



# Faith and Temperance

## The Marks of a Living Faith

**Main point:** Faith can be tested by its reaction to partiality.

### Expositional Outline

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#### A. The Rebuke for Partiality (vv.1-4)

##### 1. The prohibition of partiality (v.1)

<sup>1</sup> My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of* personal favoritism.

##### 2. The illustration of partiality (vv.2-3)

<sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> 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,"

##### 3. The question of condemnation (v.4)

<sup>4</sup> have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil <sup>[a]</sup> motives?

#### B. The Result of Partiality (vv.5-11)

##### 1. The inconsistency of their conduct (vv.5-7)

<sup>5</sup> 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? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

##### 2. The breach of God's Law (vv.8-11)

<sup>8</sup> If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. <sup>9</sup> But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> 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.

### C. The Appeal for Consistent Conduct (vv.12-13)

#### 1. The statement of the appeal (v.12)

<sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by *the* law of liberty.

#### 2. The vindication of the appeal (v.13)

<sup>13</sup> For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

### Interpretative discussion questions:

- Read Deuteronomy 1:16-18; 10:17; Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; Colossians 3:25; and James 1:17.
- Define the difference between preferences and partiality.
- Why is partiality wrong and how does it creep in to our local assembly?
- If you show favoritism, what does it say about your present spiritual condition, and how can being impartial be a strong witness of Christ's love both inside and outside of the church?

### Memory verse for lesson 8:

- **James 2:1**—*My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.*



### Insights on Our Temperance:

Keith Brazier

*“The Church was the only place in the ancient world where social distinctions did not exist. There must have been a certain initial awkwardness when a master found himself sitting next to his slave or when a master arrived at a service in which his slave was actually the leader and the dispenser of the Sacrament. The gap between the slave, who in law was nothing more than a living tool, and the master was so wide as to cause problems of approach on either side.” (William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: James and Peter*, 65)*

Numerous algorithms run incessantly to greet us every time we interact with a piece of technology: commercials on television/radio; ads that greet us when we use the internet; feeds for us to “like” on social media sites. Society intentionally markets to us based on preferences and interests. This allows us to create a controlled personal bubble convenient for shopping, entertainment, and social interactions. A problem arises when we apply this system of preferences to human beings in the church.

James “The Just” clearly and boldly addresses the sin of favoritism in this passage. Judging others superficially is hypocritical since all of us are flawed before God, and those who profile people based on perspectives and likes actually contradict the faith and break the law. Favoritism creates dissension in the church and takes the focus off God as people try to get others to conform to man’s standards instead of God’s. Since justice and mercy are consistent with God’s nature, faith should cause believers to exhibit that same impartiality to others who are all in need of His grace (*1 Pet.1:17; Acts 10:34; Eph.6:9; Col.3:15; Rom.2:11*). Application of faith in this area requires that we be concerned with others and not ourselves as we view them through scriptural—not cultural—lenses.

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.