

James 2:1 - 13 (NLT)

¹My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?
²For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes.
³If 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,
⁴doesn’t this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?
⁵Listen 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?
⁶But you dishonor the poor! Isn’t it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court?
⁷Aren’t they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear?
⁸Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
⁹But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.
¹⁰For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws.
¹¹For the same God who said, “You must not commit adultery,” also said, “You must not murder.” So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law.
¹²So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free.
¹³There 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.

⁵LISTEN 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? ⁶BUT YOU DISHONOR THE POOR! ISN’T IT THE RICH WHO OPPRESS YOU AND DRAG YOU INTO COURT?

***Would a poor person feel welcome in our church? Would a rich person feel welcome in our church?
In what ways do we consciously or unconsciously favor some people over others in our church? Why do we do this?
How can our ministry reach out to all people without any hint of discrimination?
What can we do to be completely free from being impressed by the wealth or power of others?***

⁹BUT IF YOU FAVOR SOME PEOPLE OVER OTHERS, YOU ARE COMMITTING A SIN. YOU ARE GUILTY OF BREAKING THE LAW.

Showing Favoritism

***Why is it wrong to show favoritism to the wealthy?
It is inconsistent with Christ’s teachings.
It results from evil thoughts.
It insults people made in God’s image.
It is a by-product of selfish motives.
It goes against the biblical definition of love.
It shows a lack of mercy to those less fortunate.
It is hypocritical.
It is sin.***

In the Old Testament sacrificial system, God made special provision for those who were too poor to bring the prescribed offering.

1. If they could not afford a bull, goat, or sheep, they could offer a dove or pigeon (Lev. 1:5, 10, 14).
2. In addition to that, every seventh year all debts would be canceled, in order that a person would not go permanently into debt that could never be repaid (Deut. 15:1–2).
3. Every fifty years, a jubilee was celebrated, in which slaves could choose to be set free from their masters (Lev. 25:8–13).
4. Crops in the field were not to be completely harvested and vineyards were not to be completely picked, in order that the poor could glean food for themselves (19:9–10).
5. The poor were never to be charged interest on a loan (25:35–37); if they had to sell all of their property, a kinsman was to redeem it for them (25:25); **(Boaz kinsman redeemer for Naomi)**

As soon as Zaccheus was converted, the Holy Spirit convicted him of his need to repay those he had defrauded, many of whom may have been impoverished by his power and greed (Luke 19:8).

- Jesus then said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham” (v. 9). Zaccheus’s new, redeemed heart was evidenced by his Godlike concern for those in need. The very opposite spirit characterized Judas. His unsaved heart was evidenced by his objecting to Mary’s anointing Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume, suggesting it be sold and the money given to the poor, “not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it” (John 12:6).

Monday Morning: Action Step

Find a way to serve someone who is in:

- a. **Financial need**
- b. **Medical need**
- c. **Emotional need**
- d. **Spiritual need**