


Day 1

 Please pray for holy wisdom and guidance before you begin today's study.

Favoritism Forbidden

¹ My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

Q1. What is "favoritism"?

Q2. In verse-1 we are admonished to "not show favoritism"; does this include Believers . . . as well as non-believers?

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in.

Q3. We all characterize people by first impressions. How would you characterize the men described in verse-2?

³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Q4. In the American legal system, what does a judge do?

Q5. As you read verses 3&4, why does the writer James state that we have "become judges with evil thoughts"?

Q6. It seems that at times we are to judge (1 Corinthians 5) and other times we are not to judge (Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged"). What makes judging in verses 3&4 something evil?

A story:

There's an old story, you've probably heard it before, of a church that had decided it wanted to reach out to the college in town. The church, affluent and conservative, had advertised their interest in having college students attend services, but they may not have thought about who might take them up on their invitation.

A young man who had sort of an East Village look decided to go one morning. He came into the church with his grunge jeans, tattoos, multiple piercings, spiked hair, and t-shirt. The service had started so the young man started walking down the aisle looking among the smartly dressed members for a seat. The church was packed, so the guy made it all the way to the front, with all heads turning and everyone starting to get a little uncomfortable. Still, no one said anything. The young man made it right up to the pulpit and when he realized he wasn't going to find a seat, he just sat down right there on the floor.

By now, you could cut through the tension with a knife. And just then, an usher started making his way from the back of the church, moving toward the young man sitting on the floor. The usher was in his eighties, silver-gray hair, wearing a dark suit; he was distinguished, elegant, and dignified.

The usher walked with a cane and that cane clicked on the floor as he moved down the aisle; there was a sense that there was going to be a moment of reckoning for the young man who had transgressed the mores of this congregation. It took a very long time for the usher to reach the boy. One cane-click at time, all eyes were focused on him - it was as if people had stopped breathing.

Finally, the usher reached the boy where he sat. It was time for him to do what he had come to do. So, he dropped his cane and slowly lowered himself to the floor to sit beside the young man.

The preacher entered the pulpit and said, "What I am about to preach, you will probably never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

Mark 12:31

[Jesus answered] "The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."


Q7. (Personal question) How do you show love to those whom God brings to you: The homeless? The hurting? Your detestable coworker or relative?

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Q8. (Personal question) If the person is 'detestable,' do you pray for him or her? Why?

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Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

Q9. We humans tend to look at a person and see "skin deep." Is she pretty? Is he handsome? What does God look at?

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Luke 16:14-15

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵ He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

Matthew 23:25-28

[Jesus stated,] "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. ²⁷ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Q10. How can we change the way we look at people? Is change immediate or does it occur over a life-time?

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⁶ But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

Q11. Do the "rich" today "exploit" people? Or does this apply to only the downtrodden people of the first century?

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Q12. Who does the "noble name of Him to whom you belong" refer?

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Q13. Do people today slander (i.e., defame) the Name above all names? How?

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Q14. Should we who believe in Jesus, revere celebrity and wealth as the world does?

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Proverbs 14:31

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," [Leviticus 19:18] you are doing right.

Q15. Who is our "neighbor"?

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Q16. How would you define "love" as used in verse 8?

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Q17. What did Jesus say about our "neighbor"?

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Leviticus 19:9, 10, &15

"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God... ¹⁵ " Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

Luke 10:27

He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself."

Romans 13:9


The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

Q18. Why is "favoritism" (i.e., bias) sinful?

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Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," [Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18] also said, "Do not murder." [Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17] If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

Q19. Do you believe that one stumble – on just one point – is enough to condemn a person to Hell?

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Q20. If it hasn't been answered yet, are people saved? And, if you answered 'yes', how are they saved?

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Q21. Apologetics: If someone says to you, "God won't condemn me, because the good things I do far outweigh the bad things. I know that God will accept me." How should we respond?

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¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Q22. How would you define a law from God?

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Q23. In verse 12, what is the “law that gives freedom”?

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Q24. Why do you think James places such emphasis on “Mercy triumphs over judgment!”?

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Q25. Do you think that there is a difference between discernment and judgment?

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Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Faith and Deeds

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds [works, fruit, or actions]? Can such faith save him?

Q26. Are we saved by faith? or works? or both? [See also Ephesians 1:13-14]

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Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Q27. How would you describe “deeds”?

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Q28. Why do you think the author James believes that deeds demonstrate faith?

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Q29. [Personal question] How do you demonstrate your faith to the world? Your obedience to God?

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John 15:1-8

[Jesus taught,] ¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes [or cleans] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Q30. We are to be kind to people. Is it enough to listen and to pray with them? If we are able, should we attempt to discern their needs and help them with food? Or rent? Or gas for their car?

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Q31. Is it enough to contribute to a "Caring Fund"? Why or why not?

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Q32. How would you explain verse 17?

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¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

Q33. What example might unbelievers see in you if they know you have faith in Jesus and you care for their needs, too?

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¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder.

Q34. Can you provide an example from the Gospels that emphasize the demons' knowledge? (See Mark 5:7)


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Q35. According to this Scripture demons believe. So, the demons heard the Word. The demons have faith in what they heard. What is missing?

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 Could it be action? Including confession of faith? Obedience? Deeds? Works? Fruit? Please refer to Romans 10:9-13 duplicated at the end of this StudySheet.

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

²⁰ You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," [Genesis 15:6] and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Genesis 15:1,6

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." ... ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:18-25

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²² This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³ The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Genesis 22:2-3, 9-18

Then God said [to Abraham], "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

³ Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ...

⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" He replied, "Here I am,"

¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your

descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."


Q36. How did Abraham prove his faith?

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Q37. We know that Satan enjoys deceiving us who believe in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus. If in a dream an authority commanded you to do something, how would you validate that request? [Refer to Acts 17:11 & Philippians 4:6-7]

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Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

Joshua 2:1-23

¹ Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

² The king of Jericho was told, "Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." ⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) ⁷ So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof ⁹ and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. ¹² Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign ¹³ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death."

¹⁴ "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land."

¹⁵ So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. ¹⁶ Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

¹⁷ The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us ¹⁸ unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. ¹⁹ If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. ²⁰ But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

²¹ "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

²² When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. ²³ Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them.

Q38. Referring to James 2:25, somehow it doesn't seem right that Rahab, who is an adulteress, a pagan, and a liar, would be held up as an example for us. What do you think God is telling us by using such a sinner to further His will?

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Q39. You are talking to a non-believer who declares 'I am so bad; God wouldn't want me.' How might you respond?

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²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Q40. What does James mean when he writes, "the body without the spirit is dead"?

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Q41. James writes, "faith without deeds is dead." Does this statement contradict Ephesians 1:13-14?

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Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Romans 8:9-11

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Romans 10:9-13

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:17

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

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