



**PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR AN EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN LIFE**  
**Lesson Four: Favoritism in the Church**  
**James 2:1-13**

1. It has been said that the most segregated time of the week in this culture is Sunday morning worship hour. In what ways, if any, have you seen this to be true (financial, racial, social, theological, etc.)

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2. Have you experienced negative prejudicial treatment from someone? Explain the situation. How did it feel?

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3. Have you experienced positive preferential treatment from someone? Explain the situation. How did it feel?

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**Keys to the Text**

**Partiality:** Refers to an attitude of personal favoritism. Translated from the single Greek word *Prosopolempsia*, it has the literal meaning of lifting up someone's face, with the idea of judging by appearance and, on that basis, giving special favor and respect. This word originally referred to raising someone's face or elevating the person, but it came to refer to exalting someone strictly on a superficial, external basis-such as appearance race, wealth, rank, or social status, without consideration of a person's true merits, abilities, or character.



### The Principle: James 2:1-13

1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.

*(Leviticus 19:13)*

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### The Example: James 2:2-4

<sup>2</sup> For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, *(Job 34:19, 1 Cor. 1:27-29)* <sup>3</sup> and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,”<sup>4</sup> have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

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### The Inconsistency: James 2:5-7

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

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### The Violation: James 2:8-11

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”<sup>[a]</sup> you do well; (*Lev. 19:18, Matt. 22:37-40*)<sup>9</sup> but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (*Lev. 19:15, Duet. 1:17, Romans 13:9-10*)<sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (*Duet 27:26, Galatians 3:10-11*)<sup>11</sup> For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,”<sup>[b]</sup> also said, “Do not murder.”<sup>[c]</sup> Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (*Exodus 20:13-17*)

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### The Appeal: James 2:12-13

<sup>12</sup> So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. (*James 1:25*)<sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (*Ephesians 4:30-32*)

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### Recap Questions:

1. According to James, why is showing partiality incompatible with faith?

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2. What reaction did the poor often get when they visited a Christian assembly?

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3. How does James use the law to explain the problem of partiality (vv. 8-10)?

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