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TEACH ME  
THE BIBLE PODCAST

STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER

2:1-13

THE BOOK OF

J A M E S

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*Faith, Works and Blessing*



## James 2:1-13

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If you are new to the Story of the Bible or would like to review the Story:  
Listen to the following TMTB Podcasts:

*The Story: Understanding the “Big Story” (30 min)*

*Old Testament: Walk Through the Broad Story (27 min)*

*Timeline: New Testament Beginnings (35 min)*

*Letters: Paul’s Writing to the Churches–Part 1 (30 min)*

### REVIEW

In James 2:1-13, James spells out the core of his argument. Namely, the believer in Jesus Christ should not hold their faith with an attitude of “*personal favoritism*.” In other words, the believer is not to show partiality to the rich because he or she is rich, nor to the poor because he or she is poor. Of course, the more common problem is to show favoritism toward the rich and view them (or oneself) as “*blessed*” (i.e., rich) because of some service to the Lord.

In the case of the one holding a Pharisaical theology, the service to the Lord would be some claim to adherence to the Law of Moses that produced a physical blessing. One is blessed because he or she keeps the law. Thus, the “*poor man*” would need to start law keeping in order to be “*blessed*.” In these 13 verses, James will dispel the notion that these believers are “*blessed*” because they keep the Law. In fact, James will demonstrate that such a theology is based in partiality and is in fact a violation of the Law of Moses. Therefore, they are not “*blessed*” because they keep the Law. In fact, they need to remember that they are violators of the law (i.e., forgetful hearers) and not keepers of the law (i.e., effectual doers) and have thus been shown mercy.



## James 2:1-13

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### MONDAY

Listen to the James 2:1-13 podcast.

### TUESDAY

The same Greek word appears in 1:6 and 2:4 (Greek “diakrino”) which literally means “*through judging*.”

Look up the following verses: Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:23; Acts 10:20; Romans 11:2; Romans 14:23; James 1:6; Jude 9 and 22. All of these verses are variously translate the word “*diakrino*.” Often they are translated as some form of “*doubting*.” However, the problem is not one of doubting in any of these books. Instead, the problem is one of judging incorrectly. Read these passages and see if reading the word as “*judging*” makes more sense.

### WEDNESDAY

In Deuteronomy 10:17, Moses reminds Israel that the LORD does not “*show partiality*” or “*take a bribe*.” The Bible has quite a lot to say about bribes. Read Exo 23:8; 16:19; 27:25; Isa 1:23; 5:23; Micah 3:11; Psa 15:5; 26:10; Pro 6:35; 17:8, 23; and 21:14. Injustice in judgment, or partiality, and the giving and taking of bribes is particularly offensive to the LORD. Moreover, while “*bribes*” seem to be quite straightforward, partiality can be more subtle.

Think through some examples of both bribery and partiality that you see in the world.

**Now for a more difficult question:** what are some examples in your own life where you are willing to acceptingly turn a blind eye to evil rather than exposing it?

What is the motivation behind such actions? Isn't that a problem?



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### THURSDAY

In our email for today we discussed Jeremiah 7:9. Now take a look at Micah 3:4-5:

*“Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers (James 2:11) and against those who swear falsely (James 5:12), and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages (James 5:4-6), the widow and the orphan (James 1:27), and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘For I, the LORD, do not change (James 1:17-18); therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are have not come to an end.”*

The importance of all that the prophets have said to Israel and Judah in the Old Testament are weighing particularly heavy on James’s admonition to these Jewish believers in Christ. If the character of God does not change, then how do you think he regards those same things today?

### FRIDAY

Read Exodus 34:6-7.

The Greek word for “mercy” in James 2:13 shows up twice in the Septuagint’s translation of this verse. Interestingly, two different Hebrew words are being translated by the same Greek word for mercy. The first word is most usually translated “gracious.” The second word is most often translated “loyal love” or “lovingkindness.” It is important to link “grace” and “love.” Notice that James makes this same connection.

Read James 2:8-13 again. Notice love (in verse 8) and mercy (in verse 13). Grace, or mercy, and love go together as do sin and judgment. James’s point to these believers in Christ are to never forget the mercy and love shown to them by the Lord and then to express it to those around them.