

The Christian Arsenal

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HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE RIGHT Developing a Faith That Works

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Part 6 of 7
James 2:1-13

INTRO: Our biggest problems are people problems – getting along with other people.

“To dwell above with those you love, that will be glory. But to dwell below, with those we know, that’s another story.”

“If you keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right.” James 2:8

I. THE PRINCIPLE: DON’T SHOW FAVORITISM (v. 1)

“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism.” James 2:1

Definition of Favoritism: The Greek word is a compound word that means “to receive” and “to face”. It literally means “to receive somebody’s face” – to receive somebody at face value, or the basis of how they look – superficial judgment.

AREAS OF FAVORITISM

- APPEARANCE – We judge people on their appearance – how they look, how they dress.
- ANCESTRY – We judge people according to their race, their nationality, and their ethnic background.
- AGE – You’re too young or too old.
- ACHIEVEMENT – Our society gushes over winners and forgets the losers. Success and status are key words.
- AFFLUENCE – We judge people by their wealth – whether they are rich or poor – their economic status

Illustration: (vs. 2-4)

“Suppose a man comes to your meeting wearing gold rings and fine clothes and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 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 over there,’ or ‘Sit on the floor at my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”

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II. THREE PROBLEMS WITH FAVORITISM

1. Favoritism is Unchristian (v. 1)

"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism." James 2:1

"God does not show favoritism," Romans 2:11

"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

The church should be the place that no matter who you are or what your background is that you're welcome.

2. Favoritism is Unreasonable. (vs. 5-7)

"Has not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom?" James 2:5

Your value is not based on y our valuables.

Your self worth is not based on y our net worth.

3. Favoritism is Unloving (vs. 8-9)

"All the law is summed up in one sentence, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Gal. 5:14

"Anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." 1 John 4:20

How I relate to you proves how much I love God.

THE SERIOUSNESS OF IT (vs. 9-13)

"If you show favoritism you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." James 2:9-10

"For who said, 'Do not commit adultery' also said 'Do not murder.' If you don't commit adultery but you do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker." (v. 11)

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

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III. THE PRESCRIPTION: HOW TO TREAT PEOPLE RIGHT (AND HOW TO HAVE A LOVING CHURCH)

1. Accept Everybody

You can accept somebody without approving of his lifestyle.

“Accept one another just as Christ accepted you ...” Romans 15:7

The church is a hospital for sinners, not a hotel for saints where they dress up for dress parade.

Some people close their eyes at church; others go to eye their clothes.

It doesn't matter where you've been. It matters where you are now and do you know Jesus.

In the essentials we have unity,
In the non-essentials we have liberty,
And in all things we have charity.

2. Appreciate Everybody

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourself. Each of you should look not only to your own interest but also the interest of others.” (Phil. 2:3-5)

Appreciate everybody. Find something you can like, not just accept, and tell him so!

3. Affirm Everybody.

“Encourage one another and build each other up.” I Thess. 5:11

When people stumble, don't criticize. Sympathize. Be an encourager, not a complainer, not a condemner, not a critical person, not a judge.

You only have one chance to make a first impression. The church that accepts, appreciates, and affirms people is the church that God blesses.

QUESTION: Would people come back to this church just because of you?

Two kinds of pillars in the church:

- One that holds the church up

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- Caterpillars that walk in and out.

Jesus Christ breaks down all barriers and the ground is level at the foot of the cross.