

James 2:1-13

Introduction

1. I used to read Ann Landers advice column daily in the newspaper.¹ (Read title/article)
 - a. What are we teaching about prejudice in our homes?
 - i. One of most bigoted men ever knew = Bible college grad. Roomed together.
 - ii. Shocked how spoke about black people. Finally one day confronted him.
 - iii. Where did he learn that? So deep even 3-yrs of Bible college didn't dislodge it.
 - iv. BTW, after I confronted him, he never talked like that w/me rest of summer.
 - b. Other types of prejudice people guilty of. **Racism** is prejudice because of color.
 - i. **Classism** is prejudice because of social/economic status.
 - ii. **Sexism** is prejudice because of gender. **Ageism** is prejudice because of age.
 - iii. **Don't trust anyone over 30.**² Are we guilty of any of these? James very concerned.
2. Can't serve people as God intends if we hold prejudiced attitudes. Must be humble.
3. How overcome prejudice? Learn principle & warning about prejudice. (**Show**)

I. PRINCIPLE: PREJUDICE IS WRONG (1-11)

1. **Partiality** = "an attitude of" personal favoritism (respect of persons, AV)
2. **Lit.** = 'laying hold of the face (appearance)' "to receive by face"³
 - a. It means to let someone's outside determine your estimate of them.
 - b. Judge by color skin, length hair, clothes wear, money make, degrees have.
3. James says don't do. Don't treat people diff. because of externals. It's wrong.

A. The Character Of Christ (vv. 1-4)

1. Emphasis here is on relationship to our Savior, Lord Jesus Christ. 2 import things.
 - a. **glory** - is in a defining relationship in which defines nature of Jesus.
 - i. **glory = divine and heavenly radiance manifesting God's visible presence.**⁴
 - ii. Jesus is the very visible presence God. So how He treats people is standard.
 - b. **Lord Jesus Christ -- Lord = Master** (McReynolds Interlinear)
 - i. Lord is term we use to express Jesus as Master of persons/creation.
 - ii. It is term believers use to express submission to Savior.
2. So Jesus is standard of how God treats people and we are to follow our Master.
3. Would Jesus do what vv. 2-4 describe? Would use people for selfish goals?
4. **What Did Jesus Do? (WWJD? How about WDJD?)**
 - a. He did not show partiality (Matthew 22:16). He saw the heart, not the exterior (Luke 7:36-39).
 - b. He saw potential, not past (Lk 5:8-10). He reacted w/compassion, not coldness (Mk 1:40-41).
 - c. He did not stereotype people (John 4:7-9). (Judge people based on group labels.)

B. The Choice Of God (5-7)

1. 2nd reason prejudice wrong is flies in face God's choice.
2. God deliberately chooses the poor and oppressed to be recipients of salvation.
 - a. The poor refers to the materially poor (cf. vv. 6-7).

¹Ann Landers. Bigotry Dooms Relationship, *Muskegon Chronicle*, 8/31/00.

²I saw a bumper sticker in downtown Marquette that said, **Ageism will catch up to you.**

³Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, p. 469.

⁴D. Edmond Hiebert, *James*.

- i. It is a matter of historical record that these things were occurring then.
- ii. Wealthy Jewish landowners had bought up much of the land.
- iii. People lost jobs, businesses were boycotted, some were destitute.
- iv. Moneylenders were plentiful and extortionate.
 - (a) There was the custom of summary arrest.
 - (b) If creditor met debtor could seize by neck of robe, nearly choking.
 - (c) Drag into court. No sympathy, just get paid the last nickel.
- b. **“Chosen”** means God has determined to save them by His grace, not merit.
 - i. God desires to magnify His grace in salvation.
 - ii. Since the rich usually think their status makes them more worthy than others, God deliberately chooses the poor to show that human merit plays no part in receiving salvation (see Luke 1:52-53).
- c. God offers the gospel to the rich also, and many are saved (cf. 1:10).
- d. Jesus said poor more saveable because more conscious their need (Mt 19:23ff).
 - i. Money gives a sense of power negating the helplessness must feel before God.
 - ii. Wealth blinds people to the true riches.
 - iii. Materialism distracts people even fr. caring about the future (Lk. 12:16f)
- e. Church history reveals more poor than rich have accepted the gospel.
 - i. **If Christians have caste differences also, I might as well remain a Hindu.**⁵
 - ii. **I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.**⁶
 - iii. Would you feel any differently if you were told to worship w/your own kind?

C. The Command Of Scripture (8-11)

1. V. 8 says Christians' actions are to be governed by love.
2. In fact this is the royal law (v. 8). **Why Is Love The Royal Law?** --W. W. Wiersbe
 - a. It was given by the King (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-40).
 - b. It rules all other laws leading us to fulfill them (Rom. 13:10).
 - c. Obeying it makes us a king or queen (James 1:8).
3. Treat others unlovingly due to race/appearance/status like adultery/murder, vv. 9-11.
 - a. How? Showing partiality or favoritism can lead to disobeying all of God's laws.
 - b. H. G. Wells, famous author, figured this out. Look what said. (**Show**)⁷
 - i. Slave owners committed adultery w/female slaves because treated as piece of property.
 - ii. Home owners have lied about property prices to keep minorities out of the neighborhood.
 - iii. I was once told to shake a certain visitor's hand. **He's got money. Covetousness.**
 - iv. Murder. I was once punched in the face by a man who didn't like my skin color.
 - (a) You can kill a person with one punch. Prejudice can lead to murder.

II. WARNING: PREJUDICE WILL BE JUDGED (12-13) BEWARE AND BE WARNED.

A. Our Own Scriptures Will Judge Us (v. 12).

1. Since Scriptures condemn partiality as sin we'll be judged by Bible.
 - a. If unsaved put in Hell. Lot of German Nazi's in Hell today. Lot of slaveowners.

⁵Mahatma Gandhi wrote this in his autobiography after an usher refused to give him a seat and suggested he go worship with his own people. Gandhi, who was seriously considering Christianity, left and never returned. Haddon W. Robinson, "A Prejudiced Usher," *Our Daily Bread*, 3/6/94.

⁶ M. Gandhi. <http://www.memorymuseum.net/quotes/mahatma-gandhi-quotes/mahatma-gandhi-quotes-5.jpg>. 8/25/16

⁷ H. G. Wells. <http://i.quoteaddicts.com/media/q2/1372284.png>. Accessed 8/25/16.

- b. If believer lose rewards for not serving poor/oppressed.
- 2. Tell about Christians in S. Chicago who left church when integrated.⁸
- 3. They won't lose soul over that, but will lose rewards.

B. **Our Own Standard Will Judge Us (v. 13).**

- 1. The Bible teaches that the way we treat others is the way God treats us (v. 13a).
- 2. The standard we use with others will be the standard God uses with us.
- 3. How does God treat us? **Mercy triumphs over judgment** (v. 13b).
 - a. God's law condemns us. **The wages of sin is death.**
 - b. But His mercy thru Christ forgives us. **The gift of God is eternal life thru JC.**
 - c. So when stand at the judgment seat of Christ mercy will triumph over judgment.
- 4. That's what God wants us to do. Look on people in compassion and love.
- 5. If we don't, that's good indication we have never received His mercy ourselves.

Take The Bias Test. Are You? (4 Tests)

✓ **Our speech will tell us.**

- 1) Do we use racial slurs or tell racial jokes? Do we laugh when others do?
- 2) Do we criticize the poor, the backward, or the handicapped?

✓ **Our friendships will tell us.**

- 1) Do we have friends of other color, social status or ages?

✓ **Our opinions will tell us.**

- 1) Do we resent the poor assuming they are lazy or dirty? Are we jealous of rich?
- 2) A while back I didn't want to sit near 2 people in a restaurant who looked sloppy.

✓ **Our service will tell us.**

- 1) Do we serve the less advantaged?
- 2) Do we give time to people who are needier than we are?

⁸ Pastor told this story about his church at the *Sonlife* conference in Elgin, IL. Bottom line he said was they didn't want to sit in the same pews with minorities. They weren't their kind of people.