

James for Everyman: Building a Faith That Works

Week Two: James 2 Dusty Davis

Many early church leaders saw the book of James as lacking in spiritual depth of insight, and yet it remains one of the most practical and studied books of scripture. Written to the believers "of the dispersion" it provides God's Man with unique insights as to how we are to live when our culture opposes our faith. This series, *James for Everyman*, will challenge you to move beyond a faith that is merely ideological into a faith that works!

James 2: 1-4

"My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? For 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. If 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, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?"

James is going after a huge problem in both the early church, and the church today (unfortunately) a sin known as "partiality". It's when we base our treatment of people on something we should *not* be.

The Greek word for partiality used in this passages comes from two words: the first means to _____ / _____. The second means _____.

James is discouraging us from taking people simply as they appear to be. Never let your _____, be influenced by your _____.

In our sinful nature, we adjust our treatment of people for all sorts of reasons. We most often fall into one of two traps. **People are either _____, or they can do something _____.** Ouch!

Favoritism _____, while pushing _____.

James 2:5 *Listen 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?"*

Let's take favoritism seriously when we see it in our own hearts, let's be encouraged to move out in Christlike love to those who seem furthest away. That's how we put Christ on display!

James 2:12 *"So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free."*

James is basically saying, live as though _____.

James 2:13 “There 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.”

It all sounds good, treat others as I want to be treated. But...in the moment, when my flesh is running rampant? I love _____ for me, and _____ for you.

If we withhold care from those asking for it, do we really grasp the Gospel? Can I ask God to provide for me, while withholding care from another? **For God’s Man, it’s not _____ that moves us out in compassion, but rather an _____.**

James 2:14 “What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say ‘Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well’ - but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?”

Our works don’t _____ our faith, they _____ it.

We often want the things of God, without pursuing God Himself. I want the life He offers, while being unwilling to live the lifestyle he displayed. **For God’s man, our love for _____, should move us out in _____.**

James 2:21 “Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith....LISTEN TO THIS.....his faith and his actions worked TOGETHER. His actions made his faith complete.”

For Discussion:

- 1. Where are you most tempted to display “favoritism” or preferential treatment? What is most often the motivator? (What can they do FOR me, or if they are LIKE me?)**
- 2. How can we, as God’s Men, display favoritism and claim the true Gospel? How is favoritism so contrary to the heart of God?**
- 3. We often run with Grace in mind, without ever a thought to judgment. We cling to verses that remove us from all responsibility for our actions...even though scripture paints a very different picture. Unpack verse 12, do you find it unnerving? Why?**
- 4. Why is it so hard to offer others what I desire for myself? Shouldn’t our own desire for grace or mercy, drive us to offer it to others? Why don’t we freely offer what it is we desire?**
- 5. Our works don’t create our faith, they simply reveal it. What do your actions this past week reveal about your faith in Jesus?**