

# Refusing to Play Favorites

## James 2:1-13

**Main Point:** If you want God's favor, don't treat people with favoritism.

### Admonition (2:1)

- We are in the same faith family and on the same team (Galatians 3:28).
- We are saved sinners who are called to serve Him.
- He is the glorious Lord Jesus Christ.
- We're admonished to "show no partiality."
- Partiality is the idea of turning toward the one and turning away from someone else based simply on outward appearance, economic status, skin color or any other kind of discrimination.
  - Favoritism is giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another.
  - Discrimination is the practice of treating one person or group of people less fairly than other people or groups.
  - Prejudice comes from the words, pre-judge and refers to discriminating against people solely on the basis of outward appearance or skin color.
  - Racism is an explicit or implicit belief or practice that qualitatively distinguishes or values one race over other races.
- To show partiality is incompatible with our faith (Acts 10:34).

### Illustration

- The text literally reads, "gold-fingered and brilliantly clothed."
- Shabby means "vile, filthy, tattered and torn."
- When we practice partiality, in essence we've set ourselves up as judges, taking God's judging job away from Him.
- Making "distinctions" has the idea of "separating" people into distinct categories.
- When we judge others, we have "evil thoughts," which means we have reached "malignant, malicious and wicked" conclusions about people.

### Explanation

- James asks four lively questions to get us to see the contradictions that reside within us.
  - "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?" Yes.
  - "Are not the rich the ones who oppress you?" Yes.
  - "And the ones who drag you into court?" Yes.
  - "Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?" Yes.
- What Scripture says.
  - Let love be your law (vs. 8, Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, Galatians 5:14).

- Let Scripture be your standard (vs. 9-11).
- Partiality is a perversion of justice and is referred to as sin and those who do it are “transgressors” who are “guilty” of breaking the entire law of God.
- God’s law is not a set of disconnected commandments; but rather a unified whole.
- A person who breaks one of God’s laws is guilty of being a law-breaker.
- We are all sinners who are guilty before God. Since we are in need of God’s mercy, we should be known for showing mercy to others.
- Two principles to help us live on mission.
  - Utilize questions.
  - Use the 10 Commandments.

### **Application (vs. 12-13)**

- Watch your words and adjust your actions (vs. 12-13).
  - When we look at the law, these things should happen.
    - We see we are sinners who have broken God’s laws.
    - We flee to the cross of Christ so we can be forgiven.
    - We are free because we’ve been pardoned and set at liberty.
- Make mercy your message (Matthew 5:7).

### **Conclusion**

- Repent of racist attitudes, words and actions.
- Listen and love.
- Let’s make Edgewood ethnically and racially diverse and yet harmonious and united.