

The Epistle of
James
New Testament Letters Series



Lesson 3-Having a pure Faith

Focus: Ch. 2 v.1-26

1. A pure faith is not partial to one over another, but loves all (v.1-9)

- a. *So, do you like to play favorites? What would cause you to treat one person better than another? Would it be for their smile? Would it be for their riches, good looks, or fancy dress? Would it be for their powerful position? Would you treat someone as a less worthy person because they were poor? Would you treat someone as less worthy just because they were not dressed as fancy or because they not as pretty as another person? If they were physically “ugly” looking to you, would you treat them badly? **The calls that kind of favoritism as sin. It is sin because it is entirely the opposite of love, and it is based upon the superficial judgments of men, not upon the character, the true value of the soul, or upon the righteousness of God. It’s a terribly sad thing when such worldliness has been modeled or practiced within churches—churches which were filled with superficial and shallow people or “Christians.”** That kind of behavior is not Christian, because it is not of Jesus Christ. It has nothing to do with Him or the love of God whatsoever! It only stinks of pride, selfishness, shallowness, and hatred.*
- b. *(v.1) James pleads, “...do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ...with partiality.” Do not have a mixed faith. Do not have a faith in Jesus that is tainted with such sinful behavior. (v.3-4)-We should not show favorites based on externals!! That is sin!*
- c. *(v.5-9) **God has a real heart of compassion towards those who are poor in this life.** He desires that we would have an incredibly compassionate and loving heart towards those who are in need too. **God even used the poor and their condition to test the generosity, mercy, and kindness of our hearts.** God allows their situation so that He can draw the rest of the world away from selfishness and covetousness by giving an opportunity for the more wealthy to help those who are less fortunate. “He who has pity upon the poor lends to the Lord; and that which he has given He will repay him again” (Proverbs 19:17). (See also Leviticus 19:9,10; Isaiah 58:6-8; Matthew 11:5).*

2. A pure faith obeys God’s holy law (v.10-13)

- a. *The principles taught here in James 2, especially verses 10-12, reveal to us in a crystal clear manner that God’s commandments are all still intact. They stand firm and true forever. Also, they stand as a package deal. Every one of them is very important! We cannot just pick and choose which ones we’d like to keep and which ones we wouldn’t! To neglect giving our obedience to even one of the commandments is a terrible sin and makes us worthy of death. Adam and Eve lost the Garden of Eden for even one sin—eating the fruit which God had expressly forbidden them to eat! “For him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). We must follow all of God’s commandments, for whatever we know to do, but do not do for God is sin. And should we know something is sin, but yet continue doing it, we are committing sin! Jesus said to share the gospel with the entire world “...teaching them to obey ALL things that” He has commanded us (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, we must learn to obey all the words of God’s*

command, not just whichever we may wish to pick and choose from. These commandments include all of the Ten Commandments (which James here quotes from). The 4th commandment, regarding the keeping holy of God's 7th day Sabbath is also binding upon men and has never ceased to be one of God's very important commandments. Sadly, there are so many today who have not been observing the commands of God faithfully! **Let us choose to be those who truly are faithful!**

- b. (v.13) God desires us to be of a merciful spirit! We should be forgiving even as He is forgiving. This God clearly calls us to (Matthew 6:12-14; Luke 6:37).

3. A pure faith takes action and works righteousness (v.14-26)

- a. (v.14-17) **Faith and works go hand in hand.** Faith is a practical thing! If we truly believe in something then we will live by it! If you tell me that a hurricane is coming into town within 24 hours then I will expect to see you doing something like boarding up your windows. If I hear your words, but I see no actions in line with those words, then I will not believe that your words are true. If you say that you have faith and believe that the storm is coming, then I will not believe you, because your professed faith has no action to back it up! **"Faith without works is dead" (v.17).** You can know also that you will never have a living faith in God until you choose to live by His words. Your profession will not have any liveliness until it is accompanied by faithful works or actions!!
- b. (v.18-24) "You see then how that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (v.24). What James is pointing out here is that true faith does have works and it is **revealed in works. None of us are saved by our mere works (Ephesians 2:8,9). We are saved by faith, however, real faith is actually revealed in our works. Therefore, we cannot be saved without having good works** (not because of the mere works sake, but because of faith). **This is because we must have faith to be saved, and that very faith, if real and true, is also revealed in our works of actions.** These two things go together. Just remember that salvation is a free gift of God through faith—and that very faith takes form or expression through our works. Just be sure that you get the horse of faith before the cart of works, and not the other way around! The horse is to be what pulls the cart! Faith moves mountains and it is faith that works by love to the glory of God's name through Jesus Christ! Our works are a demonstration of our faith! Faith has always been demonstrated by works. Faith leads us to action or works. Therefore, faith is not really a true faith without the essential works of righteousness that must accompany and follow our faith! Abraham was a perfect example of one who revealed His faith by action!
- c. (v.25,26) The life of our faith is revealed in our works, for "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead." Rahab the Harlot saved God's people by taking action for them. This was an expression of her good faith in God and His people. Because of her acting out in faith, and rescuing God's people, she also herself was rescued, and her family too (As reference, you may find the story in Joshua 2:1-24; 6:17,23,26).

Questions for the Heart:

Will you put your faith in Jesus today? ____ (He's waiting for you, because He loves you and he gave His life for you and me, so that we could have eternal life together with Him. Won't you come to Him today?)