

Impartial Disciples

Key Verse:
*“Hearken, my
beloved brethren,
Hath not God
chosen the poor of
this world rich
in faith, and heirs
of the kingdom
which he hath
promised to them
that love him?”*
—James 2:5

Selected Scripture:
James 2

THROUGH GOD’S SERVANT,
the Apostle James, believers are reminded that the practice of showing favoritism or partiality is inconsistent with the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.—James 2:1

“If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and

say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (vss. 2-4) Such an unjust estimation of others is sinful.

Our Key Verse indicates that humble-minded individuals are more likely to respond favorably to God’s invitation to follow in the Master’s footsteps than others who are self-satisfied with their own feelings of righteousness and less inclined to develop the faith required to heed the Gospel message.

“If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” God’s

‘royal law’ of love forbids Christians to exploit others because they appear to be insignificant. Although believers are not bound by the letter of the Mosaic Law, they are under the “law of liberty.” The spirit of love welling up in their hearts will promote holiness in their conduct as an outgrowth of their relationship to the Heavenly Father. This is based upon the acceptance of Christ’s meritorious sacrifice on their behalf.—vss. 8-12

Another portion of this study deals with the relationship between faith and works. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”—vss. 14-18

As a practical assessment of our spiritual progress, since faith is an inner quality that cannot be perceived by outsiders, James emphasizes that the proof of our relationship with Christ can be seen by the fruitage of our service in the Lord’s cause.

In addition to spending time in prayer, meditation, personal Bible study and attending worship services as often as possible with fellow believers, Christians also engage in the work of sharing the Gospel. Some of these activities may include face-to-face discussions with others, arranging public meetings on Biblical topics, preparing exhibits at fair booths concerning God’s kingdom, distributing tracts, publishing religious newsletters, and creating websites on scriptural themes. What a privilege it is to share with others the wonderful plan of salvation for the entire human family! ■