

# The book of James

2:1-7

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of James.  
We finally made it to chapter two, so let's get started in this week's study.

✠ **James 2:1** *My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.*

Or as it says in the NLT:

✠ **James 2:1 (NLT)** *My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim that you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people more than others?*

Wow, what a way to start a study. Think about it, James is asking why do you judge others or look up to others and put others down and call yourself a Christian? Now I know we all have our certain friends that we hang out with at church, and after church, and there is nothing wrong with having close friends, in fact the bible says that having a close friend is a good thing.

✠ **Prov 18:24** *A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

✠ **Prov 27:17** *As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

But James is not talking about friendship here; no he is talking about judging others by their appearance. What, you have never judged someone by his or her appearance? Let's see.

✠ **James 2:2-4** *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, 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," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?*

"I never look down on the poor, so this doesn't apply to me," you may be thinking.

Maybe you don't look at the poor this way, but what about those who are not poor? We tend to think if someone has money or possessions that it's a bad thing or they are not good Christians. We tend to judge them because what God has blessed them with and even start to covet what they have, desiring for the same for ourselves.

So in our anger we put them down and say they are not good Christians because they have much. After all, doesn't the bible say that to be rich or have possessions is a bad thing? Even Jesus said:

† **Matt 19:24** *"And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

But this is talking about those who have their riches control them. Read it for yourself in Matthew 19. The man who came to Jesus wanted to get to heaven, but he was unwilling to give up his riches to do it.

What about Solomon who was the richest man in the world? No one looks down on him because God blessed him with wealth.

Do I say these things to defend my own richness? I work a normal 8-hour a day job and even work over time. In other words, I am not rich (by the world's standards) but I place all my treasure in heaven.

So if you do look down on the rich you are judging someone based on what they have just as James is talking about here.

But then we do look down on the poor in a sense. We choose who we sit next to and if they seem to be homeless we tend to shy away from these types of people.

I am sorry to say there are a lot of people who choose to be homeless and do not have a job. They want to live off of others and do nothing but sit around all day and most of these types are into drugs and/or drunkenness. The bible speaks of these types of people.

† **2 Thess 3:10** *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

Now don't get me wrong, I know there are many who are homeless and/or jobless who do need our help. They don't choose to be that way, but because of circumstances they ended up that way. I am not speaking of these, and when you come across them you should do what you can to help them.

But James is saying that we should not treat a rich or poor man any different. We shouldn't look up to the rich or look down on the poor. Instead we should be ministering to both, because both have needs.

Have you ever thought about that? Sure the poor have obvious physical needs that stand out, but what about the rich, don't they have needs deeper than what we can see on the surface?

Every once in a while we read of someone famous who has committed suicide. Now they had it all, money, fame, and popularity. But still they had a need that all their worldly possessions could not fulfill. These are needs we as Christians can minister to, because even though they have all the worldly possessions, they are still empty inside and only Jesus Christ can fulfill that emptiness. We all had that same emptiness whether we were rich or poor or even middleclass. No matter what you have or don't have with this

world's possessions, there always seems to be something missing without Jesus in your life.

We were created to worship and praise God, and also to spend time with Him as you would a close friend or a very close loved one.

When you seek pleasure in the world you are not praising and worshipping God and you are not spending time with Him, that's where the emptiness comes in.

Think about it, as a child was there ever a time when you were ignored by your parents? Maybe they were just really busy doing taxes or working on the yard or something really important that they just couldn't break away from it to spend time with you. Didn't you feel empty inside when this happened?

Or what about when your husband pushes you aside to watch a football game when you really want to spend time with him?

Maybe as a husband your wife has to take care of the kids when you were hoping to spend time with your wife.

Any rejection from someone who loves us gives us that empty feeling inside.

That's the same emptiness we feel when we reject God who loves us.

By judging others, we are pushing them away and causing them to feel that emptiness. In the church and as Christians, people come to us because of the emptiness they feel inside, both rich and poor. It's a wonder why so many do not come to the church to get that emptiness taken away. They would rather find it in a bar where they are not rejected because of who they are.

† **John 13:35** *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

This is Jesus speaking here, but we judge one another so much that it's no wonder people shy away from church and Christianity. They don't come to church to be judged, they are judged enough by the world. They want to be accepted for who they are, just as we do. We judge according to the way they dress, look, smell, and even the way they walk or talk. Maybe their hair is too long or too short. Maybe they have a tattoo or an earring. Maybe their hair is blue or their shoes aren't Nikes. Whatever reason, we tend to judge others without even knowing them.

So when you are around others, whether Christian or not, at church or a bible study or work or wherever, stop and look at yourself and the way you treat others. Think of the expressions you make when you see different people, does it change depending on who it is? Do you think others catch on to this? If not, you would be surprised to find out how many do.

If someone new came into church, would they want to be a part of it because of your love for one another, or would they turn and walk away because of the gossip and backbiting and judging that goes on in the church?

**1 Peter 4:8-10** *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each*

***one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.***

In the church there are two types of people, the police and the paramedic.

The job of the police is to make sure everyone follows the law, and if they break it they get a ticket or go to jail for breaking the law. As Christians, some spend a lot of time making sure everyone is following God's law, and if they don't they are quick to point it out and judge and even sentence others for the wrong they have done.

On the other hand there are the paramedics who regardless if someone breaks the law they are there to help them out. That's the way Jesus was and is, and that's the way we should be. Ready to help those who are struggling with sin and want to be healed spiritually.

An example of all this would be; someone is driving drunk and gets into an accident. The police are ready to throw them in jail, whereas the paramedic is there ready to help heal their wounds.

In the church someone is having a problem with alcohol, the Christian police (so to speak) is ready to condemn him or her to hell quoting scripture to them about how wrong they are for drinking and getting drunk. On the other hand, the Christian paramedic (so to speak again) would be there to encourage that person and pray for them and show them scripture where God wants to heal him or her and even is stronger than their struggle.

So which are you, the Christian police or paramedic?

What about your church, is it a Christian police station or a hospital?

Tough words, but words we all need to think about!

Now there are things we should be judging in the church, such as sexual sin.

† ***1 Cor 5:1-5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.***

Sexual sin in the church is like leaven (leaven represents sin in the bible). All it takes is a little bit to start growing. If it is allowed in the church, then it will spread throughout the church. Like having sex outside of marriage. When others see that going on in the church, the figure it must be ok, so they do it also and so on and so on.

The bible also gives guidelines to follow on how to confront those in sin.

† ***1 Cor 5:9-13 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people***

*of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."*

First we are not to judge the non-Christians, that's God's job.

✠ **Matt 18:15-17** *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."*

Jesus tells us that if someone sins then we are to confront him or her, one on one. If they won't listen, then we take one or two with us to confront them. And if they still won't listen then we are to bring them before the church.

Finally, if the person repents and returns to the Lord then we are to:

✠ **2 Cor 2:7-11** *so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

James goes on about judging:

✠ **James 2:5-7** *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? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?*

James is saying that the rich have their riches that they trust in, but the poor truly live by faith, wondering where their next meal will come from or where they will sleep. Even if you are not this poor we have all gone through times when we wondered if we would be able to pay the rent, or if we had enough money to eat on for the next week or two. There have been times our cars have broken down and we wondered how we would ever get the money to get it fixed.

Basically it's really better not to have much because then you are truly putting your trust and faith in God and His provisions. It's possible that we as the poor, or who have little possibly going from paycheck to paycheck each week, experience more miracles from God. Kind of cool if you think about it, because it sort of makes you feel sorry for the rich, because they don't get to see God's provisions and wonders being done in their lives like we do.

James says that the rich drag us into courts and will do all they can to get what they can out of us. But even worse is what it says in verse 7.

Look at it in the NLT:

✠ **James 2:7 (NLT) *Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear?***

This is so true, because they will make fun of us because we put our trust in the Lord instead of the world's way of getting by or ahead. They are the ones who think they have it all and refuse to admit their need for a Savior.

They will give a small portion to charities and think they can buy their way into heaven. Reading this you may think I am against the rich. I am not, but we need to understand that we cannot depend on what we have or don't have to get us into heaven. It's not our worldly possessions or lack of them that gets us into heaven. Only through Jesus Christ can we get to heaven, and only through Jesus Christ do we have access to God!

✠ **John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."***

Maybe you have been depending on your possessions to get you into heaven.

Maybe you have given possessions up to get into heaven.

Maybe you have tried to do works by giving or knocking on doors to get into heaven.

Without Jesus anything we do is in vain and is useless.

Until you understand that Jesus is the ONLY way to God and into heaven, you will never get rid of that emptiness inside you.

✠ **2 Cor 6:2 *For He says:  
"In an acceptable time I have heard you,  
And in the day of salvation I have helped you."  
Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***

Today stop trying to work your way into heaven. Jesus completed all the work on the cross when He said:

✠ **John 19:30 *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.***

Today accept the finished work of Jesus on the cross as your salvation and access to God and heaven.

Just pray this prayer from your heart.

***Jesus, I admit I am a sinner. I have been trying to work my way into heaven, but now I thank You that I realize that You completed all the work on the cross for me by dying for all my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and may You be my Lord and Savior from this day forward. Please fill me with Your Holy Spirit and may I tell others about You, not to earn my way into heaven, but that they also may be there with You and me too! I thank You Jesus and pray this in Your name Jesus. AMEN!***

Next week we will look at following the law of God, or should we?

May God richly bless you in His abundant love, grace and mercy!