



James, the half-brother of Jesus, was a leader in the early church. He was known for his compassion, leadership, and influence over the early church. In this letter he writes to the entire church about the persecution they are enduring. He also gives them very practical ways to live out their faith. In James 2 we have a long example of why we are to treat everyone the same in Christ. Another way to say it is that we are not invited to show favoritism to anyone. At this time, Jewish people coveted recognition and honor from others. It was typical to give a better seat to the wealthy people in the church. James wasn't going to allow culture to influence the teaching of Jesus.

1. Neal grabbed our attention with the Disney story of Cinderella but turned it upside down with a real-life example of a young girl was treated poorly by her family. Share about a time that you received special attention or favoritism.
2. **Read James 2:1 and 5.** Look at how James addresses the early church. You can see that he has a deep love for these people and a desire for them to grow in their faith. What can we learn from James about the way he thinks about people?
3. **Read Genesis 37:3-4.** James gives a command to the church not to show favoritism in verse 1 but Jacob showed favorites to his son. **Read Matthew 22:16, Luke 21:1-4, Romans 2:11, and Ephesians 6:9.** How do we not show favoritism in the church?
4. **Read James 2:5-7.** James teaches us that faith that works doesn't show favoritism. Discuss in your group what a church who doesn't favoritism would look like. How can your group implement that to help reach our city for Jesus?
5. James drives the point home by teaching on loving your neighbor. **Read James 2:8-11.** James quotes Moses and Jesus here (**see Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:38**). Also **read Luke 10:25-37.** How can we love those in need?
6. James mentioned two of the Ten Commandants in connection of not showing favoritism. It seems that human people have a great ability to justify their choices. Talk about ways that you can justify certain actions over other actions and in doing so break the truth of God.
7. The message in this section is obvious, our beliefs should control our behavior. **Read James 2:12-13.** James connects favoritism to God's mercy on us. **Read Matthew 18:23-35.** How can we show mercy because we've been shown mercy?
8. Close your time in prayer.