

# THIS WEEKEND

## *at The Crossing*



**Nope: Nope to Favoritism**  
**Shane Philip**  
**April 21, 2024**

**The Crossing Church**  
**Las Vegas, Nevada**

### OPENING

This week we are continuing our ten-week series in the book of James called Nope. It is a deep dive into following the crowd counter-culturally. This word is one we use to vehemently say “no” to the evil values of our culture most strongly! It means “no way in heck!” Here, James, Jesus’ half brother, teaches us how to say no to favoritism and take time to ask God for wisdom. Favoritism is defined as placing value on people based upon something God does not value.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**James 2:1-13** 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? 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? 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. 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.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29** Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV translation unless otherwise indicated.

despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him

**Philippians 2:9-11** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## **OBSERVATION**

James and his brother Jude both wrote books of the Bible about New Testament life after Jesus' resurrection. Two other brothers, Joses and Simon, are only mentioned once, but no daughters of Mary and Joseph are mentioned. James became the leader of the Jerusalem church and was called Camel Knees because of the time he spent praying on them! James used a word, *prosopolepsia*, defining favoritism as a sin meaning, "must not turn their faces up to people." The Jewish culture that used this term showed partiality toward people there based on outward circumstances such as wealth, attractiveness, power, position or family status. Roman culture was oriented around status and social recognition and there were very clear ranks of people in it – the elites who made up 2 % and the non-elites the other 98% of the population - who were considered commoners. Everything in the culture was for the purpose of reinforcing status and honor – for example, clothing which identified the ranking of people as to their class.

**QUESTION: Who do you tend to look down on?**

**QUESTION: Who is God calling you to show mercy to?**

## **APPLICATION**

James tells followers of Jesus to live a different way – there was to be no favoritism in Christianity. He tells them of a better way because the new church was granting privilege based on worldly status. James says the people were judging each other based upon cultural values rather than God's. J. D. Greaser says the "whats" of favoritism are: **1) Affluence.** This is wealth and the influence it affords the person who has it; **2) Appearance.** This is when we judge someone by his looks or how he dresses or the color of his skin; **3) Accent.** Someone's accent tells the world where he came from and that may identify a position of wealth or poverty; **4) Age.** There are many misjudgments made between people of different generations; **5) Ancestry.** Some cultures discriminate based upon family origin; **6) Achievement.** Assumptions are made about worthiness based upon education level or jobs.

**QUESTION: Which of the six "whats" cause you to discriminate between people?**

**QUESTIONS: How often do you make assumptions about people without knowing them personally?**

Why does God not honor favoritism? **1) It dishonors God.** Jesus chose the vulnerable, the outcast, the poor, the disabled, the failures, the widows and orphans. He considered everyone the same – loved by Him, honored by Him, so when we dishonor them, we also dishonor Jesus; **2) It dishonors people.** Who are we to determine which people are worthy or honorable when we have been unworthy and dishonorable so many times in our lives? God doesn't judge on a bell curve, because we have all sinned equally in His eyes. He judges us based upon our continuing in our chosen innate sinfulness, or our sorrow leading to repentance and our choice

of Jesus' sacrifice and His grace. The only unforgivable sin is blasphemy which is the complete and forever denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. So, let grace and mercy triumph over judgment.

**QUESTION: When have you believed you have committed the sin of blasphemy and cannot be forgiven? What do you think God would say about that?**

**QUESTION: In what ways are you personally involved in helping poor or disabled people?**

**QUESTION: Who are the people in your life, outside of family, who love you unconditionally? What are you doing to show them your appreciation for their faithful friendship?**

**QUESTION: What negative cultural values are you saying yes to today? What cultural values are you saying "NOPE" to today?**

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we ask forgiveness for dishonoring You by judging others based upon the cultural values that separate us. We know that Kingdom values are pure and righteous – that You expect us to apply them without favoritism because that's the way You love and treat us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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