
4 Who's the Judge?

James 2:1-13

Labels are found more places than on soup cans. We put them on people all the time. Funny or dull. Educated or uneducated. Friendly or cold. There are all kinds of ways we can categorize people. And our categories can have a profound influence on the way we treat people. As you might suspect, James has a few words to say about favoritism.

1. What kinds of things make you favor one person more than another?

2. Read James 2:1-13. Why should believing in “our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 1) keep us from showing favoritism?

3. How would you react if someone came into your church who wore sloppy clothes, was dirty or had body odor (vv. 2-4)?

4. Why do many people give preferential treatment to those who have money?

Why is it wrong to make distinctions in this way (v. 4)?

5. Verse 5 says God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith. Is God guilty of showing favoritism in this way? Explain.

Why is it easier to have faith when you are poor than when you are rich?

6. From a practical standpoint, why was it foolish for early Christians to favor the rich over the poor (vv. 6-7)?

To what extent is James's description of the rich valid today?

7. How can "the royal law" (v. 8) guide our treatment of both poor and rich?

8. How do verses 9-11 emphasize the seriousness of treating people unequally?

9. In what sense is violating one law as serious as breaking every law?

10. How will the way we speak and act toward others affect the way God treats us (vv. 12-13)?

11. How can the cross, the ultimate example of mercy triumphing over judgment, be a model for the way we interact with others?

12. Think of ways in which you show favoritism. Ask God to help you change your attitudes and actions.