

## The Evil of Favoritism Pt 3

### Its Condemnation

### James 2:1-13

#### James 2:1–13 (NKJV)

**2** My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. **2** 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, **3** 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,” **4** have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

**5** 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? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? **7** Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

**8** If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself,*” you do well; **9** but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

<sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For He who said, “*Do not commit adultery,*” also said, “*Do not murder.*” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

## **Introduction:**

Favoritism has been a problem of sinful men ever since the fall in the Garden. It shows its ugly head as early as Isaac and his relationship between Rebecca and Leah, and this later with Isaac’s favoritism of Esau over Jacob.

Even after the Holy Spirit came to live in the church, the people of God were not exempt from the sin of Favoritism.

We see it in Acts 6 when the church neglected the Hellenist widows, the greek speaking widows and were taking care of the Hebrew widows.

Then Peter expresses a deep rooted problem of favoritism in Acts 10, when he was told to go the house of Cornelius, a Greek to share the gospel for

his Salvation. God rebuked Peter by giving him a dream of all animals to eat that were formally unclean. And God tells Peter not to call unclean what God has deemed clean.

After Cornelius believes the gospel along with his family, Peter says.

Acts 10:34 (NKJV)

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

But this propensity to show favoritism was not banished from the church. Wherever you have people who are sinners you can have favoritism and even when you have men and women that are saved and have the indwelling spirit, there is the real potential of favoritism. It is a bent of our flesh. A desire of the sin that remains in us.

Yet it must be understood and affirmed that favoritism is a great sin. An evil that can bring the worst out of man.

James says that when we show favoritism, we.....

v.4 ...become judges with evil thoughts?

v 6 ... have dishonored the poor man.

v.9... commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

v.10... (are) guilty of all. (the law)

We have already seen in our last 2 lessons from this passage, that favoritism is

It is against Gods

**Character**— For God is no respecter of persons.

**Care**— God has a heart to care for the poor

**Choice**— God chooses what the world hates and dislikes — — the poor of this world, the rejected.

## Review

### I. The Command

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

**with partiality**— is last translation here, but in the Greek, it is place emphatically forward in the sentence. (The ESV translates it this way)

The original order calls attention to this evil with peculiar pungency.

**Original Word:** προσωποληψία, ας, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** prosópolémpsia

**Phonetic Spelling:** (pros-o-pol-ape-see'-ah)

**Definition:** respect of persons

**Usage:** partiality, favoritism.

This compound noun that literally means “a receiving of face” — — (and is plural, “acts of receiving face or favoritism” mine)

Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory,

τὴν πίστιν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ **τῆς δόξης.**

There are as many attempts to interpret what is meant by the last 2 words “the glory” as there are commentators. The last 7 words of the greek text are all genitives and trouble is how to best attribute the word Glory.

Without taking you through all of the details, I believe it is best to be understood in 3 possible ways. **First**, as an attributive genitive describing the phrase, “our Lord Jesus Christ” the glorious Lord Jesus Christ, or **second**, that Jesus Christ is the Glory of God.

John 1:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, ....

Titus 2:13 (NASB95)

<sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

**Or third,**

Describing Jesus as *the Lord of glory* suggests particularly the heavenly sphere to which he has been exalted and from which he will come at the end of history to save and to judge (cf. Jas. 5:9). This reminder is particularly appropriate in a situation

where Christians are giving too much “glory” to human beings.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 101). Eerdmans; Apollos.

## II. The Context

<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**,  
<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,”

**filthy**

**Original Word:** ῥυπαρός, á, óv

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** rhuparos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (rhoo-par-os')

**Definition:** filthy

**Usage:** filthy, defiled, dirty.

**Cognate:** 4508 rhyparós (an adjective, derived from 4509 /rhýpos, "moral filth") – filthy, foul (used only in Js 2:2). [See 4509](#) (rhypos).

## III. The Concern

**4** have you not **shown partiality** among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

James 2:4 (LSB) ESV NASB

4 have you not **made distinctions** among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

**diakrinó: to distinguish, to judge**

**Original Word:** διακρίνω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** diakrinó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (dee-ak-ree'-no)

**Definition:** to distinguish, to judge

**Usage:** I separate, distinguish, discern one thing from another; I doubt, hesitate, waver.

1252 diakrínō (from [1223](#) /diá, "thoroughly back-and-forth," which intensifies [2919](#) /krínō, "to judge") – properly, investigate (judge) thoroughly – literally, judging "back-and-forth" which can either (positively) refer to close-reasoning (discrimination) or negatively "over-judging" (going too far, vacillating). Only the context indicates which sense is meant.

[[1252](#) (diakrínō) "literally means, 'to separate throughout or wholly' (dia, 'asunder,' krinō, 'to judge,' from a root kri, meaning 'separation'), then, to distinguish, decide" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 125).]

Among Christians, such discrimination is much more than poor hospitality; it is plainly **evil**. Of the three



words James uses for **evil** (see 1:21, *kakia*, “wickedness”; and 3:16, *phaulos*, “evil”), the one used here and in 4:16 (*ponēros*) is the strongest, carrying the idea of vicious intentions that have a destructive and injurious effect.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 103). Moody Press.

## IV. The Choice

**5** 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?

**5** Listen, my beloved brethren:

Listen—-ἀκούσατε, from akouo. Aorist Imperative

It is a warm admonition, aimed at the heart as well as the mind, given not only from the standpoint of truth but also from the standpoint of affection.

**5** Listen, my beloved brethren: Has  
God not chosen the poor of this  
world

In a stark and sobering contrast to the treatment the believers have given to the poor man, it is God who has chosen the poor. You are acting the opposite of the heart of God. You are treating with contempt the very ones that God has chose.

Has God not chosen — The implication of this is that “Yes”, God has chosen the poor.

Chosen -

**Original Word:** ἐκλέγομαι—Aorist Middle

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** eklegó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ek-leg'-om-ahee)

**Definition:** to select

**Usage:** I pick out for myself, choose, elect, select.

1586 eklégomai (from [1537](#) /ek, "out of" and [3004](#) /légō, "speaking to a conclusion") – properly, to select (choose) out of, by a highly deliberate choice (i.e. real heart-preference) with a definite outcome (as with the destination of divine selection for salvation).

This is a clear reference to the Divine Sovereignty Choice of God to save. You are saved because chose you. You are elect. The Bible is as clear on this as it is that you are saved by grace not works.

**5** Listen, my beloved brethren: Has  
God not chosen the poor of this  
world

James is not talking about those who are humble, the “poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3), but the economically poor, those who are in financial poverty and therefore considered by the world to be inferior.

**5** 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?

### 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no

flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, “*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.*”

the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith

To be poor can be a benefit of enormous proportions. The poor are in genuine need, and often need someone else to help. They are more likely to cry out to God for help and to sense the need to depend on Him.

Where as the wealth of the world can lull you into a sleep where you have no sense of your need of God.

**5** 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?

In classical Greek, the verb “promised” (*epanggellomai*) was used “of voluntary offers, and

so is fitly used here and elsewhere in the N. T. of the Divine promises.” God’s faithfulness to His promises makes the promise secure to every believer. The aorist tense looks back to the fact that God made the promise to believers. “Their heirship was not a sudden thought, but a long-premeditated gift, a fact which in itself should make them see the high worth of every Christian.”<sup>61</sup>

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 141). BMH Books.

## 1 Peter 1:4–5 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,  
<sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

## Matthew 19:27–30 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?”

<sup>28</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses

or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup> But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

There will be no poor in heaven in any sense, no second-class citizens. Everyone will be rich in the things that matter eternally. Every believer will receive the same eternal life, the same heavenly citizenship in the kingdom of God, and the same perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to them by the Father. Every one of His children will live in His house and bask alike in His presence and love (John 14:1–3).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 109–110). Moody Press.

and heirs of the kingdom  
which He promised to those who love  
Him?

Love—- τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν;\*

P.A.Part.

This is characteristic of the chosen of God they are lovers of God, lovers of Christ.

James 1:12 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Exodus 20:3–6 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> “You shall have no other gods before Me.

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself a carved image— any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> But as it is written:

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,  
Nor have entered into the heart of man  
The things which God has prepared for those who  
love Him.”*

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

## IV. The Choice

## V. The Confrontation

**6** 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?

**6** But you have **dishonored** the poor man

**atimazó:** to dishonor

**Original Word:** ἀτιμάζω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** atimazó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (at-im-ad'-zo)

**Definition:** to dishonor

**Usage:** I disgrace, treat disgracefully, dishonor, insult; I despise.

**Cognate:** 818 atimázō – treat dishonorably (shamefully, with indignity) because perceived as having no value (honor, worth)

átimos – (and adjective, derived from **1** /A "without" and **5092** /timé, "attributed honor") – properly, unrecognized, i.e. not honored (valued); (figuratively) dishonored, describing someone (something) as reproachful (without dignity) – the opposite of attributing (acknowledging) worth (see the root **5092** /timé).



## 6 But you

You is emphatically forward. first word

The emphatic pronoun “you” (*humeis*) sharpens the factual contrast. God has “chosen” the poor, but they “have insulted” him. They have acted in contempt toward the poor man by ordering him to stand “over there” in an inconspicuous place or to sit on the floor. It was an act of rank discourtesy

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 142). BMH Books.

despising and rejecting those whom the Lord has specially chosen. “How,” he asks in effect, “can you claim to be God’s child and yet think and act so differently from Him

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 110). Moody Press.

Now, with no transition, James moves right into the incompatibility of there favoritism for the rich man with the pattern of the hostile actions of the rich toward them.

**6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich you oppress you and drag you into the courts?

oppress. P A I

**katadunasteuo**: I overpower, quell, treat harshly

**Original Word**: καταδυναστεύω

**Part of Speech**: Verb

**Transliteration**: katadunasteuo

**Phonetic Spelling**: (kat-ad-oo-nas-tyoo'-o)

**Definition**: to exercise power over

**Usage**: I overpower, quell, treat harshly.2616

katadynasteúō (from 2596 /katá, "down, according to," intensifying 1413 /dynástēs, "exercise rulership") – properly, powerfully bringing someone down (denying them the higher position or blessing they should enjoy), i.e. tyrannize; to dominate (treat harshly), overpowering someone (Souter).

\_\_\_\_\_ “Are exploiting you” (*katadunasteuousin*) is a compound verb conveying the picture of a potentate exercising his power over those under his control in a hurtful and oppressive manner. In Acts 10:38, its only other occurrence in the New Testament, the verb is used of the devil’s tyrannical rule over his victims. The term, frequently used in

the Septuagint of the exploitation of the poor and needy (Jer. 7:6; Ezek. 22:29; Amos 4:1; Zech. 7:10), does not denote religious persecution but social and economic exploitation by the unprincipled rich who were “lording it over” them. James 5:4, 6 gives a fuller picture of their oppressive acts. The present tense of the verb denotes repeated experiences of such oppression. It is an inveterate social evil that has plagued human relations in all ages.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 142). BMH Books.

**6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich you  
and drag you into the courts?

As a further aspect of their hostility, “are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?” “They” (*autoi*, “they themselves”) is emphatic and underlines that they are the very class to whom they showed open favoritism in their assembly. The strong verb “are dragging” indicates that they were being hauled forcibly into court (Acts 16:19

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 143).  
BMH Books.

καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλκουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς κριτήρια;

James 2:6 (NASB95)

6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and **personally** drag you into court?

**helkó: to drag**

**Original Word:** ἔλκúω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** helkó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hel-koo'-o)

**Definition:** to drag

**Usage:** I drag, draw, pull, persuade, unsheathe.

1670 helkýō – properly, induce (draw in), focusing on the attraction-power involved with the drawing.

**7** Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

Because the Sadducees were wealthy, aristocratic, and very much secularized, and because they actively persecuted the early church, James may have been making specific reference to them. Although they claimed to adhere strictly to the Mosaic Law, they did not believe in angels or other spirit beings, or in resurrection, the immortality of the soul, or therefore in heaven, hell, or future judgment. And, like the Pharisees, the Sadducees fiercely opposed Jesus when He was alive, slandered His name (see Matt. 16:1–12; 22:23–32), and strongly slandered and persecuted the early church (see Acts 4:1–3; 5:17–18).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 110). Moody Press.

The verb rendered “are slandering” (*blasphēmousin*) may mean “to slander, revile, defame” when directed against men (Rom. 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:30; Titus 3:2). When directed against that which is sacred, it is rightly translated “blaspheme” (Acts 13:45; 18:6; 26:11; 1 Tim. 1:13). Here the reference is to verbal blasphemy against “the noble name” of the One to whom Christians belong.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 143). BMH Books.

## that noble name

“The noble name” is most probably the name of Jesus. Since “Christ” denotes the Messiah, it is not probable that these unbelieving Jews would revile the name of the expected Messiah. “The noble name,” an expression used only here in the New Testament, indicates the high esteem in which James and his readers held that name. Since one’s name represents the bearer of the name, Jesus early came to be referred to among Christians as “the Name” (Acts 5:41; 15:14; 3 John 7). “Noble” (*kalon*) means “beautiful, honorable, excellent.” “By this epithet, the disgracefulness of the blasphemy is emphasized.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 143). BMH Books.

**7** Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

In the New testament Epistles there is a word translated called that refers to that internal effectious call to salvation.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

Romans 8:30 (NKJV)

<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

But this is not the word. It is related but this word means more by what name or surname or nickname you all called.

**epikaleó: to call upon**

**Original Word:** ἐπικαλέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** epikaleó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ep-ee-kal-eh'-om-ahee)

**Definition:** to call upon

**Usage:** (a) I call (name) by a supplementary (additional, alternative) name, (b) mid: I call upon, appeal to, address.

We are called Christians, which can mean little Christ or

..... “Christ’s ones,” those who belong to and identify themselves with Christ

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 110). Moody Press.

Again, the action of giving the rich man a place of honor is not the sin. especially since they are the one that oppress, persecute and act hostile to the poor of the church because the bible tells us that we are to love those who persecute us and bless them and do good to them.

Matthew 5:44–45 (NKJV)

<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Romans 12:14 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:17–21(NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written,



*“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,”* says the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> Therefore

*“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;  
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his  
head.”*

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

I. The Command

II. The Context

III. The Concern.

IV. The Choice

V. The Confrontation

## **VI. The Condemnation**

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”* you do well; <sup>9</sup> but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

<sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For He who said, *“Do not commit adultery,”* also said, *“Do not murder.”* Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

**8** If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself,*” you do well;

The connective particle *mentoi*, here rendered “really,” clearly marks a specific connection with what has preceded. Yet its intended force is not certain. This particle, which occurs eight times in the New Testament (John 4:27; 7:13; 12:42; 20:5; 21:4; 2 Tim. 2:19; James 2:8; Jude 8), means “really, actually,” and, with an adversative force, “though, to be sure, indeed.”

William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 504

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition). BMH Books.

James is anticipating an excuse on the part of his readers that their treatment of the rich man was in reality an expression of love for their neighbor. Then James’s ironic reply is, if that was really their motive he has no objection.

Roberts even suggests that James may have known “that this was already being used as an excuse.”

Then James goes on to remind them that it does not excuse their treatment of the poor man

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 144). BMH Books.

This view is in keeping with the form of the conditional sentence (first class) that assumes the actual fulfillment of the law of love. Speaking with a tone of calm impartiality, he is willing and eager to give credit where credit is due.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 145). BMH Books.

### **the royal law**

He magnifies this law by designating it as “royal.” This adjective is made prominent by the Greek order, “a law ye are keeping royal.” The original contains no article, thus stressing the quality of the law as being truly “royal,” or kingly, in its character.

The expression “a royal law” occurs only here in the New Testament

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 145). BMH Books.

This “royal **law**” is often equated with the law of love, which James at once quotes, but more probably the reference is to the whole law of God, of which the law of love is the crucial element. As

Dauids notes, “The use of *nomos* instead of *entolē* makes it appear decisive that the whole law rather than a single commandment is intended.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 145). BMH Books.

**8** If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself,*” you do well;

This comes from

Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the Lord.

Mark 12:29–31 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.* <sup>30</sup> *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. <sup>31</sup> And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

In Mark 12:29–31, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:4–5 and Leviticus 19:18 as the two laws in which all the other laws find their true fulfillment.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 145). BMH Books.

When this injunction “Love your neighbor as yourself” is actively obeyed, all the manward duties set forth by the law will be effectively performed

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 145). BMH Books

In other words, If you love others the same way you love yourself, you will give others priority. You always take care of your needs from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed, you make sure all your needs are met. If you are hungry, you eat. If you are cold, you put on more clothes. If you are tired you rest. If your in danger you do what you can to be safe. You your teeth, shower your body, comb your hair, take you meds when you are sick, choose good food, buy things for yourself. In many ways you are #1 in your book. You take care of yourself and meet your needs because you love yourself.

Now, a word of caution here. This command is not a command to love yourself. It assumes that is already true.. In fact, we don't need a command to love ourselves, we need a command to die to self.

We already have a problem with loving ourselves and giving ourselves more attention.

The command is for us to love others as much as we love ourselves.

That means that others that God brings into our paths, we should be just as committed to meeting their needs as we are ourselves.

It literally destroys the potential of favoritism or self centeredness.

He is anyone whose need we can meet, just as the Good Samaritan selflessly and generously met the need of the man he unexpectedly came upon on the road to Jericho, who had been robbed and beaten (Luke 10:30–37). The Samaritan ministered to him personally and even provided for his further care by others until he was fully well.

The purpose behind that **law** is obvious. Because we love ourselves, we do not want to be killed, lied to, stolen from, or abused. And if we love others with that same degree of love and concern, we will never do those things to them, thereby fulfilling God's **royal law**. Most important, to love others in that way reflects our heavenly Father's own nature and character. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God," John says; "and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not

love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7–8; cf. v. 11).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 112). Moody Press.

Contrary to what many teachers claim today, Scripture does not teach that we must learn to love ourselves before we can properly love others. Quite to the contrary, it simply acknowledges that it is basic human nature to love ourselves, for “no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it” (Eph. 5:29). Because we naturally love ourselves so much—whose mouth we are careful to feed, whose body we take care to dress, whose looks we are concerned about, whose job and career occupy our minds, whose life we are determined to make comfortable and happy—that is the same concern we should have for others. And when we determine to occupy ourselves with such love for others, thus fulfilling God’s sovereign law, we will have no problem with partiality (cf. Phil. 2:3–4).

Loving, godly impartiality does not relate to the highly popularized self-esteem and narcissistic self-admiration that are so much promoted today, allegedly in the name of biblical Christianity. The Christian who knows, understands, and fully accepts

Scripture realizes that, in himself, he is a vile and wretched sinner who deserves only condemnation and hell, and that it is only by God's immeasurable grace that he is saved, secured, blessed, and destined for an eternity in heaven with the Lord. The love that Moses, Jesus, and James talk about pertains to the God-given and God-blessed love that is concerned about meeting the genuine human needs of others—their physical needs; their protection; their growth in grace, holiness, and Christlikeness—in the same practical and beneficial ways in which we naturally and legitimately seek to meet our own needs.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 112–113). Moody Press.

The use of the second person singular verb marks this as an individual duty. The law of love must operate in each individual believer; it cannot be fulfilled by proxy

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 145). BMH Books.

**9** but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.



“If” (again the first class condition) recognizes that the violation of the law of love is a factual situation among them.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 146). BMH Books.

show partiality, you commit sin,

Acts of partiality and obedience to the law of love are incompatible. James knew that sin springs from lack of love. The compound verb “you show favoritism” (*prosōpolēmpeteite*), used only here in the New Testament, tersely states the evil practice.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 146). BMH Books.

**Show partiality** is a verb form (used only here in the New Testament) of the noun rendered “personal favoritism” in verse 1. The form indicates that James is not speaking of occasional favoritism but of habitual, blatant **partiality**. Those engaging in it were **committing** serious **sin**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 113). Moody Press.

you commit sin, Pres M.I

James 2:9 (LSB)

9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

**ergazomai: I work, trade, do**

**Original Word:** ἐργάζομαι

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** ergazomai

**Phonetic Spelling:** (er-gad'-zom-ahee)

**Definition:** to search, examine

**Usage:** I work, trade, perform, do, practice, commit, acquire by labor.

**Cognate:** 2038 ergázomai (from 2041 /érgon, "work") – to work (accomplish). [See 2041](#) (ergon).

The evil was not some unfortunate action into which they had accidentally fallen but was a deliberate practice. As Roberts pungently remarks, “Partiality is not a *trifling fault*, it is a *foul travesty* of the law of God fully exposed in the Scriptures!”

Roy R. Roberts, *The Game of Life, Studies in James*, p. 66. Roberts's italics  
Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition). BMH Books.

**9** but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as **transgressors.**

**Original Word:** παραβάτης, ου, ὁ

**Phonetic Spelling:** (par-ab-at'-ace)

**Definition:** one who stands beside

**Usage:** a transgressor, law-breaker.

**Cognate:** 3848 parabátēs (from 3848 /parabátēs, "contrary to" and 939 /básis, "go") – properly, someone who steps over (walks contrary to) God's line. Accordingly, [3848](#) /parabátēs

("transgressor") refers to a deliberate violator (transgressor) of God's law. See 3847 (parabasis).

(*parabatai*), people who are guilty of having passed over a forbidden boundary.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). *James* (Revised Edition, p. 147). BMH Books.

**Partiality** is not merely a matter of inconsiderateness or discourtesy but is a serious **sin**. In this verse James speaks of it in two forms, or aspects. *Hamartia*, translated simply **sin**, pertains to missing the mark of God's standard of righteousness, whereas *parabatēs* (**transgressors**) refers to someone who willfully goes beyond God's prescribed limits. In the one case, a person comes short; in the other, he goes too far. Both are sinful, just as adding to or subtracting from God's revealed Word are both sinful (Rev. 22:19).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). *James* (p. 113). Moody Press.

Adamson notes that "to the rabbis such transgression was 'rebellion,' and broke 'the fence of the Torah.' "

Behind the noun "lawbreakers" lies the picture of the law laying out the way of righteousness in which a man should walk. But they have not stayed on the marked road; they have stepped defiantly over the boundary to

engage in a forbidden practice. If the word “sin” conveys the negative truth that they have not measured up to the requirements of the Law but have fallen short, “lawbreakers” marks the positive side of sin in that they have deliberately violated the restrictions of the law.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 147). BMH Books.

James further intensifies the serious nature of the sin of favoritism by explaining, that to transgress at this one point is to break it all

**10** For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

The verbs “keeps” and “stumbles” are both aorist subjunctives and indicate that James presents the situation as a mental concept rather than a historical scene;

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 147). BMH Books.

Zodhiates remarks that the verb “stumbles” does not suggest a deliberate, purposeful act: “We certainly don’t stumble purposely as we walk.” Because of carelessness or inattention, perhaps due to enemy

distraction, he actually trips and fails in his performance of the demands of the law. Thus, the verb used metaphorically “means to make a mistake, go astray, sin.”<sup>86</sup> It stamps him as a transgressor of the Law

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 148). BMH Books.

**“Is guilty of breaking all of it”** categorically states the sweeping result. “Is” (*gegonen*) renders a perfect tense and asserts that his failure has brought him into the abiding condition of being guilty “of all,” all the things demanded by the law.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 148). BMH Books.

To break any of His commands is to defy His will and His authority, which is the basis of all sin. God’s **law** is unified; it all hangs together and is inseparable. It is like hitting a window with a hammer. You may hit it only once, and that rather lightly, but the whole window is shattered. In the same way, some sins are relatively light and some are extremely vile. But breaking even “one of the least of these commandments” (Matt. 5:19) shatters the unity of God’s holy law and turns the guilty person into a transgressor

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 114). Moody Press.

Some have said it is like a chain and to break one link in the chain means the chain is broken.

God's will is not fragmentary; the entire law is the expression of His will for His people; it constitutes a grand unity.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 148). BMH Books.

The same is true both ways, To keep the whole law, all one has to do is.

**Mark 12:29–31** (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.* <sup>30</sup> *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.* <sup>31</sup> *And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

But if you want to break the whole law, all you have to do is break the law of loving your neighbor as yourself.

When you disobey this law you,

1. Disobey God, which says you don't love Him
  2. You defy the Authority of God in your life.
  3. You reject the commands of scripture that tell you to take care of the poor.
  4. You show contempt and hatred for your brother or neighbor
  5. You exalt self above the needs of others.
- etc.etc.....

“Guilty” (*enochos*) is literally “in the power of” and means that the transgressor has been “brought into the condemning power of” the whole. In the words of Davids, “although penalties may vary, one is counted a criminal no matter which particular section of the code one may have broken.”<sup>89</sup> He who deliberately violates one part of the law, while observing the rest, reveals in himself “a sinful disposition which will manifest itself in many other ways when there is convenient opportunity and adequate inducement.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 148). BMH Books.

And now to intensify it even more, James places the sin of partiality along side some of the worst of sins.

**11** For He who said, “*Do not commit adultery,*” also said, “*Do not murder.*” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James quotes from Exodus 20:13–14 and Deuteronomy 5:17–18

James chose two of the most serious social sins, in both cases the breaking of which demanded the penalty of death. Perhaps he chose those in order to illustrate the extreme sinfulness of partiality.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 114). Moody Press.

Although we can see that James sees the sin of partiality as serious, I believe the primary reason why he brings up the law against murder and adultery was not to compare the two, but to refer to whom you are sinning against. The primary reason why if you break one law you are guilty of all, is not that you have physically disobeyed every law, rather, it is to whom you disobeyed. It is not the offense that is emphasized, but the one offended. Notice how it reads.

**11** For He who said, “*Do not commit adultery,*” **also said**, “*Do not murder.*”



The same one that gave the law is the law enforcer. The same one that wrote the laws is the Judge. The severity of the violation of the law is not just the law itself but in the law giver. You are not disobeying a standard, you are disobeying The Sovereign God who has complete authority over you.

The guilt of violating any part of that law “is proportioned to the greatness, the moral excellence, and glory of Him against whom the offence is committed, and who made us for loyal obedience to Himself.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 148). BMH Books.

## ***VII. The Conclusion***

**12** So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. **13** For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Because partiality is such a serious sin, James closes this section with an appeal for believers to fully consider the danger of divine judgment. And the obvious implication is

for them to then forsake the sin of partiality, asking the Lord's forgiveness and cleansing

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 116). Moody Press.

The imperatives are in the present tense, “so be speaking and so be doing,” calling for habitual action. Let them constantly regulate both word and deed by the fact that as Christians they “are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 151). BMH Books.

as those who will be judged by the law of liberty

The construction rendered “are going to be judged” (*mellontes krinesthai*) denotes a future event which is sure to happen, being divinely appointed

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 151). BMH Books.

Romans 14:10–12 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. <sup>11</sup> For it is written:

*“As I live, says the Lord,  
Every knee shall bow to Me,  
And every tongue shall confess to God.”*

<sup>12</sup> So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

## 2 Corinthians 5:9–10 (NKJV)

<sup>9</sup> Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**12** So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty

## James 1:25 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

The gospel is **the law of liberty** because it frees those who place their faith in Jesus Christ from the bondage, judgment, and punishment of sin and brings them ultimately to eternal freedom and glory. It liberates us sinners from falsehood and deception

and from the curses of death and hell. Even more marvelously, it frees us to obey and serve God, to live faithfully and righteously according to His Word and by the power of His indwelling Spirit. And it frees us to follow our Lord willingly out of love rather than reluctantly out of fear. In every sense, it is the “royal law” of God (v. 8), the divine and wondrous **law of liberty**.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 116). Moody Press.

As a further word of warning, James says that **judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy**. In this context, the **one who has shown no mercy** obviously refers to unbelievers. Their lives are characterized by partiality, hardness, selfishness, and lack of concern for others—in short, lovelessness. They are far from loving others as they love themselves, reflecting nothing of God’s love and care for those in need. They will not be blessed or receive mercy, for they have not been merciful (Matt. 5:7).

When a man lives without mercy to others in God’s world, he simply shows off the fact that he himself has never responded aright to the immeasurable mercy of God. The mercy a man has shown others as fruit of a life touched by God’s saving mercy will triumph over judgment. His own sins, worthy of judgment, are

removed by God's working in his life, dissolving all the charges strict justice might bring against him. Thus his showing of mercy is not a matter of heaping up personal merit to deserve salvation by his own good works. The mercy he shows is itself a work of God for which he can take no credit.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 116–117). Moody Press.

**13** For

judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

If you come before the judgment seat of God and He sees that you have lived a life that is merciful to others, He will show mercy to you, because your mercy will testify to your saving faith. It will be true in your case that **mercy triumphs over judgment**. Contrarily, a person who has lived a life devoid of mercy to others will show himself to be without saving faith.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 117). Moody Press.

Mercy does not triumph at the expense of justice; the triumph of mercy is based on the atonement

wrought at Calvary. Vaughan rightly remarks that the meaning is not “that by showing mercy to man we procure mercy from God. That would make salvation a matter of human merit and would contradict the whole tenor of Scripture.” The practice of mercy toward others is the evidence that God’s grace has produced a transformation in a person. Having himself received God’s mercy, he will be able to stand in the judgment that otherwise would overwhelm him. He will be “full of glad confidence,” having “no fear of judgment.” By his conduct the merciless man reveals that he has never vitally apprehended God’s mercy himself (Matt. 18:23–25). But “the man who by a merciful character proves his having a vital faith in God’s mercy, is through Christ safe” and can face the coming judgment with “a blissful sense of safety.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 153). BMH Books.

Matthew 5:7 (NKJV)

**7 Blessed are the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.**

