



Title: The Folly of Favoritism

Date: October 8, 2023

Scripture Text: James 2:1-13

Series: The Behavior of a Believer

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We are continuing the series The Behavior of a Believer, a study of the book of James. Today's message focuses on the folly of favoritism. As we've seen in the book of James, the author is dealing with the practical aspects of living the Christian life. Favoritism can be very subtle, and any of us can be guilty. James highlights five features of favoritism for us to avoid.

I. The Prohibition of Favoritism ([James 2:1](#))

"Favoritism translates a Greek word that means, literally, '*receiving the face*'. To 'receive the face' is to make judgments and distinctions based on external considerations, such as physical appearance, social status, or race. Favoritism based on external considerations is inconsistent with faith in the One who came to break down the barriers of nationality, race, class, gender, and religion." [Douglas Moo]

- What are examples of characteristics by which people are judged today?
- What is the danger of showing favoritism based on external appearance?
- What are examples of Jesus engaging those who tend to not be shown favoritism?

II. The Illustration of Favoritism ([James 2:2-4](#))

James gives us an example of what favoritism looks like within the church. The first to arrive is a person of means, the second has nothing. The way they are received by the local congregation is based on their outer appearance. No consideration for their character is made. James describes these actions as "evil motives".

- How might the illustration described in [vss. 2-3](#) look today?
- What motivates someone to show favoritism?
- How might someone dress or act in order to seek special treatment (favoritism)?
- How are those actions contrary to why we come to church?

Morningside Church

If you have a need or a prayer request, contact the church office.

850.878.5503

office@morningsidetlh.org



SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Morningside Church

If you have a need or a prayer request, contact the church office.

850.878.5503

office@morningsidetlh.org

III. The Explanation of Favoritism (James 2:5-7)

James explains that just because someone is rich doesn't make them a mature Christian. Many of the rich will turn against you to their own advantage. Riches don't disqualify someone from being saved, but you can't buy your way into heaven.

- Do you know someone with money, but also a commitment to Christ?
 - What distinguishes them from those James describes in this passage?
- How can a person's possessions create barriers to their walk with Christ?
- Describe the story of the rich, young ruler from [Matt. 19:16-22](#).
 - How is he a good example of the challenge people with possessions can face?

IV. The Violations of Favoritism (James 2:8-11)

James compares favoritism with adultery and murder. Favoritism, either giving someone favor or withholding favor based on outward appearance, is sin. God looks at the heart ([1 Sam. 16:7](#)).

- What does it mean that God looks at the heart?
- How is the outward appearance not a good indicator of the condition of the heart?
- What are ways we can focus more on the heart of others? Ourselves?

V. Exhortation (James 2:12-13)

James describes that there are consequences for how we treat others (with favoritism or not). We are to treat others the way we want to be treated. James quotes [Lev. 19:18b](#) in [vs. 8](#). In [vss. 12-13](#), he reiterates that motive.

- [Phil. 2:3](#) states as Christians we are to put one another's needs above our own. What is one way you can put the needs of a fellow Christian brother or sister ahead of your own this week?
- [John 13:35](#) states that people will know we are Jesus' disciples if we have love for one another. How can you show someone the love of Jesus this week?
- How is placing the needs of others and loving them a remedy for favoritism?