

## **James 2:1-13 — The Problem with Partiality**

The kind of partiality James is condemning is partiality that has sinful motives.

### **1. The Problem with Partiality is that it reveals our sinful hearts.**

Categorizing people leads to being partial and being partial reveals sin.

Biblically, sin is anything that falls short of God's will and glory or anything that violates his law and his character.

How do we sin by being partial?

#### **A. Evil thoughts**

- thinking less of certain people for any reason
- belittles
- disrespects
- dehumanizes the people we think lesser of

Partiality can go by many other names:

Favoritism	The practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another.
Discrimination	The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.
Prejudice	Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. Dislike, hostility, or unjust behavior deriving from unfounded opinions.
Racism	The belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.
Chauvinism	Excessive or prejudiced loyalty or support for one's on gender.
Bigotry	Intolerant toward those who hold different opinions from oneself.

These are sinful. These are dangerous. They have no place in the life of a Christian.

Sin of partiality is sneaky. We tend to justify or minimize because "its just the way we were raised" or because of a past situation. No reason is justifiable. If left unchecked, partiality can ruin lives, relationships and our testimonies.

We need to identify any partiality in our life and repent.

## **B. Reveals an attitude of pride.**

When we are partial, we pridefully elevate ourselves as judge.

When we show partiality, we've made distinctions. We've given ourselves a godlike complex thinking our opinions, reasonings and conclusions are correct.

We are all sinners, so we have no right to make ourselves judge over anyone.

We all have sin we need to deal with so rather than focusing on other people's sin, we must deal with our own.

The focus of sin in scripture is about putting to death our own sin.

Partiality has no place in the life of a Christian because sin has no place in the life of a Christian.

Partiality is a problem because it reveals our sinful hearts but it ultimately it reveals a shallow faith.

## **2. The Problem with Partiality is that it violates the gospel.**

Partiality is the opposite of the gospel.

God shows no partiality. A significant aspect of the work of Jesus was to break down these walls that divided humanity.

For us to show partiality we are violating the gospel because we are putting up walls that Jesus came to tear down.

When we don't treat people equally, then we are demonstrating that we don't really understand what happened at the cross for us. We don't really understand the gospel.

“You don't have time to throw stones when you're busy washing feet.”

We are to speak and act as those whose life has been changed by the gospel because if we've truly given our life to Jesus then it has!

Solution to our problem with partiality: Remember the mercies of Jesus. Remember the gospel.

How do we love our neighbor? Accept them for what they are and see them as a person for whom Christ died.

Jesus became the final atoning sacrifice. Jesus became the perfect law for us.

Remembering the gospel motivates us to action.

Remember the gospel because it reminds us to love our neighbors as ourselves because we've been reminded of how God has so graciously loved us!

“The Gospel, if it is really believed, removes neediness - the need to be constantly respected, appreciated, and well regarded; the need to have everything in your life go well; the need to have power over others. All of these great, deep needs continue to control you only because the concept of the glorious God delighting in you with all His being is just that - a concept and nothing more. Our hearts don't believe it, so they operate in default mode. If you want to really change, you must let the Gospel teach you - that is to train, discipline, coach you - over a period of time. You must let the Gospel argue with you. You must let the Gospel sink down deeply into your heart, until it changes your motivation and views and attitudes.” (Tim Keller)

Remember the gospel- knowledge  
Surrender to the gospel- action

Surrender

- deny ourselves
- submit to God's authority

“Jesus does not call disciples to Himself to make their lives easy and prosperous, but to make them holy and productive. Willingness to **take up his cross** is the mark of the true disciple.” (John MacArthur)

When we deny ourselves and take up our cross, we're not thinking about being partial. We're thinking about dying to self. We're thinking about Jesus' call to him and others.

Partiality is problem.

Solution is to remember the gospel and to surrender to the gospel.

## **Homework Questions**

Define partiality.

In James 2:1-4, why do you think the leaders of the meeting showed partiality?

Why is that wrong?

Describe a time in your life when you showed partiality or someone else showed partiality at your expense.

What are the consequences of partiality being shown in your situations?

Are sinful motives always present when partiality is shown?

Can you think of other sins that partiality reveals? Explain.

What can happen if we let partiality go unchecked?

Why is judgement on our part wrong?

What do we need to do instead of making ourselves judge?

How does partiality reveal a shallow faith?

Define violate.

Define “the gospel” in your own words.

How does partiality violate the gospel?

Why is it important that we truly understand the gospel?

How does our understanding of the gospel effect the way we treat people?

Describe a time when “washing feet” would have kept you from “throwing stones.”

What is the connection between the gospel and loving your neighbor?

Describe in your own words what remembering the gospel means.

Describe in your own words what surrendering to the gospel means.

What is the difference in remembering the gospel and surrendering to the gospel?

Have you truly surrendered your life to the gospel?

If so, share your testimony. (your Jesus story)

-what happened before you knew Jesus?

-what happened the moment you gave your life to him? (where were you? What did you realize?)

-what has happened since?

What does it mean to take up your cross?

Give some examples of what taking up your cross might look like on a typical day for you.