

Joyful Life Bible Studies

JAMES 2:1-13

Lesson 8

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Review James 1:22-27. What action have you taken in response to these verses?

a. Why is application of God's Word to our life (being doers of the Word) so essential?

Optional: What do you do when you find yourself resistant or reluctant *to doing* what the Word of God instructs you to do?

2. Mark the paragraph divisions in this week's study as follows. Briefly state the key point of each:

a. James 2:1-4

b. James 2:5-7

c. James 2:8-13

3. The problem dealt with in James 2:1-13 is one not discussed often in most churches today. It is assumed that because we live in the U.S.A., we accept everyone as an equal. We know this is not true among many unbelievers. Unfortunately, we also find this exclusiveness can be found among believers. All believers need to diligently heed James' exhortation in James 2:1-13. Examine your heart under the searchlight of God's Word. Ask Him to show you your heart in the light of these verses and express your desire to do His will in response to His instruction. Write this as a prayer here.

*He is in the way of life
that keepeth instruction; but he
that refuseth reproof erreth.*

Proverbs 10:17 KJV

SECOND DAY: Read James 2:1-4

1. In the passage we are studying this week we'll be dealing with relationships between believers. Apparently this was a problem in the churches then and this is a problem among some believers now. Compare this translation of James 2:1 with the KJV: *My brothers, don't hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, by showing favoritism.* The Lord of Glory, Jesus, indwells every believer and it is His glory, His presence within each believer, that we are to relate to. Outward appearance, education, status, or financial worth should not decide our acceptance or cause our rejection of believers or result in favoritism or partiality. Print from James 2:1 what believers are not to do.

- a. Observe James' illustration of this *respect of persons* in James 2:2,3 and write an updated version of how this might happen in the *assembly* (meeting of Christians) today.

Advanced Students: Research the phrase *Lord of Glory*. Record what you discover.

2. How does the Word of God evaluate the behavior of the believers towards the rich man and the *poor man*? James 2:4
 - a. Ponder James 2:4 from the KJV and the following NIV: *have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?* (Judges with false values. Wycliffe) What kinds of *thoughts* or *false values* do you suppose would cause this discrimination?
 - b. In what way do you think society's value system affects this kind of behavior?
3. View this *respect of persons* in the light of I Peter 1:17 (18,19)22. What do you see?
4. It has been said: *The ground is level at the cross.* What does that say to you about *every* born-again believer?
 - a. Reflect on the *glory* of the Lord the disciples beheld from John 1:14. How does *beholding His glory* through the Word and recognizing that the Lord of Glory indwells every believer encourage you to treat all Christians with love and respect?
5. Examine your life in the light of James 2:1-4. How do these verses challenge your attitudes and actions toward other believers?
 - a. James 2:1-4 doesn't mean you must make every believer your new best friend. What does it mean?

THIRD DAY: Read James 2:5-7

1. *Listen, my beloved brethren* is the way other versions open James 2:5. This issue of partiality must be dealt with and James wants to assure these believers of his love for them as he begins his instruction. According to James 2:5, why are we not to show partiality to the rich? (See also I Corinthians 1:26-28)
 - a. This choice certainly does not exclude the rich but I Corinthians 1:29 helps us understand why not many *wise, mighty* or *noble* are not a part of the kingdom. Explain from I Corinthians 1:29(30,31) why God chose the *poor*.
2. In what way are the *poor* of James 2:5 wealthy?
3. According to James 2:6a how were the *beloved* to whom James was writing treating the poor whom *God had chosen*?
 - a. Contrast the character and behavior of those *rich men* depicted in James 2:6,7 who were being esteemed and honored in the assembly, with that of the *despised* or *dishonored poor* of James 2:5, by recording what these *rich men* were doing:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - (1.) Pause to reflect on this. What in the world would cause Christians to esteem and show partiality to these tyrannical, oppressive, blasphemers of the *worthy* (lovely) name by which *Christians* are called?
4. Whatever your circumstances today, how does knowing God has *chosen the poor* of James 2:5 inspire or speak to you?
 - a. Sometimes people experience a reverse snobbery in the body where the poor discriminate against the wealthy. How does Galatians 3:26-28 understood, embraced, and put into practice prevent any favoritism based on outward circumstances or appearance?
5. Summarize what you have learned so far about *respect of persons*.

FOURTH DAY: Read James 2:8-11

1. What is the *royal law* according to the (Old Testament) *scripture*? Leviticus 19:18b
2. *This has been called the royal law because it is the supreme law of human relationships and it is given by the King Himself. Discover this for yourself by writing Mark 12:(29,30)31b.*
 - a. What does Jesus say about this law in Mark 12:31c? Selah
 - b. How do we *do well, fulfil the royal law, in respect to persons who come into our assembly?*
3. What do we learn from James 2:9 about having *respect to persons* (showing partiality or favoritism or despising or dishonoring other Christians):
 - a. ye _____
 - b. are convinced (convicted) _____

 - c. Why? James 2:10,11
4. We need to understand that the Law is broken just as severely when we fail to obey the command to love others as it is when we fail to obey the command *do not kill*. Comment on this.
5. Why must we recognize it is blatant sin to have *respect of persons* as exposed by James 2:2-4?
 - a. What counsel would you give to someone who had this problem and asked you for help?
6. See James 2:10,11 in the light of the Law as being the expression of God's character and will. Notice the phrase **He** *that said* (verse 11a). When we violate one of God's commandments, we are violating God's will for us and thus the whole law is violated. How do these scriptures help you to fulfil the (royal) law:
 - a. Romans 13:8-10
 - b. Galatians 5:13,14

Optional: The early believers whom James was addressing may have argued that they were keeping the law by showing respect for the rich. Why is it impossible to keep one part of the law and not another? James 2:10,11

7. Use the *royal law* as a mirror today. Print it here.

a. What does it mean to you to *love others as yourself*?

FIFTH DAY: Read James 2:12,13

1. Amplify your understanding of James 2:12,13 by comparing this version with the KJV: *Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.* How are we to *speak and act*? Answer from James 2:12b. Selah.

a. The judgment spoken of in these verses does not refer to the judgment of sinners. James is speaking to believers about standing before the judgment seat of Christ. We may be slipshod in our obedience to *the royal law* around people but the sense of being accountable to the Lord for the way we relate to other people ought to have a profound affect on the way we *speak and act* toward them. How does this awareness of accountability affect you?

Optional: Cite a practical example of how James 2:12,13 will enable us to avoid the believers' behavior of James 2:2,3.

2. In what way is the *respect of persons* (favoritism or partiality) spoken of in James 2:2-4 not showing *mercy*?

a. What do we learn about *mercy* in the following verses:

(1.) Micah 6:8

(2.) Micah 7:18

b. Think of James 2:13a in the light of Matthew 5:7. What do you see?

3. Why is it personally a blessing to you to know that *mercy triumphs over judgment*?

4. In what way does James 2:12,13 impress you to put into practice the *royal law*?

SIXTH DAY: James 2:1-13

1. How does James 2:1-13 correct any attitude among believers that the way they treat others is of no consequence and doesn't matter that much?

2. What *law* should govern our attitudes and actions towards others?

Optional: Focus on *that worthy name*. (James 2:7b) What is so special about that name by which we are called? See Philippians 2:9-11.

3. What are the serious implications of showing partiality?

4. Does this passage preclude showing honor or appreciation to others? Why or why not? See I Thessalonians 5:12,13; I Timothy 5:17.

5. What feelings accompany being snubbed, shunned, discriminated against, or ignored?

a. In what way are these feelings an additional incentive to fulfil the *royal law*?

6. What will you do in response to James 2:1-13?

*Holy God make me holy
Merciful God give me a merciful heart
Lover of souls help me to love them too
So I can be more like You.*