

The Book Of James With Francis Chan: A 12-Day Video Bible Study

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Devotional

Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/bGzB3b-8pJM>

Think about the most famous person you've ever met. How did this happen? How did you react to this person? Now reflect on the scene described in verses 2–3. If this were to happen in your church, what do you think would happen? How would you treat the two people differently?

We can figure out from this letter what the problems were with the people James wrote to. Those people gossiped sometimes. They got angry with one another. And when a rich person showed up at the church door, they shoved poor folks aside to clear the path.

So that's the first challenge James offers in this chapter: Do we show favoritism? It's natural to get nervous around celebrities. No one would blame us for favoring the rich folks who show up to worship with us. We are naturally blinded by the trappings of success and worldly value. But such behavior goes against all the truth of God. The rich don't deserve special treatment; in fact, the poor do. Doesn't the kingdom of God belong to them?

Then James accuses his very religious readers of being lawbreakers. Playing favorites? You're no better than a murderer. You have broken God's law. You deserve His judgment. James is saying that all of us have sinned, even religious folks. All deserve judgment. But guess what? God offers you mercy, so receive it. His mercy triumphs over judgment.

And once we realize how much we depend on God's mercy, it's hard to show favoritism to the rich. Instead, we value the poor, because they have mastered the one thing God wants above all else: relying on Him for everything they have.

If you have been working hard to keep God's rules, talk with a pastor or teacher about the idea of God's "mercy." If you lead in your church, evaluate the church's response to visitors — not just the stated policies, but the actual behaviors. Is favoritism shown? If so, what can you do about it? Finally, can you get involved in a ministry to the poor and homeless in your community? Many such ministries need volunteers and financial support. If you can't find one to connect with, perhaps you could start one.