And the church is like no! Wait - How does - No, restore him, forgive him. He repented. Love on him. He needs to be loved on. You guys - that's love! But see, self-love says I'm not going to jeopardize the friendship and put the friendship into jeopardy because I want them to like me. I don't want them to unfriend me so I'm not going to post that because then they'll unfriend me and block me. That's self-love. No, if you really love them as you love yourself,

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you'll do this and not do what you're doing. It was really exposing their self-love. And the reason it was exposing their self-love is because they wanted these people that they were showing favoritism to, to love them in return.

Let me draw your attention to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 22. I want to begin reading in verse 34. **“But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ [We've got Him now] and He [Speaking of Jesus] said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments depend [or hang] the whole Law and the Prophets.”**

Stay with me. If I love God like that, first five Commandments, done deal. If I love my neighbor like that, sorry, emphasis added, then second five Commandments, done deal. An interesting, we talked about this on Resurrection Sunday. The Commandments are a picture of the cross. So you have the - you cannot have the second five until you have the first five in order to hang the second five on. So the first five are vertical, loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, body.

And then hanging on that, the second commandment like it, loving your neighbor as yourself. See, if I love you as my neighbor, I'm careful not to point because people get weird, you know, because I'll point and people are like he's looking at me. So I will do this, okay? If I love you as much as I already love myself, I'm not going to covet you. I'm not going to steal from you. I'm not going to murder you.

Oh, I better bring Jesus into this conversation because of course I'm not going to murder you. But wait a minute, Jesus kind of raised the bar on that one, didn't He? Same thing with adultery. He said if you assassinate their character, you're murdering them. You're committing murder in your heart when you're angry with your brother. Well, wait a minute. If I love them, like I already love myself, then I'm not going to do that.

That's right, that's the whole point, and you fulfilled the law. It's not really Ten Commandments. It's just basically down to this, as they affectionately refer to it as the 11th commandment of love, loving God and loving your neighbor. And if you love God like that, you're not going to have any other god. What would be the point? You're not going to make yourself a graven image and wash it every weekend and make payments on it. I'm trying to bring it into modern day application.

You're not going to, certainly not going to take His name in vain, as we just talked about. You're not going to do that. Why? Because you love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. And your neighbor, you're not going to do anything against them because you love them as much as you love yourself. And you must really love yourself. You do, and so do I. So you mean if I love my neighbor as myself then I'm good? Yeah. Yeah.

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Let me close with John 13, beginning in verse 34. **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, [I want you to hang on to that for second] that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”** ok, well wait. Okay, wow! Wait, so the litmus test to know that I'm your disciple is going to be how much I love one another?

Yeah. You mean it's not how big my Bible is? No. It's not how often I attend church? No. It's not if I tithe and pray and go to church and I don't drink or smoke or chew or go out with girls who do? (Chuckling) That was a blast from the past. No. That's not how they're going to know. The litmus test by which they're going to know that your My disciple is going to be how you love one another. That's how they're going to know. So okay, You just said that I've got to love one another as You have loved me, Lord? Yeah.

Oh, kind of a tall order though. Because I know You love me like a lot, and you even like me too, which is sometimes more powerful than love. You mean God likes me? Yeah. I mean, I know He loves me and all, but you mean He likes me? Yeah. So this is the new commandment, that I love one another as You, Jesus, have loved me. Yeah. Uh-oh, I'm in deep kimchi because You love me so much, I don't know if I can love someone that much. Yes, you can. How? Oh, the love that I have for you and give to you will be the love that you have and give to others. He's the source of that love. This could be a whole other sermon.

I'm not going to go there. Don't lose heart. We're almost done. But this is forgiveness too. How am I going to forgive that person? Oh, what have I forgiven you of? Oh! And you're withholding forgiveness from them for what they did to you and I forgave you for what you did? Really? So how am I going to forgive? With the forgiveness that I've been on the receiving end of from God. Same thing is true with love. Early on - I'll close with this. I've shared this before. I hope it hasn't been too recent.

Early on in our marriage, my wife and I have been married for 33 years this year, I was so full of myself and in love with myself and, you know, just - I mean, so pious and proud and so spiritually proud. Man, I remember this one day I looked at my wife and I said to her, and there was a certain tone in my voice, you know that husbandly, spiritual tone, you know, And I said to her, “Honey, I love you with a love that only God can give.” [Laughter] I thought, I thought she would just melt and oh, honey, give me a big Velcro hug and kiss and oh, honey I'm so blessed to have you as my husband.

She did not do that! She did the opposite of that. She looked at me with this puzzling look like wait, what? You mean to tell me you cannot muster up enough love in and of yourself? I'm that unlovable, I'm so unlovable that the only way you can love me is if God gives you a love for me? I'm like, how did you do that? How did you do that, woman? [Laughter] (Chuckling) Whenever I do weddings, I always do Ephesians 5, where three times the Apostle Paul says to the husband, “Love your wife, love your wife, love your wife.”

One time to the woman, “respect your husband.” Wait, what? And it's not just love your wife, love your wife, love your wife. It's love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave

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Himself for her. Okay, I'm done right there. Love your wife as much as you love your own body. I have yet to meet a guy that wasn't into his body. every time he walks by a mirror, sucks it in. And then thirdly, love your wife as you already love yourself. Three times. And then one time, five words of the woman. Oh, and wives respect your husbands. How lopsided is that?

But here's the point. She's going to respect her husband if he loves her "like dat." Oh, no, that's the way God wired her. If you love her that much, she will be unable, she will not be able to resist because that's the way God made her. You will never hear that husband of that wife say to his wife, "You need to respect me." Why? Because he loves her. And here's the wife over here going, "Honey, you better go back and read that because three times before that, and in other words, proportionate to your love for me is my respect for you." "Well, you need to respect me, woman." Well, you need to love me, husband.

Well, no, you need to respect me first. No, that's not what it says. You need to love me first and then I'll respect you That's how it works. So all that to say this, when I said that to my wife, I was actually theologically correct. The love that I have for you comes from God. It's not that I can't muster up love in and of myself, but that's the source of that love. Because see, God loves me so much and with that love because God is love, not God has love; God is love.

That's who He is. That's the source. So I've been on the receiving end of God's love, and from that I'm going to love you. As Jesus said, you love one another as I have loved you. I want to say, and I know I said that this will be the last thing. In fact, it has to be the last thing. Kaponu, come on up. Why don't you stand up. Last thing. If you're having a hard time with someone and - it's like my wife would say to me over the years - I love you, but I don't like you right now Okay, I don't blame you actually. But maybe you're having a hard time with someone. You're having a hard time loving them, maybe a hard time forgiving them. May I encourage you to go back to the Lord and just allow the Lord to remind you and show you, and if need be, e-mail you the attachment - it's going to be a huge file, by the way - of all the times He's loved you with an unfailing love.

And then it's going to have to be a separate file. In fact, it's going to have to go on a separate drive. The other file is going to be the list of all the times that He's forgiven you. And then when you realize just how much you've been forgiven of and how loved you are, the expression of that is love and forgiveness. It comes from Him because of Him.

Father, thank You. Lord, this is so true about our sin nature, our human nature, our Adamic nature. Thank You, Lord. You changed everything. And Lord, thank You that we'll never study a passage in Your Word that is unreachable or not doable.

If it's here and you say to do this, even command us to do this, then You're going to package with that the enabling to do it because You're not going to be party to our disobedience. So Lord, we need to love people as much as we love ourselves and as You have loved us. So,

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Lord, that's doable. So, Lord, would You do that by the Holy Spirit in us, through us, and for us, we pray, in Jesus' name, amen.