James: Faith That Works: The Law of Mercy

Day 1
History

There are a number of times in scripture where favoritism leads to unpleasant outcomes. Can you think of any examples? Check out this devotional to read about them:

https://www.truthforlife.org/devotionals/alistair-begg/3/24/2026/

Exit questions? Does the prohibition on favoritism mean everyone must be treated the same? Should I treat my son the same as a random person on the street? If it doesn't mean treating everyone the same, how do I know when I am showing favoritism? Does it mean treating everyone of the same "category" the same? What if I have a disobedient son or a poor employee? Do I have to treat them the same as those who are behaving well? What is at the heart of the kind of favoritism the bible speaks against?

Verses: Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 10:17, Galatians 3:28

Prayer Topics: Justice, Fairness, Humility

Day 2
Kingdoms

We ended yesterday's devotional with some questions about the prohibition on showing favoritism. Many think of this prohibition as a command to treat everyone the same. The problem is that scripture and our own common sense seem to be against this very simple but misguided notion. For example Jesus did not treat his disciples the same, but often chose Peter, James, and John to accompany him while the others were left behind. Of these three, John seemed to have an especially close relationship, calling himself "the disciple Jesus loved". In addition to that, there appears to be a differentiation in rewards. In the parable of the talents, different talents are bestowed on all of the servants, and we also know there are different rewards in God's kingdom. Scripture speaks of a crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4), crown of life (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10), crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8) crown of rejoicing (1

Thessalonians 2:19) and the victor's crown (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). Do these differences break the command against showing favoritism? Of course not. So how do we know when favoritism is being shown? Every time the Olympics rolls around you can be sure there will be controversy. This time has been no exception, as a French judge in one of the skating competitions has been accused of cheating for giving the French competitors an absurdly high score, allowing them to beat the favored American team. The whole point of being a judge is to treat everyone differently, and yet the accusation of favoritism has been leveled against this judge. How can that be? He is using a criteria for judging outside of the standards of evaluation. He is using a personal standard (sharing citizenship of a particular country) rather than the standard of the game. As Christian's we are called to seek God's kingdom and His glory first. If we start to evaluate things and make judgements based on what is better or more glorifying to us, we make judgments that show favoritism. God has set the rules for the game, and he will always judge according to those rules. Our job is to make the same kind of judgments God has made, to be the embodiment of His spirit. Have there been times you have been tempted to show favoritism? How did you handle that temptation? Are there any areas of your life where you are currently showing favoritism? What can you do about that? Follow the leading of the spirit in your life to make good judgments, and seek first the kingdom.

Verses: Matthew 16:19, Hebrews 5:14, Philippians 1:9-10

Prayer Topics: Discernment, Insight, Reality

Day 3
Both Sides

James began his letter telling the believers that they should consider it Joy when they faced trials and difficulties. His encouragement was due to the fact that God uses such trials to develop us spiritually, and he went on to tell us that the poor and the rich both face their trials as God intended and that we should not envy the trials of another. In the times in which James lived, it was often considered to be a sign of God's favor to be rich, prosperous, and healthy while God's displeasure was revealed in trials. If it is important for us to see our own trials as signs of God's desire to bless us, how do we see the trials of others? Check out this devotional to explore the answer:

https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/making-judgments

Verses: Romans 5:3-5, James 1:12, 1 Peter 4:12-13
Prayer Topics: Endurance, Steadfastness, Strength

Day 4
Faith that Works

When we see others going through trials and difficulties, how do we respond? Check out this devotional for some encouragement in making your faith work in these circumstances:

https://devotionsbychris.com/tag/helping-others/

Verses: Philippians 2:4, Hebrews 13:16, Galatians 6:2
Prayer Topics: Unity, Compassion, Hospitality

Day 5

Thanks to Sylvester Warsaw, Jr for our devotional today

As children of God, we can't define God's fruitfulness that He produces in our lives based on our worldly understanding of success. This world order understanding of success is built upon lies and speculations that speak to the flesh giving the flesh meaning not built on truth. Truth isn't loud whereas speculation is loud because it's about self and builds up self whereas truth begins and ends with God and Him alone. Because of this truth fruitfulness can't be defined by size but the relationships God creates in and through His children within the communities we interact and engage in. God's fruitfulness in the life of His children is solely based on our willingness to abide in Him and He in us because it's the living Word that cleanses us daily while engaging in community for all to witness. Our daily walk with Christ Jesus isn't cloaked but transparent. Therefore the question becomes are we daily allowing the Holy Spirit to write God's will in our heart for all to read as He directs our steps? I

know some people are afraid of what others think, however, the fact of the matter is people are always going to talk. You may as well give them something to read that's grounded in God's truth and not the speculations of this world order and that's our lifestyle. Does our lifestyle reflect God's glory God's presence operating in the life He has called His children to live in and through obedience to Him in and through Christ Jesus the author and finisher of our faith? Abiding in Him produces fruit because redemption is God's work alone, however, as His children we are His ambassadors leading people to the cross and allowing God to teach us how to teach people about Him. Therefore the question becomes are we willing to live the life of redemptive suffering that leads people to life in Christ Jesus so that Father God by and through the Holy Spirit can teach them His way so their name can be written in heaven in the Book of Life.