

GROWTH GUIDE

READ & REVIEW

Today's focus is going to be on looking at the biblical text and understanding what the writer was communicating to his original audience.

Begin by reading James 2:1-13 in its entirety.

Read James 2:1-4

Notice the word "favoritism". This literally means "receiving the face" and means to make judgments based on external appearance.

What external factors were causing partiality in James' audience? What are some other external appearances that can cause us to show favoritism?

Read James 2:5-7

Notice God "chose" the poor and that James' audience has "dishonored" the poor. His audience is giving deference to people who oppress them, drag them into court, and mock their God.

Why do you think James' audience would continue to give preferential treatment to those who were causing them harm at the expense of others in who God is working? Can you think of relationships where you might be doing a similar thing?

Read James 2:8-11

Notice James says favoritism is a violation of God's command to "love your neighbor as yourself" and makes one a "lawbreaker". He then connects "lawbreakers" to murder and adultery.

How does James' argumentation show the seriousness of favoritism? Do you consider favoritism as serious as murder and adultery?

Read James 2:12-13

Notice that James tells his audience to "speak" and "act" in accordance with the law of liberty and God's mercy. He also points out that those who do not show mercy will not receive it.

What are some ways you think these truths should have changed James' audience words and works? What are some ways that God's mercy might influence your words and works?