

Personal Favoritism

Text : **James 2: 1-13 ; Acts 10: 27-29**

S#1.

A. **Prejudice is an ongoing problem in our nation, in our state and in our town.**

1. It is also a problem in every state of every nation on earth. **S#2.**
2. You and I are part of this problem because we have prejudices.
3. Prejudices are a part of our animal nature .. i.e., .. instinctive behavior.
 - a. When my friend put a white chicken into a pen of red chickens they killed it.
 - b. When I tried putting a black pig in with white pigs, they began biting it.

B. **Our society deals with an enormous number of prejudices.**

1. Heightism : A researcher wrote interviewed a man who said “*The worst thing about being short is there is nothing I can do about it. Fat people can diet and exercise, skinny people can eat and lift weights, ugly people can have plastic surgery. Being short is more akin to being disabled.*” Some parents subject their short children to growth hormone shots six times a week for up to 10 yrs at a cost of 20K per year. Short people are at a disadvantage in the work place and in the dating pool.

Tall people are more often promoted to positions of leadership. On average, tall people make 3% per inch more money. Tall women are generally considered more glamorous so models average about 5’11”.

2. Weightism : Another type of prejudice based on physical attributes is weight-bases discrimination. This prejudice is based on the erroneous belief that people become overweight because of negative personality attributes such as “gluttonous”, “lazy”, “greedy”, “stupid”, “smelly”, “slow”, or “unmotivated.”
3. Ageism : Age discrimination has become increasingly common as baby-boomers are reaching their “golden years.” Forced retirements and refusal of employer to hire, refused credit, refused auto insurance, lower quality of service at businesses, refused referrals by doctors b/c too old, refusal of membership in organization, etc.
4. There are an enormous number of prejudices : Gender, beauty, race, hair or bald, social class, intelligence, education, marital status, religion, national/regional origin

C. **God through James tells us that our faith is being tested by our attitude toward and how we deal with people who are different from us.** **S#3.**

1. **James 1: 1-4** ... We’re taught that our faith is tested by how we deal with **trials**.
2. **James 1: 5-8** ... Our faith is tested by our **doubts**.
3. **James 1: 9-11** ... Our faith is tested by how we deal with **circumstance**.
4. **James 1: 12-18** ... Our faith is tested by our view of **God and temptations**.
5. **James 1: 19-18** ... Our faith is tested by willingness to **receive and apply the word**.

6. **James 1: 26** ... Our faith is tested by the way we **use our tongue**.
7. **James 1: 27** ... Our faith is tested by our practice of **helping the helpless**.
8. **James 1: 27** ... Our faith is tested by our devotion to **personal sanctification**.
9. **James 2: 1-13** ... Our faith is tested by the way we **love and respect other people**.

D. With this lesson it is our goal to observe that :

S#4.

1. From the very beginning Christianity has always countercultural.
2. There are many reasons why people develop prejudices.
3. Prejudices are part of the old man.
4. Prejudices are sinful.

I. Christianity has always been countercultural.

S#5.

A. The Jews were required to be a segregated people.

S#6.

1. **II Cor. 6: 16-17** – "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **17** Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the lord "and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you."

2. The Jews were forbidden to intermarry with the nations of the land.

S#7.

Ezra 10: 11 – Now therefore, make confession to the Lord God of your fathers and do His will; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives. Cf. **Deut. 7: 3-4**

3. When the church started the Apostles did not interact with the gentiles.

- a. Peter did not want to go to the house of Cornelius.

Acts 10: 28-29 – And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. **29** "That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."

S#8.

- b. The brethren in Jerusalem were offended by Peter having baptized gentiles.

- c. **Acts 21: 26ff** .. Paul was arrested when they thought he brought gentile to temple

B. The church was the only place where men of all stations were mixed as one.

S#9.

1. **Philemon** ... Masters and slaves were brothers.
2. **James 2** ... Rich and poor worshipped together.
3. **I Cor. 11 & 14** ... Women were allowed in the assemble.
4. **I Cor. 14 & James 2** ... Visitors were welcomed in the assembly.

II. There are many reasons why people become prejudice.**S#10.****A. In some places prejudice is taught as a cultural norm.****S#11.**

1. When our whole family is prejudice, it is hard not to be.
2. We tend to be influenced by those around us .. that is why God drove out idolaters.

B. Some are simply misguided.

1. They believe God made some people superior to others.
2. They believe they have the right to make distinctions.

C. Pride causes prejudices.

1. I am part of the majority so I am better than the minorities.
2. I have more than others so I am better, I am smarter, I am more beautiful, etc.

D. Bad experiences cause prejudices.

1. People who are enemies in war.
2. Person who was beat up and robbed blames all people in race for it.

E. Much prejudice is rooted in ignorance.

1. There are people who don't recognize that they are prejudice.
2. Others realize they are prejudice, but don't think it is wrong or a problem.

F. Sin blinds people to their prejudices.

1. Many know that it is wrong, but they do not care.
2. Hatred can poison a person's heart and soul.

III. Prejudices are part of the old man which must be buried.**S#12.****A. Exactly what is "prejudice ?"**

1. **"Personal favoritism"** { *prosopolepsia* } 1 respect of persons. 2 partiality. **S#13.**
 2A the fault of one who when called on to give judgment has respect of the outward circumstances of man and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high born, or powerful, to another who does not have these qualities. *"to lift one man's face above another"* **S#14.**

- a. **Rom. 2: 11** – Jew first and also to the Greek. **11** For there is no partiality with God.
- b. **Eph. 6: 9** – their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
- c. **Col. 3: 25** – consequences of the wrong ... he has done, and that without partiality.

*** Thus, partiality, prejudice is the antithesis of Godliness.**

2. Prejudice (Webster) : preconceived judgment or opinion (2) : an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge

B. When we became a Christians we became one with God and His family. S#15.

1. Christians are caused to be born again by God.

I Pet. 1: 3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who According to His great mercy has caused us to be born again through ...

2. All the children of God must love each other.

I John 3: 9-10 – No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. ¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. S#16.

C. When one becomes a Christian he unites his heritage with all other Christians.

1. Every Christian has the same citizenship.

Phil. 3:20 – For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; S#17.

2. Every Christian belongs to the one family, the family of God.

Eph. 2: 19 – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

D. Being born again into a new family and given a new citizenship there is no just cause for prejudice among Christians. Love covers all differences. S#18.

IV. James is explaining that an attitude of prejudice is sinful. S#19.

- A. James 2: 9** – But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. S#20.

S#21.

B. Those who are prejudicial toward others are trying to be God. USURPERS

1. Heard a preacher tell a troublemaker “*There is but one God and you ain't it.*”

2. **James 4: 12** – There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

3. No man on earth has the ability to be totally just in his judgment of another.

- a. You can only see the exterior of the house.

- b. **I Cor. 4: 5** – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. S#22.

- c. We never know why men do what they do ... God said some preach the true gospel out of evil motives.

Phil. 1: 17 – The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

C. We must make some judgments, but not based on appearances. S#23.

- 1. **I Cor. 5 & 6** ... We are instructed to judge each other in certain circumstances.
- 2. When we must make evaluations we are instructed to make “righteous” judgments.

John 7: 24 – Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.

D. Luke 16 ... What judgment would have been made on appearance ?

- 1. **Rich man** : Habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, lived luxuriously
- 2. **Lazarus** : Laying at a gate, covered with sores, begging for food
- 3. **I Sam. 16: 7** – But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or S#24. at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

CONCLUSION :

A. Yes, there are times that we must evaluate actions and make judgments. S#25.

- 1. But, we must never be judgmental; **we must seek restoration, not condemnation.**
- 2. REMEMBER : **Matt. 7:2** We will be judged by the same standard we judge others.

B. We must never judge another on the basis of something they cannot change.

- 1. Short people can't choose to be tall.
- 2. No one can change where they were born.
- 3. No one can change their skin color.

C. When we leave this earth, ALL of the external will be left behind, not our heart.

- 1. God is continually monitoring our hearts.
- 2. He knows every evil thought you ever had and He still loves you.
- 3. We must likewise love others.

INVITATION :

We've been talking about our relationship with our fellowman, but S#26. our relationship with God is even more important ?

S#27. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 2: 1-13**

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. **2** For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, **3** and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," **4** have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? **5** Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? **7** Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. **11** For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. **13** For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Acts 10: 27-29

27 As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. **28** And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. **29** That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."