

Favoritism

A Sin Against the Gospel

James 2:1–13



James 2:1–13

2:1 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man 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?

2:5 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 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?

2:8 If you really keep the royal law found in 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. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

2:12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Favoritism: the practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another.

“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.” (Lev. 19:15)

2:1 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. ² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. ³ 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,” ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

2:5 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?

⁶ But you have dishonored the poor.

Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?

⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

God offers a place in His kingdom to all who will believe in Jesus and love the Father. (2:1,5) No other distinction between people should exist.

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." (Acts 10:34–35)

“All who share Messiah-faith belong at the same table... Paul, in every letter, insists on the unity of the church and is working hard to achieve it through what Paul names ‘the ministry of reconciliation.’ Whether it’s Jewish and Gentile in Galatians and Romans, rich and poor in Corinth, competing factions in Philippians, different ethnic groups in Colossians, a master and a slave in Philemon—at every point we find Paul standing in the middle and saying, ‘But we must do this together.’ ”

(N.T. Wright)

2:8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

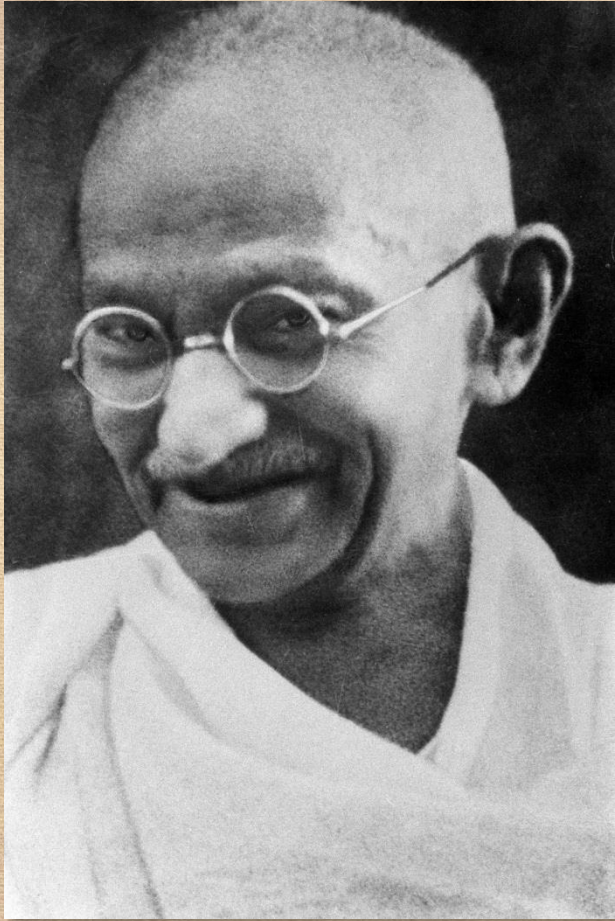
2:12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.... Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Matt. 5:7; 7:1–2)

“The Day will bring it to light.... If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.” (1 Cor. 3:13–15)

Good Things Which Can Lead To Exclusion

- Income
- Race



“Go and worship with your own people.”

“If Christians have caste differences also,” he said, “I might as well remain a Hindu.”

Good Things Which Can Create Exclusion

- **Income**
- **Race**
- **Education**
- **Camps**
- **Extended Family**

What Is Wrong With Favoritism?

- **God has chosen all who believe, even the ones you are excluding.**
- **The group whose favor you are seeking can hurt you and disrespect your God.**
- **Favoritism violates the law of love and is sin.**
- **Favoritism will be judged by God.**

Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

- **My identity is in Jesus – “My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.” (2:1)**
- **Be aware of all around you.**
- **Focus on shared values – “to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him.” (2:5)**
- **Extend mercy to people outside your group. (2:13)**