

Enlightened: Part 1-Discrimination and Favoritism

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

What if your favorite strange food combinations?

Using one word, name something that drives your success?

WORD

James 2:1-4 (NIV)

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?

The *Greek word* for *favoritism* in this verse means "to make unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another."

The key word in this definition is the word "**unjust**," because to make distinctions between people by treating one person better than another is not necessarily sinful.

For example, I treat my wife better than other women. Is it sinful for me to treat my wife better than other women? Absolutely not! In fact, it is just right that I treat my wife better than other women. Therefore, when we say partiality or favoritism, it means an unjust discrimination between people by considering one person better than another.

In this passage James is addressing professing (claiming) to be Christians who treat some people better than others because of their status in life. Notice that favoritism could be financial or intellectual or competitive in nature.

Favoritism is forbidden and has no place among God's people, and has no place in the life of the believers.

James provides at least five reasons why partiality or favoritism is unbiblical:

1. It Is Not Who We Are (Who are we? Salt of the earth and Light of the world. If you know who you are, you know what to do.)

“must not show favoritism” (v. 1). One version puts verse one this way: “My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism” (NAS).

In other words, do not profess your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and practices discrimination and favoritism against the poor. Claiming to be Christian yet not caring for the poor is **contradictory to God's Word**.

2. It Is Not Relational:

(v. 1). Our relationship or biblical Christianity, teaches us that as believers in Christ we are all equal in God's sight. We are brothers and sisters in the Lord. We belong to the same family of God in which partiality or favoritism does not exist. God loved us all equally. God doesn't love me more than you because what I do, God love us all because we are his children his own creation.

James 2:8 (NIV)

8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right.

3. It Is Not Biblical (v. 1). In the Bible the gospel and the person of Jesus Christ are sometimes used interchangeably.

Mark 1:14-15

Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’

We don't just follow Jesus because we know him but because we heard and know his word of truth the gospel.

4.It Is Not God's Heart

(v. 5). As far as salvation is concerned, God did not choose us on the basis of our status in life. God does not save people according to their economic, physical, racial, or social condition.

Talking to his countrymen, Moses writes,

Deuteronomy 7:6-8

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you.

5.It Is Not God's Command. Now the professing believers who practice partiality might say to James, "Well, the reason why we treat the rich with special respect is because we love them. In fact, we are just fulfilling the royal law: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" In verse eight James responds to their justification of their unchristian practice of favoritism: "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture...you are doing well." In other words, if you truly observe the royal law, then you are pleasing the Lord. But the truth is you are not really keeping the royal law because of your partiality toward the rich. You do not show love to your poor neighbors.

DISCUSSION

Share a time when you are showing favoritism and discrimination to anyone? What happened?

LIFE APPLICATION

We are the salt of the earth and light of the world. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. God loves us

and He does not show favoritism. God`s command is to love our neighbor.

VERSE TO MEDITATE ON

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James 2:8 (NIV)

PRAYER

Share your answered prayer. Pray for one another and throughout this week.