

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness**  
**Part IV: Godliness In Relation To Impartiality**  
**(James 2:1-13)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. The existence of social and economic classes of people in the world presents a challenge in how even we believers relate to one another: the world typically exalts the rich, the beautiful and the young, so the poor, unattractive and elderly often face dishonor, and these tendencies can exist even among us Christians.
- B. At times there may be a reverse discrimination where people react against the favoritism of the "haves" by rejecting the rich, the beautiful and the young, and this tendency can also exist among Christians.
- C. All of this is the sin of partiality, something we must avoid as James 2:1-13 reveals (as follows):

**II. Godliness In Relation To Impartiality, James 2:1-13.**

- A. James called his readers not to show favoritism as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, James 2:1.
- B. The explanation for this call is given in James 2:2-4 where James explained how his readers were wrongly treating wealthy believers with honor and poor Christians without honor in their worship services:
  - 1. James described a typical scene where a wealthy man entered the Church wearing a gold ring and fine clothes and then a poor believer entered wearing cheap clothing, and the believers present directed the wealthy to sit in an honored seat while the poor man had to sit embarrassed on the floor, James 2:2-3.
  - 2. In this event, James declared the believers in the meeting had unrighteously discriminated among themselves, and become judges with evil thoughts and motives, James 2:4!
- C. Clarifying the sin of such impartiality, James noted how inconsistent such favoritism was in view of the experience of his readers with the typically rich and typically poor folk in the world, James 2:5-7:
  - 1. James explained that God had chosen many believers who were poor in the viewpoint of this world to become rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom He had promised to them that love Him, James 2:5.
  - 2. However, these believers were dishonoring the poor believers God had honored, James 2:6a.
  - 3. Conversely, James told how the materially rich typically oppressed them, drawing them before judges in court cases and slandering the Name of the Lord to Whom they belonged, James 2:6b-7 NIV.
- D. James added that such impartiality violates the principles of God's own righteousness, James 2:8-9:
  - 1. Scripture's royal law of God is the law that we love our neighbor as ourselves, James 2:8. This means that we should treat another person, rich or poor, as we wish to be treated!
  - 2. However, if we show favoritism to one person over another because of some external, worldly appeal such as his wealth, we treat others like we would not want to be treated, and thus stand convicted of being lawbreakers, James 2:9.
- E. Such violations makes one a lawbreaker of God's law even if he does not break other more "serious" commands, James 2:10: using an excessive case to illustrate, James wrote that just as one who does not commit adultery, but who commits murder is still a lawbreaker (James 2:11), so one who shows partiality in violating the law of loving one's neighbor as himself is a lawbreaker like any other breaker of the law!
- F. In summation, James explained that the believer must be totally obedient to the Lord, including the need to be impartial (in the context), for he will surely give an account for how he treats others, James 2:12-13:
  - 1. Whatever we believers do, be it in speech or in deed, it needs to be done in realization that we will give an account to Almighty God (James 2:12a), and His standards bring freedom in judgment, Jas. 2:12b.
  - 2. Thus, as true love causes the believer to triumph over sinful prejudice, God's mercy triumphs over judgment when the obedient believer gives an account to the Lord, James 2:13. Failure to be merciful in being partial will thus be met with God's judgment, not with His mercy, when we answer to Him!

***Lesson:*** *Showing partiality to others due to worldly criteria is not only very inconsistent with how we believers are often mistreated by the same criteria, but it violates the righteousness of God, leading to His discipline, not His mercy. We must be impartial to others in line with God's impartiality toward us!*

***Application:*** *May we look beyond a fellow believer's wealth or poverty, his good or bad appearance, his good or poor education, etc. to treat him as considerately as we want others to treat us!*