

Journey CHURCH

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Developing a Faith that Works Leader Guide Session 5: How to Treat People Right

*My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old 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 there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. **James 2:1-13 NIV***

The Principle: Don't Show Favoritism

Ways We Show Favoritism

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Three Problems with Showing Favoritism

1. Favoritism is _____.

*For God does not show favoritism. **Romans 2:11 NIV***

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2. Favoritism is _____.

*Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? **James 2:5 NIV***

3. Favoritism is _____.

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

James 2:8 NIV

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
Galatians 5:15 NIV

The Prescription for How to Overcome Favoritism

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, **Romans 15:7a NIV***

1. _____ everybody.
2. _____ everybody.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:3-4 NIV

3. _____ everybody.

*encourage one another and build each other up... **1 Thessalonians 5:11a NIV***

Discussion Questions

1. Describe some ways in which we in the church show favoritism today.
2. What is God’s view of favoritism? In what ways is favoritism “*judgment without mercy*” (verse 13), and what kind of judgement will God bring on those who show favoritism?

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3. According to James 2:8, what is “*the royal law found in Scripture*”? Why is showing favoritism a violation of this law?
4. What is God nudging you personally to do to become more accepting, appreciative, or affirming of other? What practical steps can you take to help others feel God’s love and acceptance?

Recently, 8,600 people from congregations in 39 different denominations were surveyed concerning their “love quotient.” What was discovered? Churches that had learned how to love people were growing, while those that hadn’t learned how to love people were declining. The amount of love and acceptance people experience when they attend Church significantly influences that church’s growth or decline.

5. Spend a few minutes evaluating how well you are doing as a group in loving and accepting others in your small group and in your church. What specific things can members of your group do to ensure that both new and current group members feel accepted, appreciated and affirmed when they are with you?