

Studies from the Epistle of James

James 2 (New American Standard Bible)

James 2

The Sin of Partiality

¹My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. ²For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, ³and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," ⁴have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

⁵Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?

⁷Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

⁸If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.

⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

¹¹For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and Works

¹⁴What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet

you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

¹⁸But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹You believe that God is one You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

²⁰But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²²You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

²⁴You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Questions:

¹My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. ²For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, ³and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," ⁴have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

- What does James mean when he refers to personal favoritism?

- Why is it wrong to show personal favoritism?

- What problems do we create when we judge people?

- What criteria do we use to judge others?

⁵Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? ⁷Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

- Does God choose the poor to be rich in faith?
- What will be the distinctions in heaven?
- Oppression of the rich?

⁸If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.

- What are the circumstances of the Royal Law?
- How does following this law make us do well?

⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

- How does the Law make those who show partiality transgressors?
- If we keep the whole law and then stumble on one point, we become guilty of all? All what?

¹¹For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

- He who said "Do not commit adultery?"
- Judgment will be merciless to the one who shows no mercy?
- Mercy triumphs over judgment?

Faith and Works

¹⁴What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

- James asks what use is it if someone says they have faith but have no works. What use is it?

- Can faith alone save us?

- What does James mean when he compares faith alone to faith with works?

¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

- Do he help the needy when we say Go in peace, be warmed and be filled and then send them away?

- Faith without works is dead being by itself?

¹⁸But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹You believe that God is one You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

- Believing in God is faith?

- What does James mean with his comparison of faith without works and faith by works?

- You (faith without works) believe that God is one. James compares this with demons who also believe and shudder?

- Should we believe that faith without works is useless? Why?

²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²²You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

²⁴You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

- Abraham was justified by works?
- Sanctification - made holy. (Jesus in John 17:16) a state of separation unto God. 1 Corinthians 1:30

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption

- Justification is God's act of declaring or making a sinner righteous before God. Is final justification accomplished after a lifetime of striving to do God's will?
- Are we sanctified by faith and then justified by works? (Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as Righteousness and he was called the friend of God)
- Faith was working with his works and as the result of his works, faith was perfected?
- Faith alone will not justify us?
- Is true faith possible without works?

²⁵In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

- Rahab was justified by work? Why?

²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

- The body without the spirit is dead?
- Faith without works is dead?